2023

# Southern Grampians Municipal Emergency Management Plan

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj people, the traditional custodians of the land where we live and work.

We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

Southern Grampians Shire is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique and cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 AUTHORITY

In 2020, the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018 amended the Emergency Management Act 2013 (EM Act 2013) to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the State, regional and municipal levels; and create an obligation for a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria, including the alpine resorts which, for the purposes of the act, are taken to be a municipal district. Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry, or personal expertise to the task of emergency management planning for the municipal district.

This plan has been prepared in accordance with and complies with the requirements of the EM Act 2013 including having regard to the guidelines issued under section 77, Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

## 1.2 PLANNING & ASSURANCE

A Statement of Assurance has been prepared and submitted to the REMPC pursuant to EM Act 2013 (S60AG). This Plan is approved by the Barwon Southwest Regional Emergency Management Committee (BSW-REMP). This Plan comes into effect until superseded by an approved and published updated.

## 1.3 REVIEW

To ensure the plan provides for a current integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to emergency management and is effective, it is to be reviewed at least every three years or as required.

Urgent update of this Plan is permitted if there is significant risk that life or property will be endangered if the plan is not updated (EM Act 2013 s60AM). Urgent updates come

into effect when published on the municipal council website and remain in force for a maximum period of three months.

This Plan will be reviewed not later than December 2026. This Plan is current at the time of publication and remains in effect until modified, superseded or withdrawn.

Refer to Appendix 1 for document administration.

## 1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Southern Grampians MEMP is to document agreed emergency management arrangements for the prevention of, preparedness for, response, relief and recovery from emergencies that could impact on the municipality and its communities.

The broad objectives of the MEMP are to:

- identify hazards and evaluate potential risks that may impact upon the municipality.
- implement measures to prevent or reduce the likelihood or consequences of emergencies.
- in collaboration, emergency services organisations, agencies and stakeholders will manage arrangements for the utilisation and implementation of resources available for use in prevention, preparedness, response, relief, and recovery to emergencies.
- manage support that may be provided to or from adjoining municipalities.
- provide assistance to meet the essential needs of individuals, families, and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.
- assist communities affected by emergencies to recover following an emergency; and complement other local, regional, and state planning emergency arrangements.

## 1.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

The MEMP provides for an integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to emergency management at the municipal level. The EM Act 2013 requires the MEMP to contain provisions providing for the mitigation of, response to relief and recovery from emergencies (before, during and after), and to specify the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management.

## 1.5 TRAINING AND EXERCISING

The arrangements in the SEMP require the MEMP to be exercised at least once a year. Exercises are a valuable tool to test the arrangements set out in the MEMP.

The MEMP Committee will plan and undertake an annual exercise in either a desktop format or a practical exercise based on a hypothetical emergency event. Any improvements identified during these exercises will form part of the MEMP review or it may be decided by the MEMP Committee that the MEMP be updated immediately.

Exercises are structured to provide the following benefits:

- provide the opportunity for members and stakeholders to test their procedures and skills in simulated emergency situations.
- provide an opportunity for the local emergency management community to work together, build capacity and capability.
- test the plan and identify areas for continuous improvement; and
- use learnings and outcomes to update and improve the MEMP and sup-plans.

* *Scenario conducted in April 2024, included a desktop scenario with SGSC Executive Leadership Team and staff involved in emergency management. CFA & Vic Pol. facilitated scenario. The learning outcomes achieved were updates to legislation, functions of Council in an emergency and strengthening SGSC relationships with emergency management agencies outside the MEMPC.*

# 2. CONTEXT

The Southern Grampians Shire extends across southwest Victoria, from the Southern Grampians in the northeast to Penshurst and Mount Napier in the south, and west to the Glenelg River. The Shire covers an area of 6,652 square kilometres and includes significant areas of public land in national and state parks. The Shire is rural in nature, serviced by the city of Hamilton which is the main service centre and accommodates over half the Shire's population of 16,1001. Other towns include Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Penshurst, and Tarrington. Much of the rural area is used for agriculture with some mining.

## 2.1 THE REGION AT A GLANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| Total land area | 6,652 km$^2$ |
| Population | 16,100 approx. |
| Tenure | Approx. 17% public land (parks and reserves) and 83% private land (agricultural, residential and other) |
| River Basins | Glenelg Basin and small parts of the Portland Coast and Hopkins Basin |
| Major Waterways | Glenelg, Grange Burn and Wannon |
| Traditional Custodians | Bunganditj, Gunditjmara, Wotjobaluk and Tjap Wurrung Aboriginal people |
| Wetlands of national importance | Lake Linlithgow Wetlands |
| Significant natural landscapes or bioregions | The Victorian Volcanic Plains, the Dundas Tablelands, and the Grampians |
| Land use | Primary agricultural production and conservation are the major land uses in the Shire, followed by forestry and extractive industry |
| Lagest contributors to the regional economy | The Shire is world renowned for producing fine wool, but the primary industry sector now includes a greater proportion of large-scale cropping, hay production, meat production (lamb and beef) and horticulture. Significant growth is expected in agro-forestry, mining and renewable energy |

## 2.2 INDUSTRY

Agriculture, with its associated industries, is the largest employment sector with this intensive agricultural production contributing significantly to the Victorian and Australian economies. Processing, manufacturing, research and development, engineering, retail, tourism, aged and health care services and education are also important employment sectors across the Shire.

## 2.3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The top five cultural identities in Southern Grampians Shire are Australian, English, Scottish, Irish and German. English is the main language spoken at home with other minority languages identified as Malayalam, Mandarin, Afrikaans, German and Thai. People who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander make up 2.3% of the population.

## 2.4 VULNERABLE PERSONS

Vulnerable Persons Register can be accessed by Victoria Police during emergencies for evacuation purposes.

During an emergency, or when there is an imminent threat of an emergency, special consideration must be given to the evacuation of vulnerable people in the community.

Vulnerability is contextual. An individual's overall vulnerability to any particular situation sits somewhere within a continuum related to a mixture of fixed and temporary influences. These influences include geographically located risks, infrastructure hazards, and socially located liabilities

The Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH), in conjunction with local government and other support agencies, will provide tailored advice to vulnerable people. This advice will include the need to develop personal safety plans with an emphasis on leaving early and identification of appropriate support to do so.

The Vulnerable Persons in Emergency Policy has been developed by DFFH, to address key elements of Recommendation three of Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report relating to vulnerable people, and associated recommendations.

## 2.5 VULNERABLE PERSONS REGISTER

For the current vulnerable persons register please contact the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO). Please also refer to appendix – for leave early plan in case of emergency event. For a list of all primary and secondary schools within the Shire please refer to Appendix 1.

The Southern Grampians holds significant environmental and landscape assets, that are important for their ecosystem values, as well as being an important component of the Shire's tourism industry and liveability. The natural environment of the Shire consists of outstanding features such as the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park, the Glenelg and Wannon Rivers, ancient geological forms and mountain peaks, and fertile farming land interspersed with magnificent red gums and diverse grasslands that define the landscape values of the area.

The Southern Grampians Shire lies almost entirely within the Glenelg River Basin. The Glenelg River is the largest river in south-west Victoria and contains river reaches in some of the best condition in the broader region. The basin contains more than 150 threatened to near-threatened species and ecological communities and falls within one of 15 listed 'biodiversity hotspots' in Australia, and one of only two in Victoria. Significant tributaries of the Glenelg River within the Shire include the Wannon, Chetwynd and Wando rivers. Other important waterway and wetland assets that have been identified as being exceptional or very highly significant include:

- Wannon Falls Scenic Reserve
- Fulhams Reserve
- Mathers Creek, Downstream of Cameron's Road
- Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserve
- Lake Linlithgow Wetlands listed under the Australian Directory of Important
- Wetlands
- Bryans Swamp
- Gooseneck Swamp.

The Red Gum swamp community and Basalt Plains grassland community are listed as threatened ecological communities under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988*. The Plains Grasslands and Volcanic Eucalypt Grassy Woodlands are protected by the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. These EPBC listed natural temperate grassland communities of the Victorian Volcanic Plain are among the most under-represented ecosystems in Australia's conservation estate and are recognised nationally as among the most threatened vegetation types. They are highly fragmented and together are estimated to have been reduced by more than 95% of their pre-European extent. In addition to threatened ecological communities, the Shire is also home to several rare and threatened fauna species.

## 2.5 CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

For a list of Southern Grampians Shire critical infrastructure please refer to, appendix 3.

## 2.6 HISTORY OF EMERGENCIES

Southern Grampians Shire is prone to bushfire in the grasslands and flooding near the townships of Hamilton and Coleraine.  For a list of past emergencies see, appendix 7.



**Figure 1 Coleraine Flood 2016**

## 3. PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

### 3.1 VICTORIAN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This plan supports holistic and coordinated emergency management arrangements within the region. It is consistent with and contextualises the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP). Ther REMP is a subordinate plan to the SEMP and the MEMP is a subordinate plan to the REMP.



**Figure 2 Outlines this plan's hierarchy. This Plan Should be read in conjunction with the SEMP and the BSW REMP**

## 3.2 MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE (MEMPC)

The Southern Grampians Shire MEMPC has been established under the Emergency Management Legislation 2018 (EMLA Act) and the Emergency Management Act 2013 (EM Act 2013). The MEMPC is one component of a broader structure that enables appropriate planning, response and recovery activities and arrangements at local and regional levels. Sub-committees and Working Groups are appointed to take on the responsibility of planning for fire management, flood and dam safety, and relief and recovery. The MEMPC will also work with other agencies that are represented at regional level when required and other agencies not represented on the MEMPC such as, Traditional Owners Corporations, where relevant.

See Appendix 4 for the Committee Membership. *Note this is not available to the public.*

## 3.3 SUBPLANS AND COMPLEMENTARY PLANS

All sub-plans are multi-agency plans and may be hazard specific where the consequences are likely to be significant. All sub-plans to this Plan are subject to the same preparation, consultation, assurance, approval, and publication requirements as this Plan, as outlined in Part 6A of the EM Act 2013. The MEMPC have determined the following sub-plans are required:

- Fire Management Plan

- Flood Plan

- Livestock Standstill Plan

- Animal Welfare Plan

- Pandemic

Complimentary Plans are prepared by industry/sectors or agencies for emergencies that do not fall within the Act Part 6A. They are often prepared under other legislation, governance, or statutory requirements for a specific purpose.

Complementary plans do not form part of this plan and are not subject to approval, consultation, and other requirements under the Act. A list of

complementary plans that have significance to the coordinated and integrated emergency management arrangement in the shire are listed below.

- *Penshurst Community Emergency Management Plan (in progress)*

- *Opportunity to explore cross-border arrangements with neighbouring Councils.*

Section 60AI (2) of the EM Act 2013 allows the MEMPC and Emergency Management Victoria to exclude information from this published that is related to critical infrastructure, personal information or information that is of a commercially sensitive nature. A short summary of the restricted information is included here, including who the contact point is should the user of this plan seek access to this information.

| Restricted Information | Reason for Restriction | Responsible Agency | Contact Point |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vulnerable Persons Register | Personal Information | Municipal Council | Victoria Police |
| MEMPC TOR | Agency Representative Contact Information | Municipal Council | Southern Grampians Shire Council |

## 4. MITIGATION

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Government and non-government organisations, commercial enterprises and community members are all expected to undertake mitigation measures within their areas of responsibility, for example:

- Private businesses prepare business continuity plans

- Aged care and health facilities have emergency management plans

- Farmers have appropriate fire control measures at harvest

- Fire agencies will conduct strategic controlled burn programs, see the CFA website for a list of preventative measures.

- Council implements relevant planning, prevention and mitigation measures within its authority, responsibility and policies

- Community members have personal emergency plans

- Organisations and individuals have appropriate levels of insurance.

### 4.2 HAZARD, EXPOSURE, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Future vulnerabilities will include larger landholdings managed by consortiums and serviced by contractors leading to declining populations across the Shire.

This demographic, combined with an ageing population, has seen previously robust rural communities replaced by smaller, older more vulnerable communities isolated from services. The shift in the population may reduce emergency services volunteer capacity and resources potentially leading to delayed suppression activities in rural areas.

An increase in individuals purchasing property for investment purposes has resulted in more absentee landowners. These landowners traditionally have less understanding of fuel and fire management requirements, little engagement with the community and live externally to the municipality. This limits their capacity and

ability to undertake regular fuel management works and participate in local community networks.

As predicted by the Victorian Government's climate change projections, an increase in temperature can be expected in the future. This escalation in temperature will potentially increase the likelihood and frequency of heatwaves across the municipality. Increased heatwaves in conjunction with an ageing population could be a cause for concern.

## 4.3 RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

To complement the emergency management process and, as a means of identifying, minimising, or eliminating risks within the municipality, the MEMPC is tasked with carrying out an initial assessment and subsequent reviews to identify existing and potential risks.

The process used is CERA, based upon Risk Management Standard ISO 31000:2018 facilitated by the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES). It addresses context, community profile, and vulnerable elements, risk identification, analysis and rating, culminating with a range of suggested treatment options for each risk. The process is fully documented, and the recommended treatment options are presented to Council for consideration and action. The process is subject to minor reviews annually and a major review at least once every 3 years, between audits. (Cera Risk Assessment)

## 4.4 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The MEMPC and key stakeholders from the major emergency service/support organisations identified the top risks in the municipal area. These risks are reviewed at the MEPC meeting annually. Any changes to hazards and controls are

reflected and actioned as soon as identified and assessed. A full risk assessment is undertaken every three years, led by the MEMPC or after a major event. The outputs of the assessment process are used to inform the MEMP, introduce risk action plans and ensure that communities are aware of and better informed about hazards and the associated emergency risks that may affect them.

## 5. RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The SEMP defines Emergency Response as the action taken immediately before, during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs. This section outlines the Southern Grampians Shire arrangements for response to an emergency which is consistent with the SEMP.

### 5.2 STRATEGIC CONTROL PRIORITIES

Emergency response arrangements provide the structure for establishment of appropriate resources to manage emergencies throughout the State including additional resource requirements and escalation strategies for example requesting assistance from State and Commonwealth. Emergency events are categorised using three parameters:

- Operational Tier
- Class of Emergency
- Classification Victorian emergency response management operates at three tiers:
- Incident
- Regional
- State

Emergencies are managed at the appropriate operational tier until the event may require escalation to a higher level. Response arrangements are largely hazard-based, and Control Agencies are responsible for developing and maintaining hazard-specific response plans, as sub-plans to the SEMP. Sub-plans include arrangements for readiness, the establishment of control, incident management systems, relief, escalation, and de-escalation. They also include arrangements for communications, coordination, consequence management and community connections.

## 5.2.1 CLASSIFICATION OF EMERGENCIES

Classes of emergency as defined in the Emergency Management Act 2013 relate to the 'type' of emergency.

These are:

Class 1- a major fire or any other major emergency for which the Fire Rescue Victoria, the Country Fire Authority or the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority is the control agency under the State Emergency Management Plan

Class 2- a major emergency which is not a Class 1 emergency or a warlike act or act of terrorism or a hi-jack, siege, or riot.

Class 3- a warlike act or terrorist act, a hijack, siege or may also be referred to as security emergencies.

## 5.3 COMMAND, CONTROL, COORDINATION

Victoria bases its emergency response arrangements on the management functions of Command, Control and Coordination

## 5.3.1 COMMAND

Command is the internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency, operating vertically within the agency. Each agency appoints agency commanders to supervise their personnel and ensure they are working safely. The "chain of command" refers to an agency's organisational hierarchy that defines the accountability of people or positions and identifies the link between individuals and their supervisor.

An agency might formally agree for a person from another agency to supervise their personnel for a fixed period during emergencies, however, this does not replace the home agency's responsibility to their personnel.

Line of Control



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **State** | Emergency Management Commissioner | |
| | ↓ | |
| | State Response Controller | |
| **Regional** | ↓ | |
| | Regional Controller (where appointed) | |
| **Incident** | ↓ | |
| | Incident Controller | |
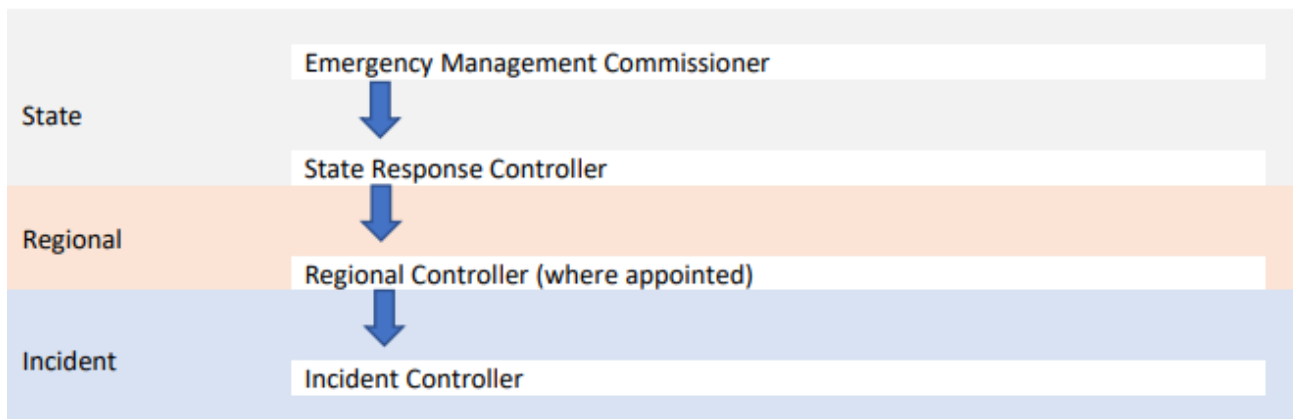
## 5.3.2 CONTROL

Control is the overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies. Authority for control is established in legislation or an emergency response plan and carries with it the responsibility for tasking other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation. The "line of control" refers to the line of supervision for those appointed to perform the control function. For the emergencies covered by the scope of this document, the line of control is shown in Figure 2.

## 5.3.3 COORDINATION

Coordination is the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure an effective response to and recovery from emergencies. The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for response coordination at the state tier supported by the Senior Police Liaison Officer, while Victoria Police is responsible for the coordination function at the regional and municipal tiers.

## 5.4 INCIDENT CONTROL CENTRE

Incident management and control will be set up and activated by the controlling agency at a predetermined ICC. In some cases, it may be initially set up from a police station or predetermined municipal facility.

An Emergency Management Team (EMT) communicates through the ICC when an Alert is issued. The team comprises the MERC, Control Agencies, and the MEMO. Its role and function are to assess agency readiness, which includes their capacity for deployment and determine the extent of resources available locally. The ICC operates using the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). AIIMS provides a management system that facilitates the coordination of all activities, by all parties involved, in the resolution of any emergency.

The nearest ICC (level three) for Southern Grampians Shire has two locations, depending on the location of the emergency. ICC's are located in both Horsham and Warrnambool. See, figure below for ICC Boundaries.

Note: The ICC is not open to the public.
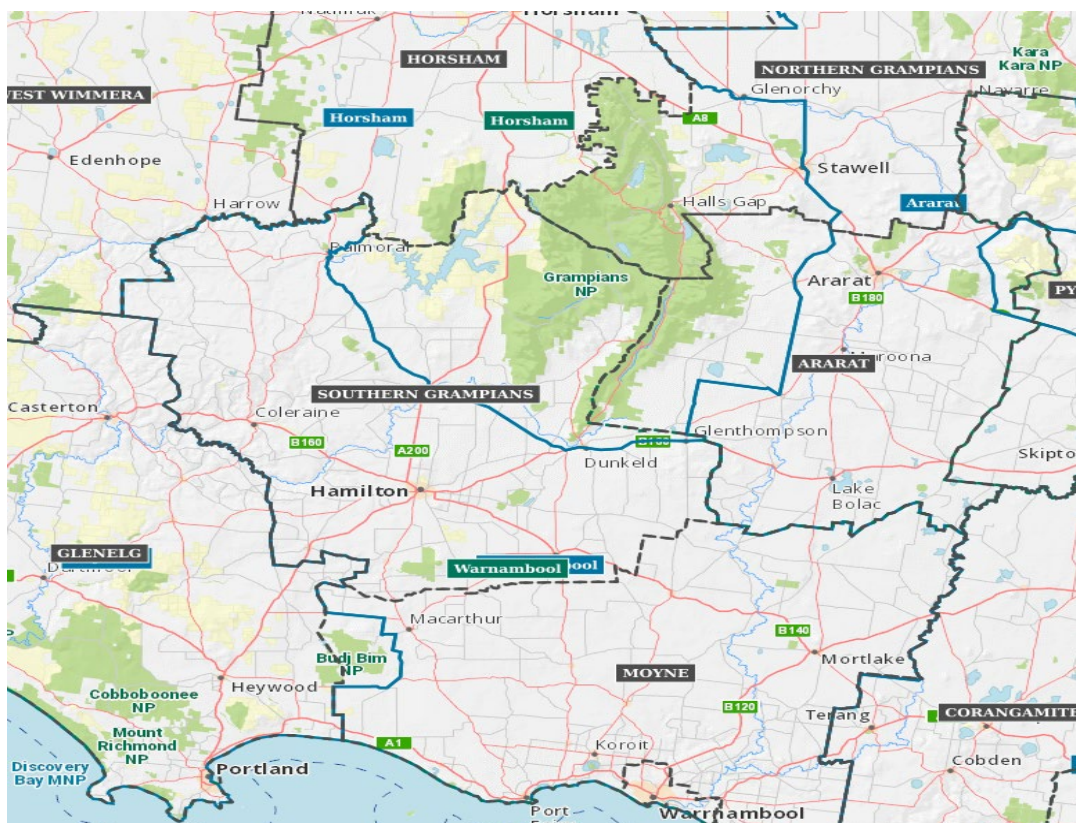
Activation of local arrangements are outlined within the MEMP Sub-Plans and complementary plans. Each individual agency has activation procedures, and these will be activated in line with the state sub-plans. An Incident Management Team (IMT) or Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) will be established as part of any emergency situation. Early notification to other agencies is essential to enable them to implement their own emergency response arrangements to support the coordinated approach to incident management. This is especially important when there is a likelihood that the event could escalate or be protracted. The emergency arrangements will be activated in four phases:

- Alert / Notification: *Control agency notifies IEMT that an emergency may require resources and keeps them informed about the situational awareness and conditions of the incident.*
- Standby: *As the threat becomes imminent, members of the relevant agencies are placed on standby so they can act immediately if required.*
- Activation: *The operational phase of an incident where agencies are committed to contain or control the emergency.*
- Stand down: *Once the response to the emergency has been completed all participating agencies are advised to stand down. Initial information will generally come from the control agency to the MERC who advises the MEMO and the level of response will depend on the nature and extent of the emergency. The planning for specific response, relief and recovery activities are detailed in the subplans, identified in item 3.3 of this document.*

Control Agencies are responsible for all costs involved in that agency responding to an emergency. Government Agencies supporting the Control Agency are expected to defray all costs from their normal budgets. When a Control Agency requests services and supplies (for example, food and water) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the Control Agency will be responsible for costs incurred.

A requesting agency will be responsible for all associated costs for the provision of resources to support the response to an emergency event. Council is able to keep track of resources distributed by recording their provision in Council's emergency operating system CrisisWorks.

Municipal Councils are responsible for the cost of Municipal Emergency Operating Centre (MEOC) setup costs and emergency relief services and provisions, however, depending on the magnitude of the emergency, some financial assistance may be available for prevention, response or recovery activities. All expenditure is to be authorised by the MEMO or MRM in accordance with the normal Council financial arrangements and recorded and logged for potential cost recovery.

Municipal employees from other Councils who are asked and authorised to assist during a municipal emergency are to claim staff costs through their Council finance systems which in turn may claim against the Council requesting assistance.

Depending on the magnitude of the emergency, some government financial assistance may be available for prevention, response and recovery activities through The Victorian Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Program (NDFA) and/or Australian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), both of which, are accessed through the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance by contacting The Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Team (ndfa@emv.vic.gov.au). NDFA should be contacted as soon as practicable after an event to register a potential application. Further, for biosecurity events, there is funding available under the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement for listed animal health emergencies and Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed for listed plant emergencies.

## 5.7 Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Place of Last Resort (NSP-BPLR)

An NSP-BPLR is a place of last resort when all other bushfire plans have failed. Appendix 6: Southern Grampians Shire NSP-BPLR, includes a list of sites.

## 5.8 RESOURCE SHARING PROTOCOLS

Assistance may be sought from the MAV Protocol for Inter Council Emergency Resource Sharing. The Southern Grampians Shire is a signatory to both this protocol.

Lessons management involves the identification and learning of lessons captured through assurance activities (including debriefing, monitoring and reviews) occurring before, during and after emergencies.

The Municipal or Regional Emergency Response Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the Control Agency for the emergency organises as operational debrief with participating agencies as soon as practicable after cessation of response activities.

The purpose of a debriefing is to:

- ensure participating agencies understand what happened during an operation or emergency, and
- identify areas of improvement and highlight areas that were handled well, in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of future operations or emergencies.

Victoria Police is responsible for managing evacuation in Victoria. Evacuation is a risk management strategy that involves the movement of people to a safer location and return of them at an appropriate time. As with emergency response activities, the main priority when deciding to undertake evacuation is the protection of life. There are five stages in the evacuation process, these are outlined by the Australian Disaster Resilience Institute:

STAGES OF EVACUATION

1 DECISION
2 WARNING
3 WITHDRAWAL
4 SHELTER
5 RETURN
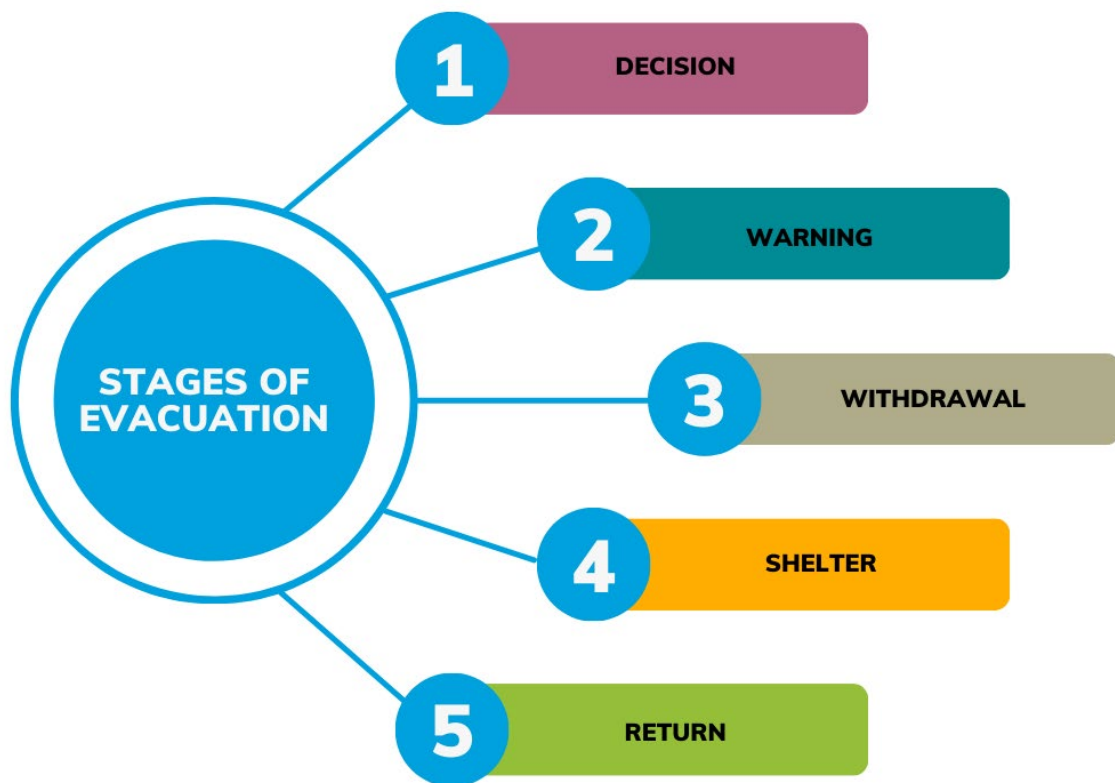
In Victoria, evacuation is largely voluntary. The Incident Controller makes a recommendation to evacuate, and it is the choice of individuals as to how they respond to the recommendation. However, circumstances, legislation provides some emergency service personnel with authority to remove people from areas or prohibit their entry.

Special consideration must be given to the evacuation of vulnerable people in the community. Vulnerable people and those who may care for them, including facilities such as hospitals, aged care facilities, educational facilities, and prisons, are likely to need more time, resources, support and assistance to evacuate safely.

Further information on evacuation can be found at Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) – Evacuation for Major Emergencies (JO3.12) available from EM-COP.

Council may be involved in assisting with the relocation/evacuation operation. Council's Municipal Recovery Manager plays a lead role in relocation/evacuation operations. In the first instance, it is preferable for residents/evacuees to self-evacuate to a safe neighbour's property or to a friend or relatives place of residence.

When Emergency Relief Centres are required, Council is the lead agency to establish relief centres supported by Police and agencies. These centres provide temporary short-term shelter as well as an avenue to provide the community with information, and, if needed, personal support.

Red Cross will assume the role of registration of relocated/evacuated people on behalf of Victoria Police, responsible for accessing the Vulnerable Persons Register during an evacuation.

An alternative to evacuation in some circumstances may be to shelter in a suitable home, building, structure, or other safe area. Sheltering in place should be considered as an alternative when the associated risks with evacuation are greater than the risks of sheltering in place.

Sheltering in place, however, will often not be without risk. Agencies should consider the risks posed to people when sheltering in place and provide advice to them about how to best minimise these. Agencies, in conjunction with their local planning committees, should work closely with their local community to provide advice and alternatives regarding the suitability of sheltering in place during an emergency.

Some considerations for agencies and people considering taking shelter in place are:

- the nature of the emergency
- quality of the shelter or safer area
- the likely duration of the emergency
- the need for emergency supplies such as water, food and medical supplies
- the need for designated shelter managers, if applicable
- the contents of pre-arranged plans
- the age and health of the affected persons
- timely and relevant communication strategies.

Individuals and communities have a responsibility to prepare themselves in case of an emergency. To assist them in the preparedness and during emergencies, the official emergency services web site for Victoria is https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/. It is a single all-emergencies website for Victorians. It is Victoria's primary website for incident information and warnings. Vic Emergency provides a single source of information and advice to help people prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

The VicEmergency website and app brings together data received from calls to Triple Zero (000) as well as emergency information from agencies and departments including:

- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Health
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Fire Rescue Victoria
- Forest Fire Management Victoria
- Life Saving Victoria and
- Victoria State Emergency Service

The provision of information to the broader public/community, including those attending an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC), is vitally important to their capacity to understand what is happening, and to assist them in making informed decisions during a time of crisis. Each agency manages community information through their own social media channels. Community meetings may form part of the communications strategy for the event and coordinated by the response agency.

ABC 774 is the National Emergency Broadcaster.

Information can also be received via local broadcasters:

- 3AH (AM 981)
- 3WM (AM 1080)
- Juice (FM 89.3)
- 3YB (AM 882)
- 3RPH (FM 107.5)

- 3WBC (FM 97.9)

## 6. RELIEF

Emergency Relief is the provision of essential needs to individuals, families and communities in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. Southern Grampians Shire is responsible for relief coordination at the municipal level. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Emergency Relief Victoria are responsible for relief and recovery coordination at the regional and state level respectively.

Emergency Management agencies with relief responsibilities incorporate the principles of relief as outlined in the [SEMP](#). Relief is focused on consequence management and should consider the principles of relief.

Relief encompasses a range of services such as, from the initial mobilisation following a disaster, to the achievement of outcomes, recovery is a long process that requires planning in phases and across multiple levels. These are:

- Community
- Municipal
- state, and
- national

Relief and recovery phases assist in coordinating timelines for activities, which can scale up or down according to the different needs of the emergency.
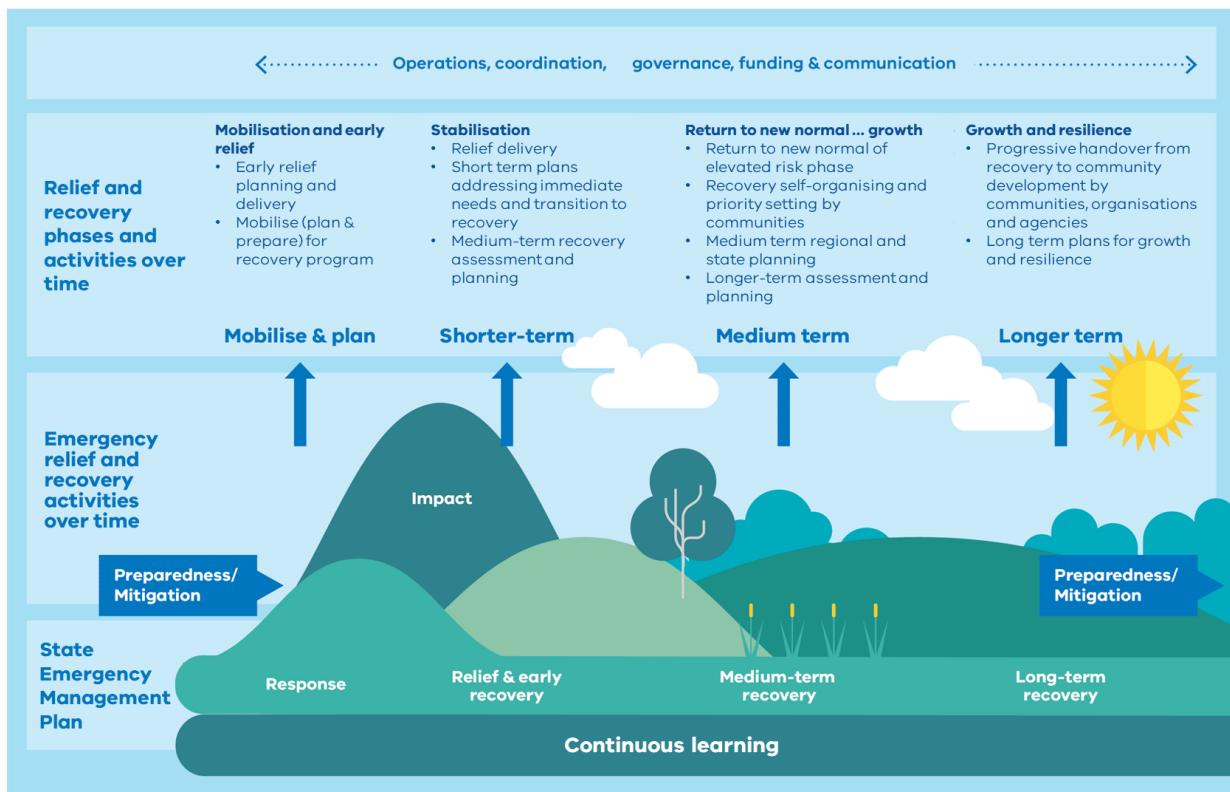
**Figure 3 Phases of Relief & Recovery, Emergency Recovery Victoria**

The level and type of relief required to support affected communities will be determined in consultation with the Incident Controller, MERC, MEMO and MRM. The MRM will coordinate the activation of the selected relief team and respective centre or services as depicted by the needs assessment.

Not all requests for relief will stem from major emergencies. Relief services may also be provided as a result of incidents such as a house fire, over floor flooding or storm damage where there is an immediate need for emergency relief to mitigate hardship. Reports of a non-major emergency may be initiated from a range of sources (e.g. control agency, Victoria Police, MEMO, affected individuals, hospitals and health care centres, ESTA). The agency will notify the MEMO to ensure coordination of relief services at the local level.

## 6.2 ESCALATION

A formal request for escalation of relief will be made if the emergency event increases in complexity; exceeds the capacity and/or capability of the Southern Grampians Shire Council to respond; or an emergency has affected multiple municipalities within a region or multiple regions. The decision to escalate will be undertaken in consultation with the Incident Controller, MERC, MEMO, MRM and the Regional Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Escalation of relief should build on existing local arrangement rather than replacing them. Resources to support Council in its response to a local event may be obtained through the MAV Resource Sharing Protocol or through neighbouring councils.

## 6.3 RELIEF PLANNING

SGSC has the lead role in ensuring coordination of relief activities during an emergency. They are supported by a number of Recovery Support Agencies (RecSAs) including Australian Red Cross, VCC-EM, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Health and the Salvation Army. Together these agencies deliver services such as:

- community information (public meetings, newsletters, information sheets, advertising, and  media requests)
- temporary or emergency shelter and Emergency Relief Centres (ERC)
- food, water, and immediate material-aid
- psychosocial support and health and medical assistance
- health and medical assistance
- financial assistance
- reconnecting families and friends
- animal welfare

- providing advice and referral regarding goodwill, donated goods and services and spontaneous volunteering

A critical component of relief is connecting affected persons during and following an emergency. Victoria Police are responsible for the activation of Register.Find.Reunite and will activate Australian Red Cross to manage this service on their behalf.

Municipal Councils are the lead for housing displaced companion animals and lost/stray domestic animals, and this includes supporting domestic animals and their owners within an Emergency Relief Centre. The Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan defines animal welfare support services in relief. This includes livestock, companion animals and wildlife. Further information relating to domestic animals in emergencies is available through the Southern Grampians Shire Municipal Emergency Management Officer.

While it is recognised that recovery activities will have commenced shortly after impact, or preferably, simultaneously with response operations and run concurrently with same, there will be a termination of response activities and a hand over to recovery agencies. The Incident Controller, MERC and MRM should commence transition planning [from response to recovery] as soon as possible following the start of the emergency. The early notification of recovery agencies involved in the emergency will ensure a smooth transition of ongoing activities from response to recovery.

The Incident Controller, MERC and MRM should commence transition planning from response to recovery as soon as possible following the start of the emergency. While relief and recovery actions will already have commenced, there needs to be a formal cessation of response activities and handover to recovery agencies.

Issues to be considered for the timing of transition from response to recovery include:

- the nature of the emergency and what ongoing specialist resources are required.
- whether a recurring threat is likely to occur compounding the impact on the community.
- the extent of the impact on communities, as this may determine the length of the transition period.
- the level of loss/damage and the extent to which this has been validated (the stage of impact assessment reached e.g., if phasing into secondary/post impact stages may indicate transition requirements).
- the extent to which the community requires emergency relief services.
- the resources required for the activation of recovery arrangements.
- the transition agreement will be developed at the appropriate level between the response agency Incident Controller, MERC, MEMO, MRM, and the recovery agency coordinator (typically ERV).

If the emergency is of significant size the Regional Recovery Coordinator will lead the transition from response and relief to recovery. Further details around the arrangements for the transition from can be found in the SEMP on the Emergency Management Victoria [website](website)

## 7. RECOVERY

Recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency affected individuals and communities to reconnect and re-establish a level of functioning, coordination, and access to services. Recovery is part of emergency management which includes the broader components of prevention, preparedness and response. Planning for recovery is integral to emergency preparation and mitigation actions may be initiated as part of recovery. The Municipal Recovery arrangements for the municipal district of Southern Grampians have been developed in accordance with the Emergency Management Act 1986, Emergency Management Act 2013 and align to the SEMP, Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) and recovery planning across the Barwon South West Region.

Consideration will also be given to adapt the recovery framework as necessary to align with Emergency Recovery Victoria's Recovery Framework - Five Lines of Recovery:

- People and Wellbeing
- Aboriginal Culture and Healing
- Environment and Biodiversity
- Business and Economy
- Building and Infrastructure

### 7.1 RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

The Municipal Emergency Recovery Arrangements have been developed in accordance with the Emergency Management Act 1986, Emergency Management Act 2103 and align to the SEMP, Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) and the Regional Relief and Recovery Sub-plan. These arrangements apply to all emergencies that have an impact on the community.

The SEMP states that recovery is "the assisting of persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning."

Effective recovery from emergencies involves the coordination of a range of services provided by government, non-government organisations, community

organisations and the commercial sector. It should be focussed on community needs community-led and enable individuals, families, and the community to actively participate in their own recovery.  Community recovery planning should be guided by community priorities, local knowledge and existing community strengths and resilience.

Emergency recovery activities integrate with emergency response and relief activities and commence as soon as possible following the emergency. Recovery planning and identification of need should commence at the start of the event.

The National Principles for Disaster Recovery outlines the following Principles of Recovery: can be accessed through SEMP link https://www.emv.vic.gov.au

## 7.2 OBJECTIVES OF RECOVERY

Recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency affected individuals and communities to reconnect and re-establish a level of functioning, coordination, and access to services.

To achieve this objective, the cooperation and coordination of services between all levels of government, non-government organisations, community agencies and the private sector is critical to the process. Key considerations of the recovery arrangements include:

- General Principles of Recovery
- Recovery Planning and Preparedness
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities for lead and support agencies
- Developed Recovery Action plans
- Consideration for long term recovery

Recovery considerations typically fall under four environments that require coordination as part of the recovery process:

- Social,
- Economic
- Built and
- Natural

Consideration will also be given to adapt the recovery framework as necessary to align with Emergency Recovery Victoria's Recovery Framework - Five Lines of Recovery:

- People and Wellbeing
- Aboriginal Culture and Healing
- Environment and Biodiversity
- Business and Economy
- Building and Infrastructure

More information can be found in ERV's Recovery Framework 2023.

The four environments and their functional areas as described in the SEMP can be adapted to meet the needs of people and communities affected, such as consideration for Aboriginal Culture Healing and Recovery planning should consider ERV's fifth line of recovery, Aboriginal Culture and Healing. More information can be found by following the link to the Strategy for Aboriginal Community-led Recovery.

Escalation of recovery coordination may escalate from Council coordinated recovery to regional recovery rapidly or over time depending on the emergency context, capacity, recovery environment and community requirements. The following factors may indicate the need for escalation of recovery and formalised regional coordination arrangements:

- The emergency is expected to exceed Local Government Authority capacity to manage recovery coordination.
- The recovery agencies intend to draw on regional or state-tier resources for the foreseeable future in relation to the emergency.
-  An increasing scale or changing nature of the actual or expected recovery effort.
- Significant consequences.
- Escalating recovery costs and funding opportunities.

Additional considerations to activate regional recovery coordination in the Barwon South-West Region include:

-  State border closure with South Australia.
-  Initial impact assessments indicate that the damage to private property exceeds the Annual rates base of the municipality.
-  High numbers of non-resident landowners impacted by the event.
-  International tourists affected by the emergency, and diplomatic assistance is required. Recovery escalation is undertaken in consultation with the MRM, MEMO, MERC and Emergency Recovery Victoria.

## 7.4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact assessments are conducted in the aftermath of an emergency to assess its effect on the community and inform government of immediate and longer-term recovery needs.

Impact assessments must be community focused to ensure that data and information will assist decision making on how to best support affected communities. It is a three-stage process to gather and analyse information following an emergency event.

EMV's Impact Assessment Guidelines cover the three stages of the process.

## 7.4.1 INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

An Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) is a preliminary appraisal of the extent of damage, disruption and breakdown to the community and its infrastructure resulting from the emergency. This assessment is initiated and managed by the control agency and can be supported by other agencies and the municipal council, depending upon the type and scale of the emergency. IIA provides early information to assist in the prioritisation of meeting the immediate needs of individuals and the community. It also indicates if further assessment and assistance is required.

## 7.4.2 SECONDARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA)

SIA is the subsequent progressive and more holistic assessment of the event's impact on the community. It considers built and natural environments, social and economic impacts, and resulting community needs. Impact assessment for relief and recovery requires an additional layer of analysis beyond the initial impact assessment.

Coordination of SIA is the responsibility of the MRM. All departments and agencies involved in the collection of SIA should liaise with the MRM to ensure information is coordinated and shared.

## 7.5 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

To facilitate this process Southern Grampians Shire shall, as early as practicable, perform the following tasks:

- Survey the extent of damage, indicating evaluation of financial and material aid needed.
- Provide a priority listing for restoration of community needs, to assist agencies in the performance of their functions.
- Monitor the acquisition and application of financial and material aid needed, or made available, in the restoration period.

The Council may co-opt persons within the community with the appropriate expertise to assist with the above tasks. Should the emergency extend beyond the boundaries of LGA, the post impact assessment may be merged with that of the other affected municipalities.

The Municipal Association of Victoria has two publications on SIAs, Guidelines and Role Statements

## 7.6 POST EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PENA)

PENA estimates the longer-term psychosocial impacts on a community caused by their displacement, cost of destroyed assets, the changes in the 'flows' of an affected economy caused by the destruction of assets and interruption of business. It provides insight in relation to the length of time it will take the community and economy to recover.

Such assessments inform the medium to longer-term recovery process and build the knowledge base of the total cost of emergencies that, in turn, informs risk assessment and management.

## 7.7 GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE MEASURES

State and Federal government assistance may be available in the recovery efforts following a declared event. The type of support available will depend on the level

of impact. Further information about Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements can be found on the EMV [website](#).

An agency that has a role or responsibility under this plan must act in accordance with the plan. The SEMP and REMP outline agreed agency roles and responsibilities, noting that existing duties, functions, power, responsibility or obligation conferred on an agency by law, licence, agreement or arrangement prevail to the extent of its inconsistency with this plan (Act s60AK).

The roles and responsibilities outlined in this plan are specific to the region and are in addition to, or variations on, what is outlined in the SEMP and REMP. In the case of municipal-specific modifications, these are clearly identified as modifications. All agencies with responsibilities under the MEMP should provide written confirmation of their capability and commitment to meet their obligations. This can be evidenced by their endorsement of the draft MEMP, including revisions before it is presented to the Barwon Southwest REMPC for consideration.

This plan details emergency management agency roles and responsibilities for: Mitigation, Response, Relief and Recovery. It also maps agency roles for core capabilities and critical tasks under the Victorian Preparedness Framework (VPF) for the management of major emergencies.

The VPF identifies the core capabilities and critical tasks Victoria requires to effectively manage major emergencies. To be effective, the 21 core capabilities are interdependent, coordinated and overlap across emergency management phases.

These agency activities have been discussed with participating emergency organisations for inclusion in this document. While these activities are believed to be current at the date of publication, readers are advised to contact the required agency to ensure that functions can still be carried out as expected. In response to an emergency, an agency may be requested to provide support to response activities other than what is listed in the agency role statement. In these cases, the determination of support to these activities will be made by the EMC or relevant emergency response coordinator.

For further information, refer to: SEMP- Agency Roles and Responsibilities alignment to Victorian Preparedness Framework

## APPENDIX 1

| Version | Release Date | Author | Changes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Version 1** | 10 November 2010 | SGSC MEMPC | Authorised version |
| **Version 2** | 15 September 2011 | EMC on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | Audit outcomes update<br><br>Full version change |
| **Version 3** | 6 December 2012 | EMC on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | Full version change |
| **Version 4** | July 2014 | EM Coordinator on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | Full version change |
| **Version 4.4** | March 2018 | MEMO on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | Full Version |
| **Version 4.5** | June 2018 | MEMO on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | From feedback of MEMPC |
| **Version 5** | March 2022 | MEMO on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | Full version change |
| **Version 5.1** | January 2023 | MEMO on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | From feedback of MEMPC |
| **Version 6** | June 2024 | MEMO on behalf of SGSC MEMPC | Feedback from REMPC |

| School | Address | Phone | Email |
|---|---|---|---|
| Balmoral Community College | Harrow Road, Balmoral 3407 | (03) 5570 1247 | balmoral.k12.cc@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Branxholme-Wallacedale Community School | 2 Monroe Street, Branxholme 3302 | (03) 5578 6253 | bwcs@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Cavendish Primary School | Barker Street, Cavendish 3314 | (03) 5574 2282 | cavendish.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Coleraine Primary School | 124 Church Street, Coleraine 3315 | (03) 5575 2057 | Coleraine.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Dunkeld Consolidated School | Victoria Valley Road, Dunkeld 3294 | (03) 5577 2384 | dunkeld.cs@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| George Street Primary School | 32-48 George Street, Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5571 1478 | george.street.ps.hamilton@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Good Shepherd College | 33 McArthur Street, Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5571 2236 | primary@gsc.vic.edu.au |
| Gray Street Primary School | 42 Gray Street, Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5571 9295 | hamilton.gs.gray@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Hamilton North Primary School | Andrews Street, Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5571 2433 | hamilton.north.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Penshurst Primary School | Ritchie Street, Penshurst 3289 | (03) 5576 5433 | penshurst.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| St Mary's Primary School | 49 Hiller Lane, Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5551 9000 | principal@smhamilton.catholic.edu.au |
| St Joseph's Primary School | 67 Read Street, Coleraine 3315 | (03) 5575 2131 | |
| St Joseph's Primary School | PO Box 42 Penshurst 3289 | (03) 5576 5438 | principal@sjpenshurst.catholic.edu.au |
| Tarrington Lutheran Primary School | Hamilton Highway, Tarrington | (03) 5572 3897 | schooladmin@tarringtonls.vic.edu.au |
| The Hamilton & Alexandra College | PO Box 286 Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5572 1355 | jsreception@hamiltoncollege.vic.edu.au |
| OneSchool Global Hamilton Campus | 90 Chatsworth Road. Hamilton | (03) 55722165 | admin.hamilton@au.oneschoolglobal.com |
| | | | |
| School | Address | Phone | Email |
| Baimbridge College | 85 Stephens Street, Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5572 2788 | baimbridge.co@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Balmoral Community College | Harrow Road, Balmoral 3407 | (03) 5570 1247 | balmoral.k12.cc@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| Good Shepherd College | PO Box 390 Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5571 2595 | secondary@gsc.vic.edu.au |
| Monivae College | 133 Ballarat Road Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5551 1200 | reception@monivae.vic.edu.au |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Hamilton & Alexandra College | PO Box 286 Hamilton 3300 | (03) 5572 1355 | admin@hamiltoncollege.vic.edu.au |
| OneSchool Global Hamilton Campus | 90 Chatsworth road. Hamilton | (03) 55722165 | admin.hamilton@au.oneschoolglobal.com |

Critical Infrastructure (update in progress).

Committee Membership

| Agency | Role | First Name | Surname | Email |
|--------|------|------------|---------|-------|
| **Southern Grampians Shire Council** | Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation | Rory | Neeson | rneeson@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au |
| **Australian Red Cross Emergency Services Victoria** | Divisional Operations Officer - Outer Barwon Division | Dennis | Hilder | dhilder@redcross.org.au |
| **Vic SES** | Operations Officer Emergency Management | Tristan | Crews | ust.southwest@ses.vic.gov.au |
| **Country Fire Authority** | Assistant Chief Fire Officer - District 5 | Kade | Dowie | Acfo.d05@cfa.vic.gov.au |
| **Department of Health** | Senior Operations Officer (West) | Nathan | Durbridge | emergencymanagement.westregion@health.vic.gov.au  Nathan.durbridge@health.vic.gov.au |
| **Ambulance Victoria** | Senior Team Manager (MICA), Hamilton | Darren | Hicks | southerngrampians.stm@ambulance.vic.gov.au |
| **Victoria Police** | Senior Sergeant (MERC) | Gerard | Kelly | Hamilton.uni@police.vic.gov.au  0467 761 841 |
| **Community Representative** | Vacant | | | |
| **Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry** | Area Coordinator Southern Grampians Shire | Peter | Roberts | peter_m_roberts@hotmail.com |
| **Agriculture Victoria** | Ag Vic State Agency Commander | Banjo | Patterson | banjo.patterson@agriculture.vic.gov.au |
| **Glenelg Hopkins Catchment** | Manager - Statutory Planning (Floodplain & Works) | Peter | Robertson | p.robertson@ghcma.vic.gov.au |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Management Authority** | | | | |
| **Wannon Water** | Emergency Management Officer | Annie | Grundy | Annie.grundy@wannonwater.com.au |
| **Grampians Tourism** | Chief Executive Officer | Marc | Sleeman | ceo@grampianstourism.com.au |
| **Forestry Industry - FOC** | Senior Forester - PF Olsen | Darian | Schultz | Darian.Schultz@pfolsen.com |
| **Victorian Farmers Federation** | Victorian Farmers Federation | Jason | Tonissen | chromepark@bigpond.com |
| **Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership** | Manager Health and Wellbeing | Jo | Brown | joanne.brown@wdhs.net |
| **Western District Health Services** | Waiting on new representative | | | |
| **Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action** | District Manager, Far South West | Mark | Mellington | Mark.Mellington@delwp.vic.gov.au |
| **Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action** | District Manager, Wimmera | Glenn | Rudolph | glenn.rudolph@delwp.vic.gov.au |

Note: This information will not be made available to the public.

CERA

| Township | Location Name | Address | Date Adopted |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dunkeld** | Sterling Place | 14 Sterling Street | 18 May 2021 |
| **Hamilton** | Hamilton Showgrounds | Shakespeare Street | |
| **Coleraine** | Old Railway Area | Pileau Street | 10 Nov 2010 |
| **Balmoral** | Memorial Hall Grounds | Glendinning Street | 4 Oct 2011 |
| **Balmoral** | Community College Car Park (adjacent to tennis courts) | Harrow – Balmoral Road | 22 Nov 2011 |
| **Cavendish** | Town Square Memorial Park | Cnr Scott and Barker St | 20 Oct 2011 |
| **Glenthompson** | Adjacent to the swimming pool | Cnr Henry and Cameron streets | 14 Nov 2012 |
| **Penshurst** | Behind the Senior Citizens Centre | Cnr French and Watton Streets | 14 Nov 2012 |
| **Branxholme** | Former Bowling Green (Opposite Fire Station) | Best Street (between Cox and Brown Street) | 7 Feb 2014 |

**Ash Wednesday Fires 1938-1939**

Injured: 1500

Fatalities – 75

Area Burnt – 2 million ha

**Mt Lubra Fires – 2006**

Fatalities – 2

Area Burnt – 184,000 ha

**Black Saturday Fires – 2009**

Injured – 414

Fatalities – 174

Area Burnt – 450,000ha

**Grampians/ Victoria Valley Fires – 2013**

Area burnt – 37,000ha

**Grampians Complex Fires – 2014**

Area burnt – 55,000ha

**Coleraine flood – 2016**

Flood severity estimate – Major

**COVID-19 – 2019**

The **COVID-19 pandemic in Australia** is part of the ongoing worldwide pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first confirmed case in Australia was identified on 25 January 2020, in Victoria, when a man who had returned from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, tested positive for the virus