



Heat Health Plan

2020



Acknowledgement of Country

Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.

Plan Endorsement and Adoption

This Swan Hill Rural City Municipal Emergency Management Heat Health Plan is a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

The Plan has been considered by all agencies forming the Municipal Emergency Planning Committee, and endorsed by a formal motion of the Committee.

Signed: Les McPhee Date: 16/09/2021

Les McPhee
Chairperson - Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
Swan Hill Rural City Council

This Plan has been considered by the Swan Hill Rural City Council and adopted an Ordinary Meeting held on the 21 April 2020 by a formal motion of the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Signed: John McLinden Date: 07/09/2021

John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer
Swan Hill Rural City Council

Document & Version Control

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1. Introduction

Events of extreme heat have contributed to more deaths in Australia than any other natural hazard (Bureau of Meteorology 2015). These extreme heat events also causes livestock and crop losses, damage to infrastructure such as roads, railways and bridges. There is also an increased demand on, and/or failure of, essential services such as power, transport and water. These failures can affect the functioning of government, community services, business and industry, which can exacerbate the impact on human health.

In 2009 Victoria experienced several days of extreme temperatures and little overnight relief. The Chief Health Officer concluded that an estimated 374 excess deaths occurred, much greater than the 173 deaths arising from the Black Saturday bushfires the following week. In the 2014 heatwave, there were 167 excess deaths. Excess deaths are those above what would otherwise be expected and may have been a result of extreme heat (DHHS 2015).

One of the critical roles Council undertakes on behalf of the community is to plan for such events. The Heat Health Plan was developed as part of Council's Emergency Management program on the following basis. "The duration, frequency and intensity of heat, is expected to increase due to climate change." (Steffen et al 2014).

Extreme heat can affect anyone within the community. There are, however some sectors of the community that are more susceptible. These include the very young, elderly, those with pre-existing medical conditions, and the socially isolated.

This Plan describes the preparation, response and recovery objectives for the Swan Hill Rural City Council Municipality for extreme heat events.

1.1 Aim of the plan

To be prepared for and respond to heat health events within the municipality in partnership with community and agencies, and by doing so, reduce the impact on the community and particularly those deemed to be more vulnerable to heatwave events.

1.2 Objectives of the plan

- Increase the understanding, capacity and resilience of the community in responding to heat health events and therefore influence long-term community change to improve community health and wellbeing.
- Develop and enhance partnerships with agencies that will better coordinate a response to heat health events.
- Ensure that agencies who work with vulnerable people and groups are aware of heat health alerts and maintain appropriate levels of communication.
- Respond to Heat Health Alerts by providing available resources and information to the community when required.

2. Planning Framework

The following Acts outline the responsibility of Council in regards to the heatwaves and extreme heat events:

- *Emergency Management Act 1986* requires Council to have arrangements in place to prevent, respond to and recover from any emergencies that could occur in the municipality.
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* states that Council's function is to 'seek to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district.
- *Local Government Act 1989* outlines the responsibility of Council to protect public health in emergencies.
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* fosters better planning of the built environment to withstand the impact of a range of likely emergencies, including extreme heat.

The Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) explains the emergency roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to the prevention, mitigation, response and recovery components of emergencies.

In Victoria, natural events like heatwaves constitute an emergency under the *Emergency Management Act 1986*.

The Heatwave Planning Guide (Department of Human Services 2009) assists local government to develop Heat Health Management Plans that are relevant to their local community.

Management of extreme heat and heatwave encompasses a number of local government areas of responsibility including emergency management, home care services, children services, community health and wellbeing, sustainability and environment, town planning and occupational health and safety.

Swan Hill Rural City Council first developed a Heat Health Plan in 2009. (Previously called Heatwave Plan) The plan has been implemented over the summer period each year.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council Heat Health Plan provides a framework for Council to meet its emergency management and other legislative obligations and to support the community during heatwaves and extreme heat events.

3. Review and Maintenance of the Plan

The approval for the Heat Health Plan has come from the Municipal Emergency Planning Committee (MEMPC), with the plan being developed with the assistance of appropriate stakeholders.

The Heat Health Plan will be reviewed:

- Three years after its adoption by Council;
- Following significant incidents or changes in risk exposure;
- As required by legislation.

If amendments are made to the Plan during a review, the amended Plan is to then be endorsed by the MEMPC and adopted by Council.

4. Terminology

4.1 Heatwave

The Bureau of Meteorology's *Heatwave Service for Australia* defines heatwaves as 'three days or more of high maximum and minimum temperatures that are unusual for that location'. This definition of heatwave also applies to emergency management when, after three days of extreme heat; that is a heatwave, the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) assumes the role of control agency to manage the event.

4.2 Extreme heat

The *Heat Health Plan for Victoria* defines extreme heat as the minimum mean temperature that is likely to impact on the health of a community. This is known as the Department of Health and Human Services' heat health temperature threshold. Extreme heat does not have a prescribed duration and may last as little as 24 hours.

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilitiesstate-emergency-plans/state-extreme-heat-sub-plan>

4.3 Heat health temperature thresholds

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has identified heat health temperature thresholds for each weather forecast district in Victoria (which align with the Victorian Country Fire Authority districts). Above these thresholds heat-related illness and mortality increases.

The heat health temperature threshold is based on the forecast average temperature for any given day; that is the average of the forecast daily maximum temperature and the forecast overnight temperature. (See appendix 1)

4.4 Heat health alerts

Heat Health Alerts are issued by DHHS for a particular district once the forecast average temperatures reach or exceed the heat health threshold for that district. (See appendix 2)

4.5 Prevention

The elimination or minimisation of the impacts of extreme heat on communities and individuals.

4.6 Preparedness

Planning and raising community awareness in the lead up to summer and heat events.

4.7 Response

The implementation of pre-determined actions in the event of extreme heat and providing relief and recovery services.

4.8 Recovery

The follow up actions to support persons affected by the event to achieve proper and effective levels of functioning.

5. Health Implications

5.1 People

When the temperature surrounding the body is higher than a person's skin temperature the only effective way of natural heat loss is sweating. A lack of breeze or personal health issues, such as obesity and some medications or tight fitting clothing will lessen the effectiveness of sweating and may cause the body to overheat.

The body has an internal temperature of about 37°C changes in that temperature by even a single degree can cause unpleasant side effects. As the body's core temperature continues rise above 37°C sweating will increase, heat cramps and nausea may set in, and blood pressure may drop. These are signs of heat exhaustion.

Following this, as the body's temperature continues to rise to around 40°C and the body's mechanisms to cope with the heat have ceased, heat stroke is highly likely and can cause death.

The most susceptible to heat illness are;

- Babies and children under 5 years of age
- Older people over the age of 65 years
- Pregnant women
- Frail or disabled people, unable to make independent decisions due to cognitive or other impairment
- Homeless people
- Those relying on outside assistance to carry out every day functions
- Those facing financial hardship

It is important for the community to respond to heatwave conditions quickly. Suitable responses include:

- Keeping cool
- Drinking plenty of water
- Staying out of the sun
- Look after yourself and others

5.2 Pets, animals and wildlife

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. Dogs being the most common with 38.8 per cent of households owning a dog. Pets rely on their owners to provide shade, cool areas and water to cope with heat. They are just as susceptible to heat related illness as humans. Information relating to pets and heat can be found at,

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/dog-health/heat-and-pets>

5.3 Council facilities and events in the municipality

There are a number of groups, organisations both local and non-local that utilise Council facilities for events or activities. When these groups and organisations provide Risk and Emergency Plans to Council prior to the event, the plans should provide for potential heat health events.

6. Community Profile

At the 2016 Census, the Swan Hill Rural City Council has a population of approximately 20,584. There are a number of people in our communities who are at an increased risk during heatwaves. These include the elderly, children under five, persons with certain pre-existing medical conditions, people with lack of capacity to keep themselves cool and persons not acclimatised to the region.

6.1 Age factors

With an aging population, it is predicted that we can expect to see more persons affected by heatwaves. The age distribution of the population can help to identify the amount of potential vulnerability within the community.

Below shows census data from 2001 to 2016. The overall population has remained reasonably steady, as has the number of children between 0 to 4 years. However, there is a steady increase in the number of people over the age of 65.

Census Year	Population	Population 0 -4 years	Population %	Population 65yrs and over	Population %
2001	20637	1570	7.6	2909	14.1
2006	20633	1350	6.5	3208	15.5
2011	20449	1425	7.0	3406	16.7
2016	20584	1326	6.4	3885	18.9

6.2 Tourism

The community within the Swan Hill Municipality is generally acclimatised to heat, with an average summer maximum temperature of 32.1° C it often exceeds 40° C.

In the year ending 2018, there were 747,900 domestic day, domestic overnight and international overnight visitors, with 17.35% of those being over the age of 65. This shows a high number of persons in the risk category of over 65, whom may not be acclimatised to Swan Hill's heat and potentially have more pre-existing medical conditions. This places them at an increased risk of suffering from heat related health issues. (Source: Murray Region Tourism Board).

6.3 Social disadvantage

However, there is more than age that defines who is vulnerable to heat health events. Those of the population who are socially and or economically disadvantaged are also at risk, as are those who have multiple or individual issues which relate to a disability, low mobility, health issues such as obesity and require day to day assistance.

There is a level of socio-economic disadvantage within our communities, contributing to this is an unemployment rate of 3.3 per cent and a median weekly household income of \$1094.00. This is below the state median of \$1489.00. ABS data from the 2016 Census shows that 26.1 per cent of households have an income of less than \$650.00 per week. These factors all contribute to a person's capacity to cool themselves, including having air-conditioning or using it.

Not only are there direct health effects on persons during heatwaves, but there are also potential social impacts such as family violence, drug and alcohol offences. The Swan Hill municipality has the third highest rate of family violence incidents per capita at 3020 incidents per 100,000 of population. Whilst there is no specific data linking these social impacts it may be a contributing factor.

An estimated 11.8 per cent of the population speak another language than English at home, which may contribute to issues communicating vital heatwave information.

7. Local Weather and Climate

Swan Hill has been described as having a Mediterranean type climate with dry summers and mild winters. The temperatures in Swan Hill during summer vary, but it is common to have regular days of 35 to 40 degrees Celsius between November and February. The average annual rainfall for the Swan Hill region is around 350 mm.

Climate change plays a role in heatwaves and it is predicted that as climate change continues, heatwaves will increase in frequency, intensity and duration. If not properly prepared for heatwaves and their effects, communities will be at an increased risk of suffering from heat related illness and deaths.

Bureau of Meteorology historical weather data for Swan Hill.

Parameter	1884 – 2019
Mean Max Temp	23.5°C - Previous Plan Mean Max Temp was 23.12
Highest temp	47.5°C (25 th Jan 2019) Previous Hottest – 46.1 31 Jan 1968
Mean number days above 30 °C	80.9 – Previous plan mean number of day above 30 was 72.6
Mean number days above 35 °C	30.8 - Previous plan mean number of day above 35 was 24.5
Mean number days above 40 °C	10.8 - Previous plan mean number of day above 40 was 3.8

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Victorian Government

Heatwaves are a Class 2 emergency under the *Emergency Management Act, 2013*. The Emergency Management Commissioner is the nominated control agency for managing the Response to heatwaves under Part 7 of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria.

The Emergency Management Commissioner is the nominated control agency for managing the response to heatwaves at a state level. The main emergency management tasks are;

- Ensuring the messages to the public are coordinated, consistent and complementary.
- Ensuring the impact and consequences of extreme heat on the community are identified and managed in an integrated and coordinated manner.
- Coordinating the whole-of-government response to the varied emergencies caused by the heat.

8.2 Department of Health & Human Services

During a Heat Health Event, the Department of Health and Human Services has a key function for reducing the impact of extreme heat on public health. DHHS does this by;

- The development of the Heat Health Plan for Victoria. The aim of the State Plan is to raise awareness of extreme heat impacts on the community and provide information for action to reduce the risks.
- The development of the Heat Wave Planning Guide. This provides a framework to assist local councils in developing plans and supporting communities during extreme heat events.
- Maintaining the heat health information surveillance system.

- Issuing heat health alerts. Heat Health alerts are issued for relevant weather districts when forecast average temperatures reach or exceed the threshold level.
- Development of communication strategy with a range of resources
- Providing support and guidance to other agencies to coordinate the health response state-wide.

8.3 Local Government

Swan Hill Rural City Council has a responsibility to protect public health in an emergency. The Heat Health Plan for Victoria encourages local government to address this responsibility by:

- Planning for and reviewing of Heat Health event plans.
- Providing relief during heat health events by enacting arrangements to support those in the community who require it.
- Communicating health messages.
- Coordinating relief and recovery activities locally as required.

Details of actions are located in the Action Plan in Section 9.

9. Heat Health Action Plan

The Heat Health Action Plan relates to more than responding to impending Heat Health events. The Plan provides all year round guidance in preparing for and building community resilience to Heat Health events. The action plan is divided into four phases

- Phase 1: Pre summer preparation and mitigation.
- Phase 2: During summer prevention.
- Phase 3: Heat Health Event response.
- Phase 4: Heat Health Event recovery.

9.1 Phase 1 - Pre Summer Preparation and Mitigation

Phase 1 Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Notes
Heath Health Information Material and Resources			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Heat Health Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure up to date legislative requirements ➤ Review State Heat Health Plan for alignment ➤ Review appendices to ensure up-to-date ➤ Distribute updated plan 	PHRSC PHRSC PHRSC / MRM / MERO PHRSC	March-September	Information can be found on the DHHS Website. Include any previous AAR information in review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Contact Lists. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community ➤ Environmental Health 	MRM / MERO PHRSC	March-September	Ensure individual contact stakeholder contact lists are up to date and not duplicated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relief Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review and confirm agreements, availability and standards 	MRM	April-September	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check for new resources from DHHS discard out of date information & ensure appropriate stocks ➤ Ensure access to hire cooling equipment and generators 	PHRSC MERO	September-October	

Abbreviations on this page

PHRSC – Public Health & Regulatory Services Coordinator
 AAR – After Action Review

MRM – Municipal Recovery Officer
 DHHS – Department of Health & Human Services

MERO – Municipal Emergency Resource Coordinator

Phase 1 Actions continued	Responsibility	Timeline	Notes
Pre Summer Engagement and Communication.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Distribute new and updated information to relevant Council departments. 	PHRSC	September-October	Heat Health pamphlets and posters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review, update and plan potential media articles. 	MRM / PHRSC / MERO / MPRC	September-October	Up to date with plan and DHHS information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heat Health links to agencies supporting vulnerable people, groups and stakeholders and encourage development or updating of Heat Health Action Plans. 	MERO / MRM / PHRSC	September-October	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure compliance with risk assessments and emergency management plans for Heat Health where these plans form part of user agreements for events. 	Risk Officer/Events Officer	All Year	

9.2 Phase 2 - During Summer Prevention

Phase 2 includes a range of actions to continue to build community resilience.

Phase 2 Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Notes
Implement "Summer Communications Campaign"			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinate media articles ➤ Ensure social media information is updated 	MRM / MERO / MPRC / PHRSC MPRC	November-February	
Disseminate Heat Health Information			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Display within Council and encourage internal & external stakeholders to display heat health education materials. 	PHRSC / OH&S Manager / MERO / MRM All Managers	November-February	

Abbreviations on this page

PHRSC – Public Health & Regulatory Services Co-ordinator
OH&S – Occupational Health and Safety

MRM – Municipal Recovery Officer
MPRC - Media and Public Relations Coordinator

MERO – Municipal Emergency Resource Coordinator
DHHS – Department of Health & Human Services

9.3 Phase 3 - Heat Health Response

Phase 3 Occurs when the BOM forecasts Heat Wave conditions and Heat Health Alert

Phase 3 Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Notes
Upon notification of Heat Health Alert			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information & Briefings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend REMPC and ICC briefings. ➤ Monitor local forecasts and DHHS information. 	MERO MERO	Heat Health Alert	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinate media releases with DHHS. ➤ Social media alerts to community and updates 	MPRC MPRC	Heat Health Alert	
Heat Health Response			
• Phase 3 Actions continued			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relief Centres / Cooling Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ May be activated ➤ Maintain contact with ICC and / or Powercor in relation to blackouts & brownouts • Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Media release in relation to relief centres and places to stay cool if required. • Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending opening hours of libraries and public swimming pools if required 	MERO / MRM MERO / MRM MERO / MRM /MPRC MERO / MRM	Heat Health Response	

Abbreviations on this page

MRM – Municipal Recovery Officer

MPRC - Media and Public Relations Coordinator

MERO – Municipal Emergency Resource Coordinator

9.4 Phase 4 - Heat Health Recovery

Address the following questions post alert and post summer season.

- Were the actions taken in Phase 3 appropriate and timely?
- What worked and what didn't?
- Was information communicated timely and effectively?
- What can be done differently?

Phase 4 Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Notes
Post Heat Health Alert			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Modify Social media information (continue to stay hydrated after alert) 	MPRC		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Instigate "After Action Review", debrief and communicate. 	MERO / MRM	After event	Appendix 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chair AAR & circulate outcomes to MEMT 		After event	The AAR process should be considered to ensure the continued development of this plan.

Abbreviations on this page

MRM – Municipal Recovery Officer
MPRC - Media and Public Relations Coordinator

MERO – Municipal Emergency Resource Coordinator

AAR – After Action Review

10 Communication

10.1 Receiving Heat Health Alerts

Heat Health alerts are available to any persons wishing to subscribe to the Alerts, Advisories and Newsletters at the health.vic website. <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/news-and-events/healthalerts>

The MERO, MRM & PHRSC are to ensure they are subscribed to receive DHHS Heat Health Alerts. Heat Health Alerts will also be distributed to the MERO from The Regional Emergency Management Team.

10.2 Internal Communication

Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring employees who do not have access to email or may not access their email on a daily basis are informed of the alert.

10.4 Community Education

Council's communication of the risks associated with extreme heat, preparation and coping with heat are made at the beginning of summer. Consideration of early communication prior to November should be made dependent on weather forecasts.

These messages will be disseminated via Council's existing networks. Council Community Care Workers and stakeholder agencies shall be encouraged to provide verbal advice to vulnerable groups they are working with. These being the elderly frail and persons with disabilities, along with parents with babies and young children.

Education around heat health should be consistent with DHHS advice and cover the following areas

- Keeping the home cool
- Keeping out of the heat
- Keeping the body cool and hydrated
- Helping others
- What to do if you have a health problem
- What to do if you feel unwell
- Never leave children, adults or pets in cars.

Communication messages should be

- In plain and simple language
- Specific
- Regular
- Consistent
- Targeted
- Translated for culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- Available in a variety of formats
- Able to be remembered and acted on
- Achievable by the public

Heat Health information can be obtained in a number of different languages at <http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/PresentEnglishResource?Open&x=&s=Heat>

Appendix 1 Heat Health Alert System

Heat health alert system

Information and guidance for local government and other stakeholders

Introduction

The Department of Health and Human Services operates a heat health alert system to notify the department's program areas, hospitals, health and community service providers and the general public via email about forecasted extreme heat conditions which are likely to impact human health. The heat health alert system operates annually between November to the end of March.

A heat health alert is issued when mean temperatures are predicted to reach or exceed heat health thresholds. The department recommends that you continue to monitor local conditions and take action in line with your heat plan, business continuity plan and occupational health and safety (OH&S) plan.

Weather forecast districts

The heat health alert system uses the Bureau of Meteorology weather forecast districts and boundaries, as shown in Figure 1.

Heat health temperature thresholds

Temperature thresholds have been identified for Victoria, above which heat-related illness and mortality increases substantially.

These thresholds differ across the state in recognition of the higher average temperatures experienced in northern parts of Victoria. Temperature thresholds have been established for each of the nine weather forecast districts, as shown in Figure 1.

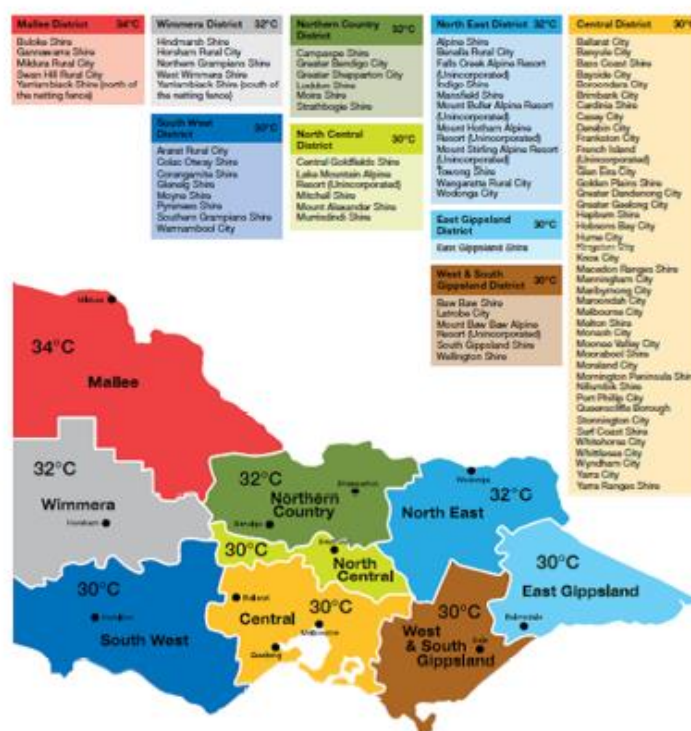


Figure 1: Weather forecast districts and corresponding heat health temperature thresholds
Image adapted from the Country Fire Authority's 'Know your total fire ban district'.



Appendix 2

Alert Decision Process

How we decide to issue an alert

The department monitors the Bureau of Meteorology forecast daily minimum and maximum temperatures and calculates the daily average temperature for each weather forecast district, as shown in Figure 2.

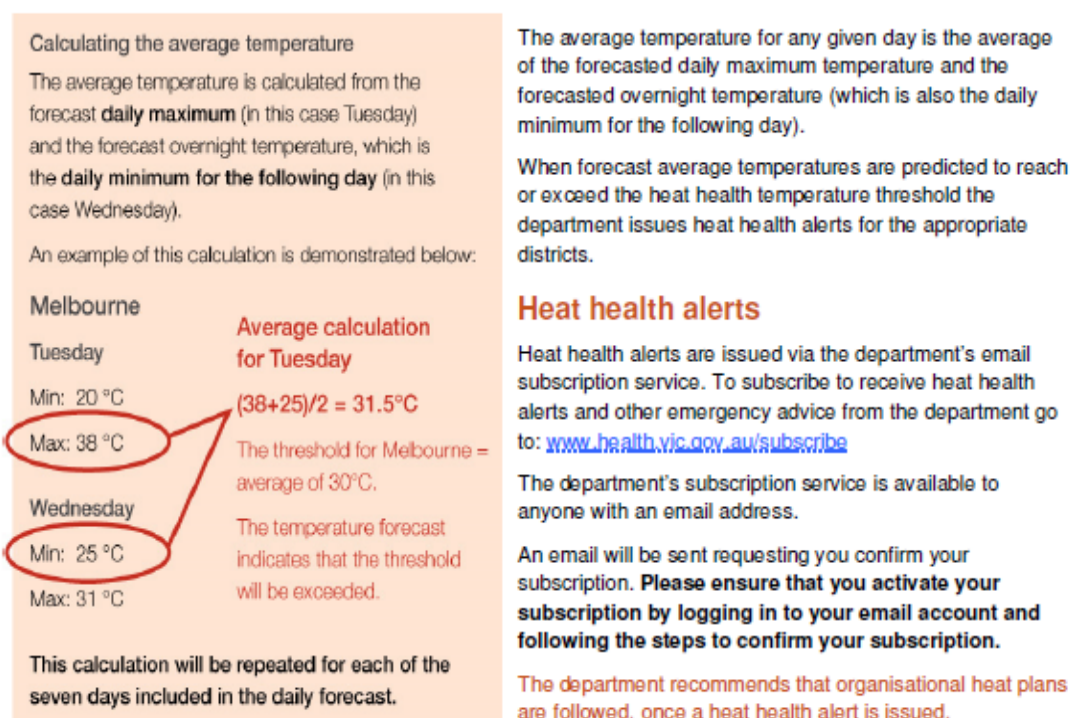


Figure 2: Example calculation of the daily average temperature

in their care from the impact of extreme heat, particularly those most at risk.

The department may also consider other factors that may influence vulnerability, such as very high maximum or minimum temperatures and high temperatures over a prolonged consecutive period. High temperature alerts may be issued in these circumstances even if the average temperature threshold is not exceeded. Prolonged high temperatures below threshold levels can still impact on health.

Where possible, heat health alerts will be issued 3-4 days prior to forecast extreme heat conditions providing alert recipients with an early warning. Even though the department will be monitoring forecast temperatures across the state, it is important for local councils and other organisations to continue to monitor local conditions. It may be necessary for local councils to activate heat plans in the absence of a heat health alert being issued. Council contacts are encouraged to monitor local conditions using the Bureau of Meteorology at: www.bom.gov.au

Further information about the extreme heat and the alert system is available on the Health website at: www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat

The department produces a range of educational resources that are available at: www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heatwave-community-resources

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 761 874, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email: extreme.weather@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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Available at: www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat

The average temperature for any given day is the average of the forecasted daily maximum temperature and the forecasted overnight temperature (which is also the daily minimum for the following day).

When forecast average temperatures are predicted to reach or exceed the heat health temperature threshold the department issues heat health alerts for the appropriate districts.

Heat health alerts

Heat health alerts are issued via the department's email subscription service. To subscribe to receive heat health alerts and other emergency advice from the department go to: www.health.vic.gov.au/subscribe

The department's subscription service is available to anyone with an email address.

An email will be sent requesting you confirm your subscription. **Please ensure that you activate your subscription by logging in to your email account and following the steps to confirm your subscription.**

The department recommends that organisational heat plans are followed, once a heat health alert is issued.

People in the general community should take action to prepare for extreme heat to protect themselves and those

Appendix 3 After Action Review (AAR) Process

Local debriefing using the After Action Review (AAR) process is a way to debrief your teams at the end of a shift or incident.

By identifying and addressing the issues as soon as possible after an event, we are able to deal with them immediately while the details are still fresh in our minds.

The AAR is the primary tool for incorporating the days action's or day's events into the learning cycle, helping us to improve our performance.

AAR:

- Provides practice for communication and for conflict resolution between team members.
- Provides a place to establish, emphasize and reinforce group norms.
- Provides a forum for determining any success and failures.
- Assists in establishing a common perception of events throughout the shift / incident.
- Is not a critique, the emphasis is on the issues NOT the personalities.

What is an AAR?

1. What was planned?

What were the goals and objectives?

- Incident Plan
- Goals of individuals
- Team goals
- Additional unstated goals

2. What really happened?

Discover the events of the day through the team's eyes. Collectively they probably know what happened but each individual may not.

3. Why did it happen?

Find the root causes behind identified successes and failures. It is important to remember, the AAR focuses on WHAT, not who.

4. What can we do better next time?

Once you have identified the root causes, develop remedies that concentrate on improvement strategies.

A local debrief using AAR does not replace other kinds of formal debrief that might be held sometime after the incident, but is a valuable tool to identify key issues.

<p>Four simple steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct the AAR at the end of the shift or incident. You may choose to use the form below for your record. 2. Implement any improvements that are within your responsibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. If there are any key issues that can be immediately actioned by others, communicate these through the appropriate channels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Note any other key issues for input into a formal debrief (if held) or submit them to the appropriate people.
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What was planned?	What really happened?	Why did it happen?	What can we do better next time?

Incident _____	Date _____	Prepared by _____
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Appendix 4 Glossary Terms and Abbreviations

Terms		
Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Act	N/A	Relates to Acts of Parliament State or Federal
Agency	N/A	Means a Government agency or a non-Government agency.
Command	N/A	The direction of members and resources of an agency in the performance of the organisation's roles and tasks. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement within an agency. Command relates to agencies and operates vertically within an agency.
Control	N/A	The overall direction of response activities in an emergency situation. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency response plan, and causes with it the responsibility for tasking and coordinating other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across agencies.
Control Agency	N/A	The agency identified in State Emergency Response Plan which is primarily responsible for responding to a specified emergency.
Coordination	N/A	The bringing together of agencies and elements to ensure effective response to emergencies and is primarily concerned with the systematic acquisition and application of resources (agency, manpower and equipment) in accordance with the requirements imposed by the emergency or emergencies.
Emergency	N/A	Emergency means an emergency due to the actual or imminent occurrence of an event which in any way endangers or threatens to endanger the safety or health of any person in Victoria or which destroys or damages, or threatens to destroy or damage any property in Victoria, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing: an earthquake, flood, windstorm or other natural event; a fire; an explosion; a road accident or any other accident; a plague or an epidemic; a warlike act, whether directed at Victoria or a part of Victoria or at any other State or Territory of the Commonwealth; or a hijack, siege or riot.

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Emergency Relief	N/A	Relief is the provision of immediate life support and human needs of persons affected by, or responding to, an emergency.
Recovery	N/A	A recovery agency is an agency or person which assists individuals, families and communities to attain a proper level of functioning, by providing information, specialist services and resources, and may include Commonwealth, State and Local government and non-government agencies.
Relief Centres	N/A	Centres established to provide groups of persons with any or all of the services, of the functional areas of Emergency Relief.

Abbreviations		
Abbreviation	Term	Explanation
AAR	After Action Review	See Appendix 3
AV	Ambulance Victoria	Statutory provider of pre-hospital emergency care and ambulance services in Victoria.
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology	Agency of the Australian Government responsible for providing weather services to Australia and surrounding areas.
CFA	Country Fire Authority	Volunteer and career fire service that CFA provides firefighting and emergency services to rural areas and regional towns in Victoria, and to portions of the outer suburban areas of Melbourne.
DHHS	Department of Health & Human Services	Government department responsible for health, ambulance services, families and children, youth affairs, public housing, disability, ageing, mental health and sport policy.
EMLO	Emergency Management Liaison Officer	An Officer designated by his agency to represent it and who is empowered to commit or to arrange the commitment of resources of the agency to the countering of emergencies, and to provide a communication link with his agency.
EMMV	Emergency Management Manual Victoria	Contains policy and planning documents for emergency management in Victoria
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria	State Government Agency responsible for leading emergency management on Victoria
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan	Municipal Plan for prevention of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur in the Swan Hill Rural City Council municipality.

Abbreviation	Term	Explanation
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	Committee Appointed by Council develops and maintains the MEMP.
MEMT	Municipal Emergency Management Team	Consists MERO, MRM. MERC. Other as required including CEO, OH&S
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator	The member of Victoria Police appointed as an emergency response coordinator for each municipal district is known as a MERC.
MERO	Municipal Emergency Resource Officer	The person appointed by Council and is responsible for the coordination of municipal owned or controlled resources in emergencies.
MPRC	Media & PR Coordinator	Council employee with responsibility in coordination of the Communications and Media Team
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager	The person appointed by Council and is responsible for the coordination of municipal recovery activities after emergencies.
OH&S Manager	Occupational Health & Safety	The person appointed by Council to Manage the safety & health in relation to occupation of employees, volunteers and contractors
PHRSC	Environmental Health Coordinator	Council Employee responsible for Environmental Health

Appendix 5 Key Stakeholders

Aged Care Facilities

A list of Aged Care Facilities is held on the Vulnerable Facilities Register with Council and is available via the MERO.

Community Health Services / Hospitals

- Swan Hill & District Health Services.
- Robinvale & District Health Services.
- Mallee Track Health & Community Services – 28 Britt St Ouyen.

Child Care Facilities / Kindergartens

A list of Child Care Facilities and Kindergartens is held on the Vulnerable Facilities Register with Council and is available via the MERO.

Schools

A list of schools is held on the Vulnerable Facilities Register with Council and is available via the MERO.

Retirement Villages

A list of Retirement Villages is held on the Vulnerable Facilities Register with Council and is available via the MERO.

Accommodation Providers

A list of accommodation providers are held by the Visitor Information Centre Visitor services & Booking Officer.

Tourism Operators

A list of tourism operators is held by the Visitor information centre and obtainable from the Visitor services & Booking Officer.

Appendix 6

Key Message / Resources

Resources for communicating with the community.

- <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heatwave-community-resources>
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/council-media-kit-survive-the-heat>
- <http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au>

Heat Health Alerts

- <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heat-health-alert-status>

Weather

- <http://www.bom.gov.au/>