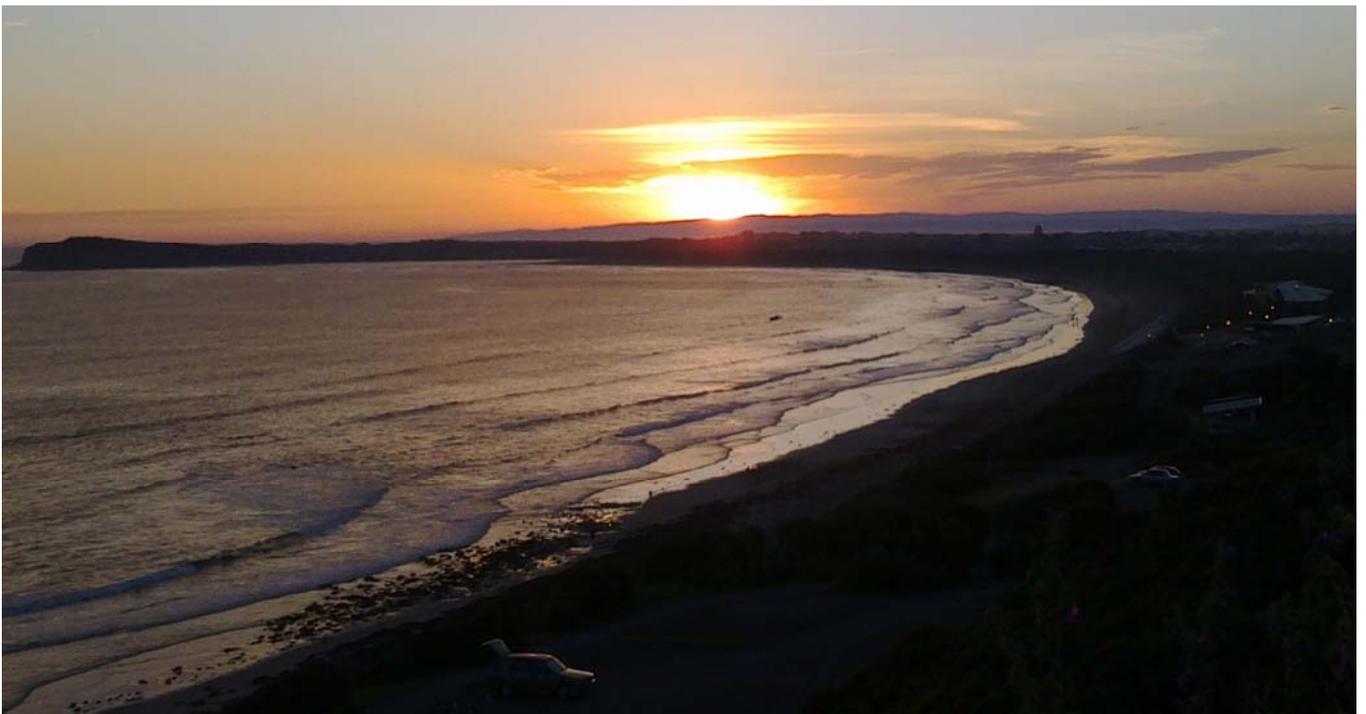




Surf Coast Shire

Heatwave Plan

February 2011



Contents

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

1 Background

1.1	Introduction.....	5
1.2	Climate change.....	5
1.3	Health impacts of heatwaves	
1.3.1	General facts.....	6
1.3.2	Victorian heatwave 2009.....	7
1.3.3	Health impacts of Victorian heatwave 2009.....	7
1.4	Heat alert system.....	8
1.5	Surf Coast community profile	
1.5.1	At a glance.....	9
1.5.2	Vulnerable population.....	9
1.5.3	Detailed vulnerable populations in Surf Coast.....	10

2 Planning Frameworks

2.1	Legislative Context	
2.1.1	Emergency Management Act 1986.....	12
2.1.2	Local Government Act 1989.....	12
2.1.3	The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.....	12
2.2	The role of local government in heatwave response planning.....	13
2.3	Surf Coast Shire's Strategic Framework	
2.3.1	Integrating heatwave into existing plans and strategies.....	14
2.3.2	Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2009-2013.....	15
2.3.3	Municipal Emergency Management Plan.....	15
2.3.4	Public Health Emergency Management Sub-Plan.....	15
2.3.5	Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.....	16

3 Communication

3.1	Communication strategy.....	17
3.2	Key messages.....	17

4 Heatwave action plan

4.1	Build Capacity to respond to a heatwave.....	20
4.2	Communication.....	21
4.3	Community and Agency Communication.....	22
4.4	Events and Recreation.....	23
4.5	Heatwave Response.....	23

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.0	Monitoring and Evaluation.....	24
-----	--------------------------------	----

Acknowledgements

The Surf Coast Shire Heatwave Plan was first developed in December 2009 by Capire Consulting Group Pty Ltd following consultation with both Surf Coast Shire and external agency staff. Since then the plan has been reviewed and subsequently rewritten to include information from the Victorian State Government's Heatwave Plan 2009-2010 and updated localised information.

Surf Coast Shire would like to thank and acknowledge the valuable contribution from many stakeholders who have generously contributed their time and expertise in the development of this plan.

In particular, the members of the Project Control Group and Risk, Goals and Strategies Workshop:-

Surf Coast Shire

- . Adam Lee, Environmental Health
- . Dennis Barker, Sustainable Communities
- . Janice Lane, Community Development
- . John Lloyd, Community Emergency Management
- . Lynne Hume, Events
- . Robyn Stevens, Aged and Family Services
- . Rowan Mackenzie, Sustainable Communities
- . Wendy Nuttall, Positive Ageing

External Partners

- . Anthony Sirgiannis, Blue Cross Anglesea Aged Care Facility
- . Birgitte Hutchens, Country Fire Authority
- . Elaine Day, Anglesea Blue Cross Aged Care Facility
- . Jim Geary, Anglesea Surf Lifesaving Club
- . Julie Walters, Lorne Community Health

Writing Team

- . Leanne Madden, Community Emergency Management
- . Virginia Enticott, Community Emergency Management

Photography

- . Michael Cooper, front page sunset

Executive Summary

The Surf Coast Shire Heatwave Plan has been developed to provide a framework for strategic and operational heatwave response. It outlines strategies to assist Council build its capacity and minimise the adverse effects of extreme heat on vulnerable individuals and communities within the Municipality.

The plan has been formulated in line with the four elements of emergency management:- Prevention; Preparedness; Response and Recovery.

The Surf Coast Shire Heatwave Plan has five key areas which detail the procedures Council will undertake to provide systems through which key stakeholders in local government and health and community sectors can collaborate to ensure effective coordination of efforts. These key areas are:

1. Building capacity to respond to a heatwave

This strategy aims to enhance the capacity of Council and responding agencies responsible for supporting heat vulnerable clients to maintain business continuity and service delivery. It also provides for educational learning for staff to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to educate and support heat vulnerable clients prior and during a heatwave.

2. Communication

Raise understanding of heatwaves in communities and increase their capacity to appropriately respond during a heatwave event.

3. Community and agency education

Community and agency education commences prior to the summer season. Literature and communication tools provided by the Department of Health will be used to disseminate heat health information

4. Events and Planning

Surf Coast Shire provides leadership, support and facilitation to event organisers to build effective and strategic partnerships to develop best practises to mitigate risks associated with heat wave.

5. Heatwave Response

Heatwave response will be triggered when Department of Health confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached and informs Council.

Communication will increase in frequency during the heatwave response and include more specific advice. Radio, television and national newspaper warnings would be issued by Department of Health. Council may employ additional dissemination methods such as local radio advertisements and distributing information through local community 'hubs'.

The plan will be reviewed annually following the summer season and where required, modified and revised to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

As part of the Victorian Heatwave Strategy¹ the Surf Coast Shire received funding from the Department of Health in 2009 to prepare a Heatwave Response Plan. The state strategy acknowledges the inevitable impacts of climate change and recognises heat as one of the most direct and immediate impacts to individuals and communities.

The Heatwave Plan has identified a suite of existing Council planning frameworks which will play an important role in preventing and preparing for the impacts of heat on communities and infrastructure. These plans include:-

- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Community Emergency Risk Management Plan
- Public Health Emergency Management Sub Plan
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Municipal Strategic Statement and Environmental Management Strategy

1.2 Climate change

Climate change has the potential to adversely affect our environment, communities and economy unless action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move toward a low carbon economy.

Changing weather patterns has seen Australia experience hotter and drier summers, prolonged requirements for water restrictions and the increased risk of bushfire.

The Victorian State Government made climate change a key policy area and have introduced a *New Climate Change Act* to ensure Victoria continues to lead the way on climate change.

Longer and more severe periods of extreme heat in Victoria are expected to be the result of ongoing climate change. According to the Department of Human Services Heatwave Strategy, by 2030 Melbourne's climate is likely to have warmed by 1⁰C with an annual rainfall of 10-15% less, creating a climate similar to Adelaide's present day climate. Forecasts into 2070 predict warming from 1-3⁰C. The Department of Health identifies that Melbourne currently has an annual average of nine days on which the temperature exceeds 35⁰C.

This may increase to 11-13 days by 2030 and 12-26 days by 2070. Climate change models include a large range of uncertainty related to unknown factors such as future emissions, demographic changes and technological advances.

In the most recent report by the Bureau of Meteorology / CSIRO "An assessment of the impact of climate change on the nature and frequency of exceptional climate events" July 2008, examines the extent of drought in Australia has identified that Victoria soon could be hit by heatwaves in three out of every four years, as Australia becomes hotter, drier and increasingly drought ravaged.²

1.3 Health impacts of heatwaves

1.3.1 General Facts

Heat stress is an acute condition of hyperthermia caused by prolonged exposure to excessive heat or heat and humidity. The heat-regulating mechanisms of the body eventually become overwhelmed and unable to effectively deal with the heat, causing the body temperature to climb uncontrollably.

People most at risk are: very young children, the elderly, people with excess weight, chronic ailments or other health problems; and those on medications or with alcohol / drug dependency.

Elderly people are most vulnerable to heat stress, as the body's ability to regulate temperature usually decreases with age. The main contributing factor to this is reduced physical activity, leading to lower muscle strength, sweating capacity and cardiovascular reserve, and to lower cardiovascular stability.

Drugs that affect body fluid balance, vasodilator activity and cardiac function are potentially harmful during extreme heat events. Common to all at-risk people is a reduced capacity to regulate the bodies own cooling system through perspiration. Very poor and homeless people are often affected as they cannot always seek the safety of a cooled home.

People in urban and suburban regions typically have far higher rates of mortality than those in rural regions. One reason for this is because urban areas frequently act as 'heat islands', and trap heat from escaping. Social isolation has also been lined to increased risk of death during heat waves.⁴

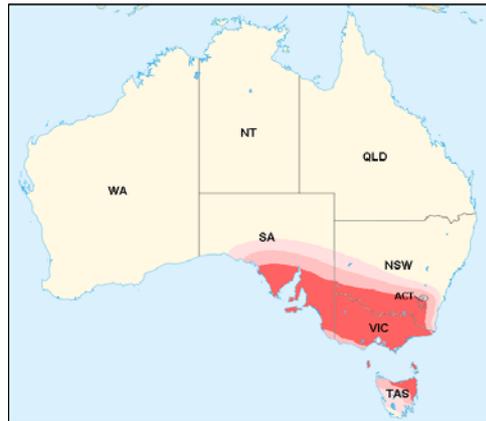
Table Two: Heat related illnesses

Disorder	Symptoms	What to do
Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muscle pains ▪ Spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stop activity and sit quietly in a cool place ▪ Increase fluid intake ▪ Rest a few hours before returning to activity ▪ Seek medical help if cramps persist
Heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pale complexion and sweating ▪ Rapid heart rate ▪ Muscle cramps, weakness ▪ Dizziness, headache ▪ Nausea, vomiting ▪ Fainting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get the person to a cool area and lie them down ▪ Remove outer clothing ▪ Wet skin with cool water or wet clothes ▪ Seek medical advice
Heat stroke (a life threatening emergency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same symptoms as heat exhaustion ▪ Dry skin with no sweating ▪ Mental condition worsens, confusion ▪ Seizure ▪ Appear to have a stroke or collapse ▪ Unconsciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Call an ambulance ▪ Get the person to a cool area and lie them down ▪ Remove clothing ▪ Wet skin with water, fanning continuously ▪ Position an unconscious person on their side and clear the airway

1.3.2 Victorian heatwave 2009

In Victoria during January and February 2009, Victoria experienced a heatwave with record breaking temperatures. The Chief Health Officer estimated that an additional 374 deaths occurred as a result of this heatwave.

In his April 2009 report, 'January 2009 Heatwave in Victoria: an Assessment of Health Impacts'⁵, the Department of Health Chief Health Officer noted that the January heatwave "was of unprecedented intensity and duration with maximum temperatures 12-15°C above normal for much of Victoria, whilst Melbourne endured three consecutive days of temperatures above 43°C".



The Age noted that most people who died were "heat stricken elderly and chronically sick people who died prematurely, often alone in their homes or suddenly of heart failure"⁶. It should be noted that the figures of excess mortality provide an indication of impact, but do not provide information specifically on the underlying cause of death (*Department of Health 2009*)

1.3.3 Health impacts of Victorian heatwave 2009

Ambulance Victoria metropolitan emergency case load:

- A 25% increase in total emergency cases and a 46% increase over the three hottest days
- A 34 fold increase in cases with direct heat-related conditions (61% in those 75 years or older);
- A 2.8 fold increase in cardiac arrest cases

Locum GP attendances MMDS:

- An almost 4 fold increase in attendances for direct heat-related conditions (65% in those 75 years or older);
- An almost 2 fold increase in calls to attend a deceased person

Emergency department presentations:

- A 12% overall increase in presentations, with a greater proportion of acutely ill patients and a 37% increase in those 75 years or older;
- An 8 fold increase in direct heat-related presentations (46% in those aged 75 years and over)
- An almost 3 fold increase in patients dead on arrival (69% being 75 years or older)

Total all cause mortality:

- There were 374 excess deaths over what would be expected;
- A 62% increase in total all-cause mortality. The total number of deaths was 980, compared to a mean of 606 for the previous five years.
- The greatest number of deaths occurred in those 75 years or older, representing a 64% increase;
- Included in these total deaths were 179 deaths reported to the State Coroner's Office; a 77% increase from 101 deaths reported for the same period in 2008. Reportable deaths in 65 years and older more than doubled.

1.4 Heat alert system

The Department of Health has developed a heat health alert system which aims to issue health alerts to local governments and service providers advising the activation of state and local heatwave responses.

The department monitors the Bureau of Meteorology website for seven-day forecast maximum and minimum temperatures. When the heat health temperature threshold is reached in a specific weather forecast district a heat health alert will be issued. The alert will be issued as an e-mail, SMS or both.

A region based response will be activated when a mean temperature threshold of 30°C or above is forecast in any region of the state except the Mildura district. The threshold for the Mildura district is a forecast mean temperature of 32°C or above.

Table 1: Heat health alert threshold

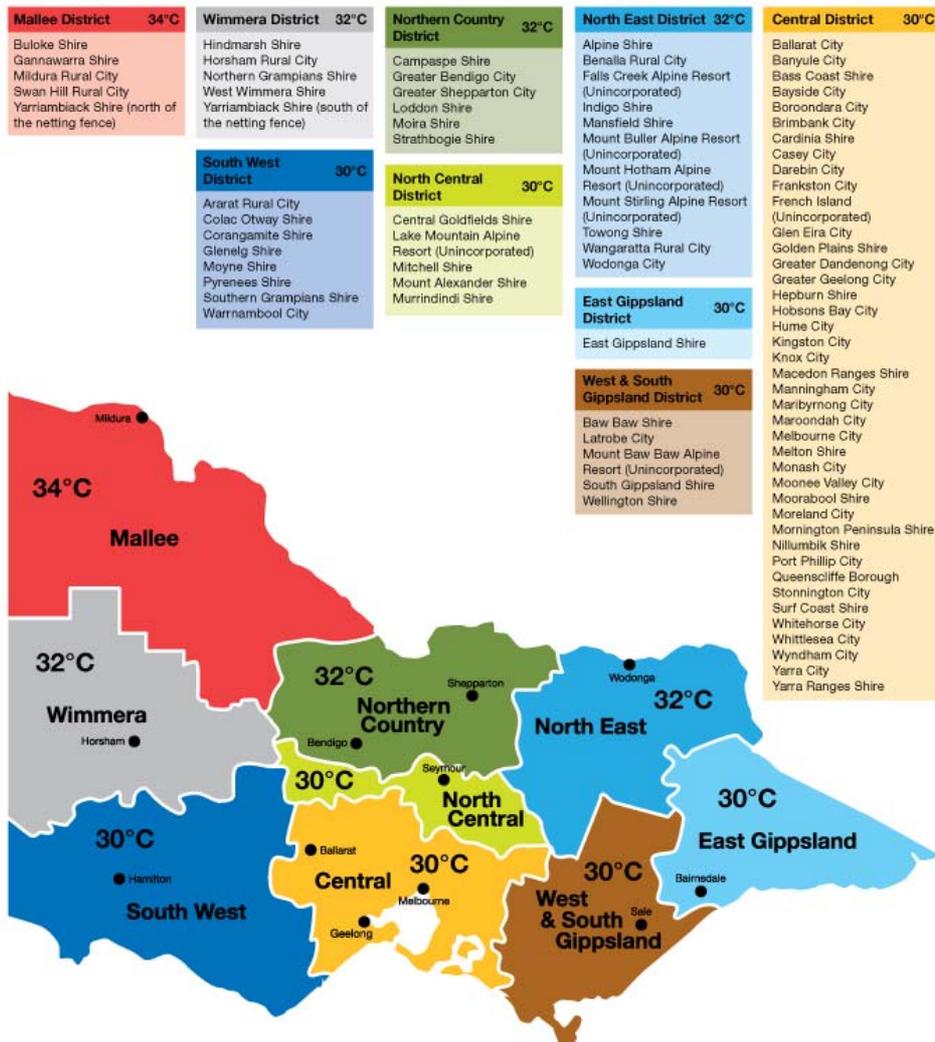


Image adapted from the Country Fire Authority's 'Know your total fire ban district'.

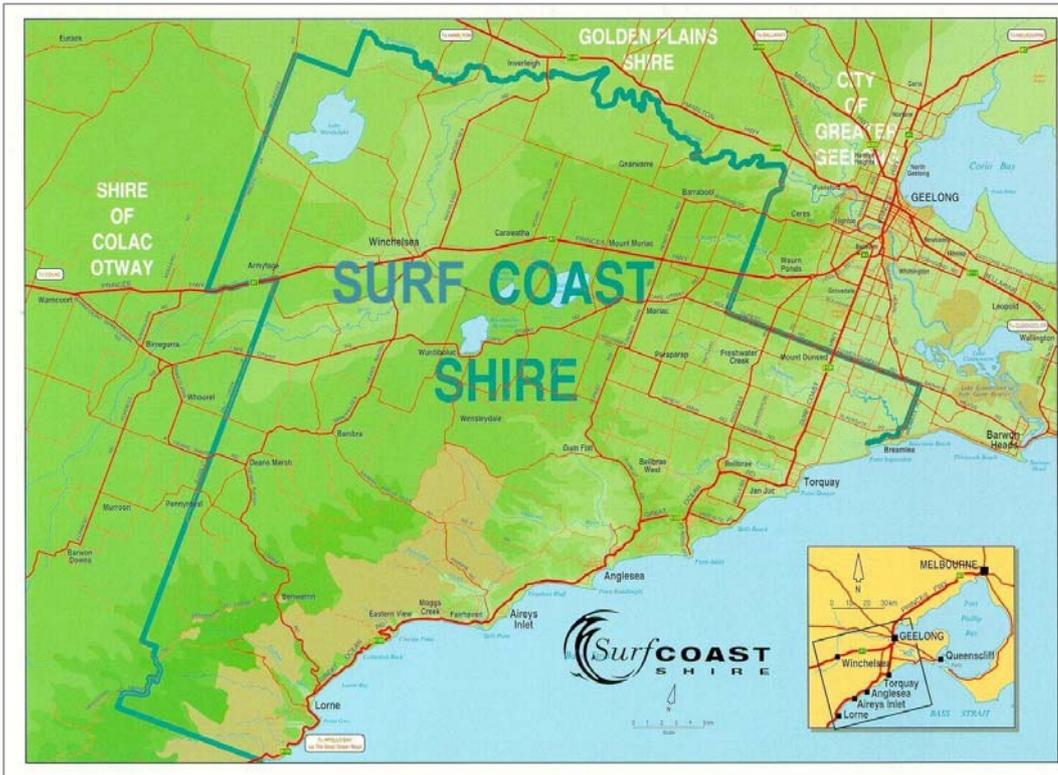
The heat health alert is only intended to notify recipients that mean temperatures are predicted to reach and exceed heat health thresholds. The alert is not intended to dictate when service providers take action; heat health alert contacts are advised to monitor local conditions and take action in accordance with their own heatwave plans, service continuity plans and occupational health and safety (OH&S) plans.

1.5 Surf Coast community profile

1.5.1 At a glance

The permanent population of Surf Coast Shire is 22,802 (*ABS 2006 estimate*) which more than doubles during peak periods, specifically in the summer months. The geography is extremely diverse, encompassing both coastal and farming areas.

Main population centres include the coastal towns of Torquay, Lorne, Anglesea and Aireys Inlet and Winchelsea being the gateway to the farming district.



1.5.2 Vulnerable population

It was identified that Lorne has a significantly high number of elderly residents, who have limited mobility and who would find it difficult to cope in a heatwave. Likewise, a number of vulnerable and isolated communities are found along the coast and rural areas where public transport is limited.

The summer period also brings an extra challenge due to the sheer number of people who visit the region. Traffic congestion and mobile network overload are emerging issues that could have repercussions during heatwave events. Summer visitors could be unfamiliar in coping with Australian heat and also would be more likely to stay in places that are isolated and more prone to heat effects (i.e. camping grounds, caravan parks, cabins and school camps). Identification of tourist facilities and centres would need to form part of a vulnerable populations register to ensure tourist facilities and centres could be targeted during the communications and response phases of the Heatwave Plan.

A detailed analysis of the Surf Coast vulnerable populations is highlighted in the following table.

1.5.3 Detailed vulnerable populations in Surf Coast

Description / Indicator	Data Source	Resident Population (22,802)	Level of vulnerability	Level of Council contact
People over 65 years of age				
7.1% of population aged 65–74 yrs in 2006	3	1,619	High	M-H
4.4% of total population aged 75-84 yrs in 2006	3	1,003	Very high	M-H
1.6% of total population aged 85 yrs & over in 2006	3	365	Very high	H
Very young people				
Persons aged 0-14 yrs make up approx. 20.9%	3	4,766	High	H
Persons 0 – 4 yrs	1	1,478	Very high	VH
People with pre-existing medical conditions				
Estimated percentage of death due to Ischemic Heart Disease in 2005	1	17% of deaths in 05'		M
Estimated prevalent cases of death due to stroke	1	8% of deaths in 05'		M
Persons with self assessed mental & behavioral problems 2004-05, males & females	1	2,233	High	M
A high level of subjective wellbeing was recorded in SCS = 79.4 as compared to the Victorian rate of 76.4	1a			M
Estimated number of people consuming alcohol levels considered to be high risk to health persons >18 yrs	1	1,025	High	M
People who are overweight or have low fitness				
Estimated number of overweight (not obese) males > 15 yrs, 2004-05	1	3,252	High	M
Estimated number of overweight (not obese) females >15 yrs, 2004-05	1	1,946	High	M
Estimated number of obese males >15 yrs, 2004-05	1	1,196	Very high	M
Estimated number of obese females >15 yrs, 2004-05	1	884	Very high	M
People who may be socially isolated or who cannot care for themselves				
Approx. 0.4% of the population is Indigenous with 0.3% being Aboriginal and the remainder Torres Strait Islanders	1	80	Variable	M
3.3% of residents aged 15 yrs and over speak a language other than English at home	3	595	Variable	M
Single parent payment recipients – March 2009 (males and females)	1	286	Mod – high	M
7.7% of population are living alone – 2006	1	1,676	Mod – very high	M
3.1% of population have a disability	1	706	Very high	H
Home and community care clients	5	1,900	Very high	VH
74.8% of the population report they feel part of the community. Therefore 25.2% feel they are not connected.	1	5,746	High – very high	M
People of lower socio-economic status				
Low income households with rental stress. Rental stress classified when more than 30% of a household's income is spent on rent	1	363	High	M
12.9% of households are considered low income. Low income families refers to a combined family income of \$350 or less per week	1	918 households	High	M
Unemployment rate at the December quarter 2008 was 2.0%	1	422	Moderate	M
Low income households with mortgage stress 2006	1	648	High	M
People who are living in caravan, cabin, houseboat or improvised home, tent or sleeping outside sits at 0.4% of total place dwellings. Victoria average of 0.2%	1	78	High	L
Tourist visitor numbers to Geelong – Otway 2005	2	5.4 million	Mod – high	L-M

Legend

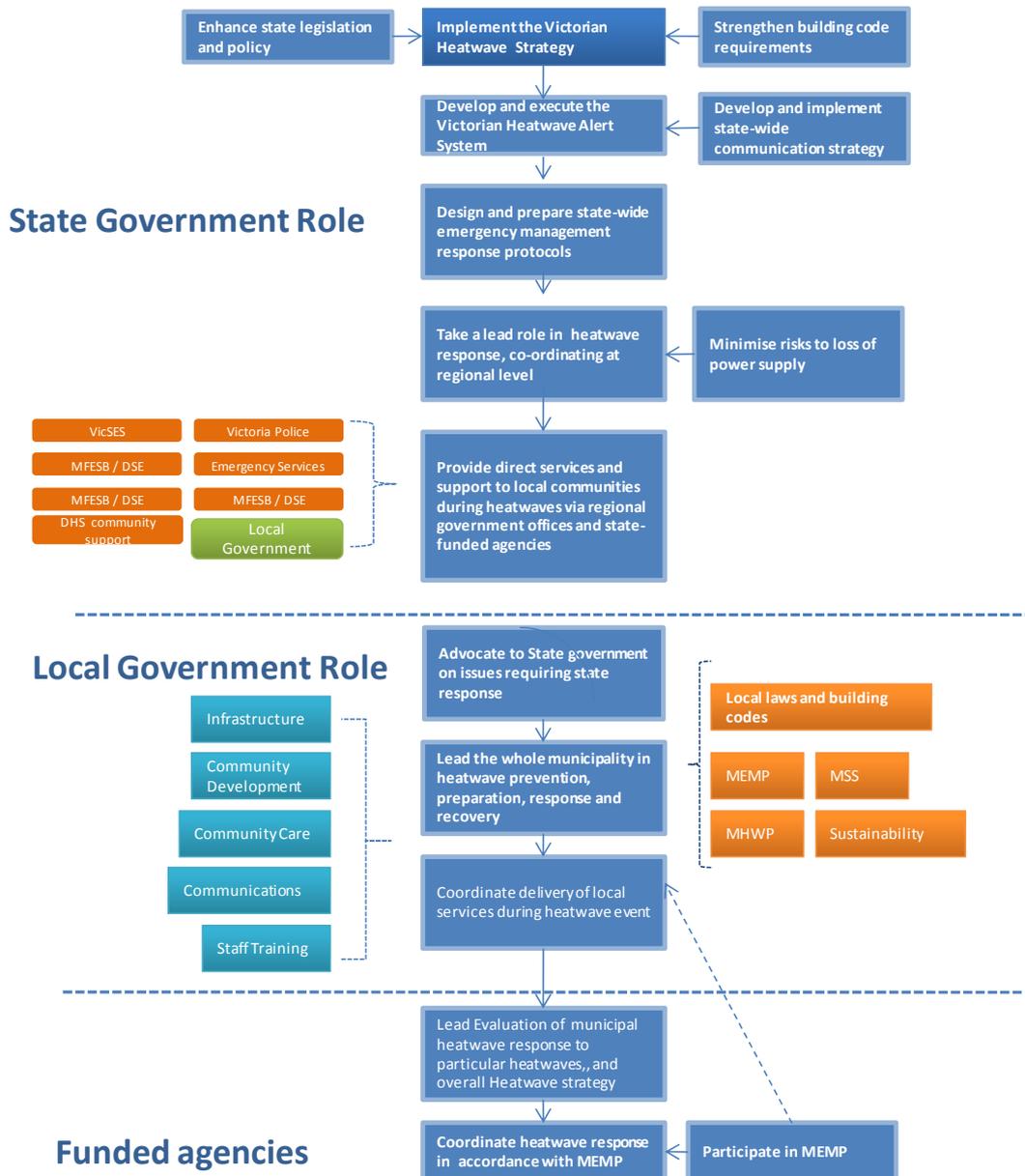
- 1 G21 HWB Profile 2009
- 1a Subjective Wellbeing as measured by 2007 Community Indicators Victoria Survey. Rates satisfaction with respondents live on a number of domains, resulting in an aggregated Personal Wellbeing Index ranging between 0-100
- 2 Travel to the Great Ocean Road, YE September 2005
- 3 ABS Census – 2006
- 4 Capire Consulting Group estimation
- 5 HACC clients based on MDS data 07/08 (Department of Human Services)

2 Planning Frameworks

2.1 Legislative context

The role of local government in heatwave response planning is part of an integrated set of relationships between state government, local government and funded agencies.

The flowchart below outlines the integrated relationships between state government, local government and funded agencies.



2.1.1 Emergency Management Act 1986

Under S.20 of the Emergency Management Act 1986, municipal councils in Victoria have the responsibility of preparing and maintaining a Municipal Emergency Management Plan. This plan must contain provisions for identifying any resources within the municipality available for use in emergency prevention, response and recovery. It also must specify how such resources are to be used in the event of an emergency.

2.1.2 Local Government Act 1989

The Local Government Act 1989 is the principal empowering legislation for councils in Victoria. It outlines the general role of councils to ensure public safety. While the Act does not deal directly with the roles and responsibilities of councils in emergency situations, it does state, in Sections 6, 7 and 8, councils' requirement to use their resources for emergency management.

Schedule 1 declares that the functions of councils include 'general public services' such as 'fire prevention and protection' and 'local emergency and safety services'. The Act also sets out the purposes and objectives of councils which could be said to encompass activities which would be consistent with general public services. In addition, a council can make local laws for or with respect to any act, matter or thing in respect of which a council has a power or function.

2.1.3 The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Under the new Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, local Councils must now prepare a renamed "Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan" (MHWP) in the first year after each general election of the Council (Section 26, sub-clause 1). The new Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 identifies that municipal health and wellbeing plans must:

- a. Include an interpretation of data about local health status and health determinants;
- b. Identify evidence-based goals and strategies for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health;
- c. Provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health plan;
- d. Specify how the Council will work in partnership with Department of Health and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the public health plan;
- e. Be consistent with:
 - (i) The Council Plan prepared under section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989; and
 - (ii) The Municipal Strategic Statement prepared under section 12A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

A Council must review its municipal public health plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.

It can be seen immediately that the Act creates a legislative imperative for Councils to integrate Council / community planning, health planning and urban planning. Before the revised Act, this was an aspirational target conveyed through Environments for Health. This new requirement provides an opportunity for local Councils to make a significant advance towards integrated planning.

The development of Health and Well-Being Plans and Heatwave Response Plans provides a unique opportunity for local councils to:

- Ensure that corporate and strategic planning promotes a supportive physical environment and increased physical activity;
- Contribute to whole-of-Council responses to community health and climate change; and
- Plan relevant infrastructure, community and health services, and emergency management.

2.2 The role of local government in heatwave response planning

The Victorian Government’s municipal public health planning framework, Environments for Health, recognises that as the level of government closest to the people, local governments are strongly positioned to promote community development across their municipality⁸. Drawing on the World Health Organisation’s ‘Healthy Cities’ approach⁹, Environments for Health acknowledges that local governments play a leadership role in fostering urban governance by engaging citizens and local stakeholders in collaborative planning to enhance community health and social equity.

The Victorian Heatwave Strategy reinforces this understanding that municipal councils are the closest level of government to communities and have access to local knowledge about the demographic, social and human service features of their districts. The strategy acknowledges that people naturally seek help from their local council during emergencies and the ensuing recovery process.¹⁰

Potential local government roles relating to heatwaves may include:

Asset Management	Community and Social Service Provision	Planning & Coordination	Civic Governance
<i>Examples</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of ‘heatwave-ready’ Council offices buildings, tenancies, accommodation or retail facilities ▪ Provision of ‘heatwave-ready’ community buildings – such as neighbourhood houses, child care centres, libraries, leisure and recreation facilities ▪ Ongoing service infrastructure-- such roads, footpaths, drainage ▪ Recognition of heatwave impacts on parks, gardens and opens space, and associated risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinating or supporting provision of Meals on Wheels to vulnerable community members ▪ Home and Community Care services ▪ Leisure and recreation services ▪ Telephone information, support and referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Plan ▪ Community Planning ▪ Municipal Public Health Planning ▪ Municipal Strategic Statement ▪ Municipal Emergency Management Plan ▪ Environmental Strategy ▪ Participation in Community Health Planning via Primary Care Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council elections ▪ Councillors ▪ Citizens’ advisory groups and boards ▪ Needs assessments ▪ Citizen feedback lines ▪ Participatory planning ▪ Community engagement strategies ▪ Volunteer development

2.3 Surf Coast Shire's Strategic Framework

2.3.1 Integrating heatwave into existing plans and strategies

The Heatwave Response Plan presents an opportunity for a coordinated approach to policy development across existing Council areas including: Council Plan; Municipal Strategic Statement; Municipal Emergency Management Plan; Environmental Strategy; and other Council areas such as Early Years Plan, Positive Ageing Strategy, and other plan. These are discussed briefly below.

Surf Coast Shire has a number of plans into which heatwave can be integrated. The Municipal Emergency Management Plan is the obvious document for the response and recovery phases of the Heatwave Response Plan. The Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan also provides an avenue for prevention and preparation stages of the Heatwave Response Plan.

The table below shows the Surf Coast Shire's plans and strategies into which the Heatwave Response Plan will be integrated, and which approach each plan takes to heatwave in terms of *Prevention*, *Preparation*, *Response* and *Recovery*.

Surf Coast Shire Plans and Strategies	Emergency Management Phase			
	<i>Prevention</i>	<i>Preparation</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Recovery</i>
SCS Council Plan 2009 - 2013	✓	✓		
SCS Municipal Strategic Statement	✓			
Positive Ageing Strategy	✓	✓		
Municipal Emergency Management Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009 - 2013	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Health Emergency Management Sub-Plan (2008)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2009 - 2013	✓	✓		
Surf Coast Early Years Plan 2009 - 2013	✓	✓		
Surf Coast Shire Volunteer Engagement Strategy 2008-2012	✓			
Environmental Management Strategy 2005	✓	✓		
Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Events Guide	✓	✓	✓	
SCS Recreation Strategy 2009 (Draft)	✓			
SCS Youth Strategy 2006 - 2009	✓			
Transport Connections	✓			
<i>Barwon Primary Care Forum Strategic Plan (not Council doc)</i>	✓	✓		

2.3.2 Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2009-2013

According to the Vision detailed in the new Council Plan 2009-2013, “Surf Coast Shire will be a place of wellbeing, successfully balancing population growth, tourism and economic development with the preservation of our natural environment, quality of life and connection to our communities”. The five priorities identified for the new Council Plan are all highly relevant to effective heatwave response planning:

- Sustainable and protected natural environments.
- Inclusive and accountable governance.
- Healthy, resilient, safe communities.
- Community focused infrastructure services
- Sustainable development and growth.

The Council Plan identifies climate change as a key issue:

“Already we know that our precious natural environment is becoming increasingly stressed due to our changing climate. Council must show leadership and guidance for the community in this area. We must reduce our carbon emissions and we must ensure we develop the resilience to adapt to this new world” (p. 4).

The Council Plan identifies that partnerships are essential to achieving progress towards meeting its five broad priorities over the next four years.

2.3.3 Municipal Emergency Management Plan

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan details general arrangements for the management of various emergency situations which may occur within the Surf Coast Shire.

The deployment and co-ordination of emergency resources is an integral part of Council’s normal operations and may occur without any formal activation or declaration in relation to this or any other emergency plan. The flexible nature of Emergency Management Plans enables activation of only those elements required in any given situation.

In line with current best practice, it is anticipated that response and recovery activities commence simultaneously to better provide the full range of resources to affected communities.

The Surf Coast Shire’s Municipal Emergency Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the Emergency Management Manual Victoria which can be accessed from www.oesc.vic.gov.au.

2.3.4 Public Health Emergency Management Sub-Plan

Public health emergency management planning is a key part of the municipality’s all agencies, ‘all hazards’ approach to municipal emergency management.

The Public Health Emergency Management sub-Plan is a component of the MEMP. It aims to protect the community and emergency management personnel from public health risks generated by an emergency.

2.3.5 Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Surf Coast Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP) 2009 – 2013 responds to the following strategic priorities:

- The five priority areas set out in the Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2009 – 2013;
- The Department of Health's Health Promotion Priorities;
- The G21 Health and Wellbeing Pillar Strategic Directions.
- G21's Integrated Health Promotion and Community Strengthening Priority Selection 2009

Together, these plans and priorities have a strong focus on promoting healthy, resilient, safe communities; and connecting people, communities and services. Community capacity building to promote social connectedness is core to the actions identified in the MHWP.

The Heatwave Response Plan also promotes active community participation and encourages community members to support and collaborate in heatwave prevention, preparation, response and recovery. In the Heatwave Response Plan, this support and collaboration will be in the form of promoting 'know your neighbour' strategies, building capacity of volunteers to prevent isolation during a heatwave event and allow appropriate responses to heatwaves.



3 Communication

3.1 Communication strategy³

People living through a summer in Surf Coast Shire need to be informed adequately about heatwaves. This includes information about risk characteristics, preventative measures and appropriate behaviors' during a heatwave and an understanding of their own responsibility to be prepared.

Surf Coast Shire's communications strategy will focus on preparing the general public, vulnerable groups in the community and key service providers to vulnerable populations for heatwave conditions. It will also ensure community members are advised through the media of a heatwave event and appropriate actions to take and notified when a heatwave event has passed and options and actions to take in the recovery phase.

Any heatwave material prepared by the Department of Health will be used for the dissemination of key messages.

The objectives of the strategy will be to:

- Generate preparedness and improve community resilience to heatwave conditions; and,
- Educate all stakeholders about roles, responsibilities and procedures to be followed in the event of a heat alert.

3.2 Key Messages

Key messages for the general community will include:

Cool your home down;

- Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and opened at night when the temperature has cooled
- Turn off non essential lights and electrical equipment
- Move to the coolest room in the house to sleep

Stay out of the heat;

- Keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
- Avoid extreme physical exercise
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes
- Reschedule appointments to early in the morning

Keep yourself cool and hydrated;

- Drink plenty of water but avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Take a cool shower
- Spray water over your skin or clothing
- Keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck

Know your neighbours; and,

- Phone or visit elderly or sick neighbours everyday during a heatwave

What you can do if there is a problem.

- Be aware of the Heatwave Hotline number

Key messages for vulnerable groups will include also:

- Medications and heat related illness;
- Child and car safety; and,
- Keeping babies and breast feeding mothers hydrated.

Surf Coast Shire will use material developed by the Department of Health. Core components of the heatwave awareness campaign are to:

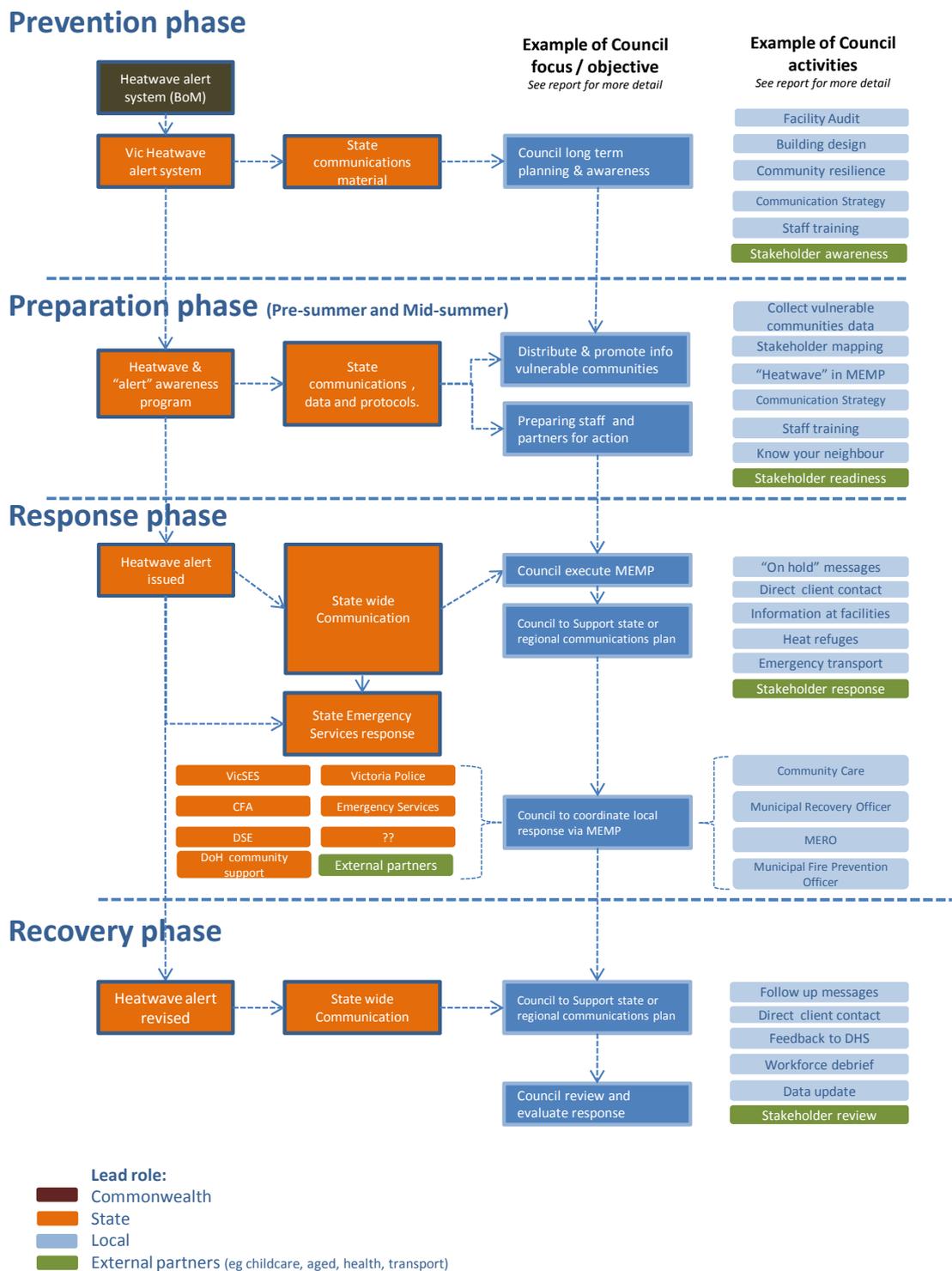
- Engage with a media partner to act as a local sponsor of the campaign
- Distribute the general public information leaflet through a city wide mail out as a insert to the Surf Coast Shire magazine/newsletter;
- Fact sheets developed by the Department of Health will be distributed through Aged Services (HACC workers and Meals on Wheels), Senior Citizens' Association, Maternal and Child Health nurses, GPs, pharmacies, Surf Coast Shire Mobile Library, community centres, visitor information centres and facilities, child-care centres, preschools, playgroups and other key services or facilities;
- Disseminate heatwave messages at events e.g. Festivals, Senior's Week;
- Produce articles / information sheets for community newsletters, magazines or websites.
- Develop an "on-hold" heatwave telephone message that is staged according to pre-summer, mid-summer and response phases.



4 Heatwave action plan

The Surf Coast Heatwave Action Plan details the procedures Council will undertake to provide systems through which key stakeholders in local government and health and community sectors can collaborate to ensure effective coordination of efforts.

The plan has been developed in line with Victorian emergency management components as shown in the flowchart below.



4.1 Building capacity to respond to a heatwave event

Develop collaborative partnership arrangements to better respond to heatwaves

Actions identified

1. Incorporate heatwave prevention and preparation information across all service provision areas strategic planning documents
2. Incorporate heatwave issues into training programs for staff and volunteers to ensure adequate knowledge of heatwave, their risk to heat stress and how to support other members in the community
3. In conjunction with Department of Health encourage high risk premises to have plans in place to respond to surge demand during heatwave events
4. Promote with key health services in the Surf Coast Shire the need to have access to backup power grid
5. Ensure Surf Coast Shire has access to a generator for power backup
6. Review existing protocols and formalize agreements with emergency services to incorporate specific reference to heatwave
7. Facilitate discussions with emergency services to ensure appropriate backup and ability to cope during heatwave events.
8. Identify essential services that require power to be maintained
9. Assist in educating community strategies to be undertaken during a power blackout
10. Develop an OH&S policy for staff who work in hot environments or could be exposed to heatwave events
11. Ensure Heatwave plan is appropriately integrated with other Council plans and Business Continuity Plan
12. Ensure heatwave is considered in Shire wide strategies for long term planning in design
13. Review and update Business Continuity Plan

This strategy aims to enhance the capacity of Council and responding agencies responsible for supporting heat vulnerable clients to maintain business continuity and service delivery. It also provides for educational learning for staff to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to educate and support heat vulnerable clients prior and during a heatwave.

It is also important to ensure that staff delivering client based services or working outdoors have a process in place such as:

- scheduling appointments for the coolest part of the day
- carrying cool drinking water
- wearing sunscreen, hat and appropriate clothing

4.3 Community and Agency Education

Develop and implement a community and agency education program

Actions identified

1. Engage community in establishing community-based heatwave initiatives
2. Ensure understanding of heatwave strategies undertaken by other agencies/service providers
3. Include heatwave awareness in New Resident Kits (2) Promote Good Neighbour Programs during the summer months to encourage neighbours to check on each other

Community and agency education commences prior to the summer season. Literature and communication tools provided by the Department of Health will be used to disseminate heat health information.

The first phase of councils heatwave planning will focus in generic community education messages and collaboration with local community services organisations to ensure heatwave messages reach heat vulnerable populations.²

A range of community resources are available from the Department of Health home page as well as that available through the Better Health Channel. These include but are not limited to:

Heat stress and related illness

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Heat_stress_and_heat-related_illness

Heat stress and the elderly

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Heat_stress_and_the_elderly

Managing heat stress

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/emergency_mgmnt/heat_stress.htm

Child Safety – hot weather

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Child_safety_hot_weather

Heat stress and sport

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Heat_stress_and_sport_reducing_the_risks

Heat stress – preventing heat stroke

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Heat_stress_preventing_heat_stroke?open&utm_campaign=rotation&utm_source=&utm_medium=social_posting

Climate change and health

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Climate_change_and_health

4.4 Events and Planning

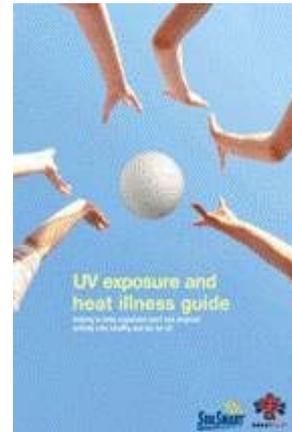
Develop guidelines for future design, events and recreation

Actions identified

1. Develop a street tree policy for the entire Shire
2. Plan for adequate shade and drinking water when completing Master plans for parks and reserves and designing new sports/community facilities
3. Continue to build capacity of event organisers. Communicate to event manager the need to contract additional support during events in the municipality

Surf Coast Shire hosts and supports safe and sustainable events which contribute to the quality of life of Surf Coast residents and visitors.

Surf Coast Shire provides leadership, support and facilitation to event organisers to build effective and strategic partnerships to develop best practises to mitigate risks associated with heat wave.



4.5 Heatwave Response

Heatwave response will be triggered when Department of Health confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached and informs Council.

Actions identified

1. Contact service providers to initiate required response to heatwave
2. Activate media messages for 'safety during the heatwave'
3. Provide current information and educational resources for consumers on the Council's website
4. Monitor Bureau of Meteorology during Response Stage

Communication will increase in frequency during the heatwave response and include more specific advice. Radio, television and national newspaper warnings would be issued by Department of Health. Council may employ additional dissemination methods such as local radio advertisements and distributing information through local community 'hubs'.

Community organisations respond to increasing heat stress incidence amongst vulnerable population groups. The community will be encouraged to check on their neighbours or activate a buddy system.

Council may be required to activate other measures such as the Emergency Management Plan if a heatwave is exacerbated by severity, length, blackouts or other emergency such as bushfire.²

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure Surf Coast Shire Council is delivering on its targets it must be adaptable and responsive. Evaluation not only helps to audit performance, it provides an opportunity to learn. By continuously reviewing and monitoring the performance of engagement activities it is possible to strengthen relationships, build awareness, promote accountability and deliver a more efficient output. Consideration should be given to the following questions in developing the evaluation plan;

- How has the community responded to the campaign?
- Has the campaign received negative or positive media feedback?
- Has Council implemented adaptation responses in line with the project's scope? If not what were the barriers?
- Have new opportunities been identified and fed back into the Adaptation Action Plan? Has this been easy to achieve? If not, why, and how can that be addressed?
- What issues and risks have emerged and how have they been responded to?
- Have new priorities emerged?
- Are community members still engaging with the program? If not why and how can this be addressed?
- How will the campaign fit in with the next year's budget and strategic plan?
- How can the campaign deliver better outcomes next time?

With any engagement campaign of this type, the focus is on the community, which will ultimately guide Council in its decision making processes. Listen to them, consider their views, celebrate successes and adapt accordingly.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/climate/heatwave.htm>
2. Adapted from the Great Shepparton Heatwave Plan 2009
3. Adapted from the Wodonga Heatwave Strategy 2008
4. United States Environment Protection Agency, Excessive Heat Events Guidebook 2006. http://www.epa.gov/hiri/about/pdf/EHOguide_final.pdf
5. Http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/downloads/heat_impact_rpt.pdf
6. <http://www.theage.com.au/national/heatwave-left-hundereds-dead-20090221-8ea4.html>
7. http://www.daff.gov.au_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/721285/csiro-bom-report-future-droughts.pdf
8. http://www.health.vic.gov/localgov/mphpfr/a_intro.htm
9. <http://www.euro.who.int/healthy-cities>
10. <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/climate/heatwave.htm>