



# Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2025-2028

*Hepburn*  
SHIRE COUNCIL



**Ambulance  
Victoria**



**FIRE  
RESCUE  
VICTORIA**



**Australian  
Red Cross**



Energy,  
Environment  
and Climate Action



Department  
of Health



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing



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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Hepburn MEMPC acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, DJAARA have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation, and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession, and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

The Hepburn MEMPC also acknowledges the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to the south-east and the Wadawurrung to the south-west, and pays respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. The Hepburn MEMPC acknowledges their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan (the Plan or MEMP) outlines Hepburn Shire's arrangements for mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery. It reflects the shared responsibility of government, agencies, businesses, and the community to support safer, more resilient communities. The Plan aligns with state and regional arrangements and is informed by Hepburn's local risk profile, operational capability and community context.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Audience

This Plan is intended for all organisations, agencies and community members who contribute to emergency management in Hepburn Shire. It recognises that effective emergency management relies on coordinated action across the sector and on informed community participation. While the Plan provides detailed guidance for emergency management practitioners, it is also written to be readable and accessible to the community, supporting shared understanding of emergency roles, local risks, and responsibilities.

With a focus on shared responsibility, the Hepburn Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) also see this Plan as a community document. Ensuring members of the community understand emergency management processes, including their role within them, will help us work together to build the sector's vision of 'safer and more resilient communities.

### 1.2 What is an Emergency?

In Victoria, the term emergency is defined by legislation and state emergency management doctrine. Under section 3 of the Emergency Management Act 2013, an emergency is:

*"is an event or circumstance that endangers, or threatens to endanger, the safety or health of any person, or that destroys or damages, or threatens to destroy or damage, property or the environment."*

The EM Act further describes the types of events or circumstances that may constitute an emergency. An emergency may be (based on the EM Act 2013):

- a fire, flood, storm, earthquake, heatwave or other natural event
- an epidemic or pandemic
- a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service (such as power, water, gas, transport or telecommunications)
- a hazard that may cause loss of life, injury or damage to the environment or property
- an incident involving hazardous materials or dangerous goods
- an event that impacts the continuity of critical infrastructure or essential supply chains
- an event that results in widespread social, economic or environmental consequences.

These events may occur suddenly or develop over time, and may be localised, widespread, isolated, or multi-site in nature. Emergencies can also create cascading or compounding impacts, requiring coordinated action across multiple agencies and sectors.

Understanding how emergencies are defined and grouped under the Emergency Management Act 2013 supports consistent planning, decision-making, and coordination across Victoria's emergency management arrangements.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Plan

The MEMP is required under the Emergency Management Act 2013. The Act establishes a coordinated, integrated and risk-based emergency management system for Victoria. It mandates that each municipal district maintain an emergency management plan that addresses mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery.

Under the EM Act 2013, the MEMP must:

- outline municipal-level arrangements for managing emergencies
- identify and assess local hazards, risks and consequences
- specify roles and responsibilities across agencies and organisations
- support coordinated response, relief and recovery activities
- align with the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the relevant Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP)
- be developed in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines and reviewed regularly.

The legislative intent is to ensure that every municipality has clear, coordinated and publicly accessible emergency management arrangements, strengthening the safety, wellbeing and resilience of local communities.

#### **The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)**

The MEMPC is established under the EM Act 2013 to lead and oversee emergency management planning within the municipality. The MEMPC is a multi-agency committee comprising representatives from Council, emergency services, health and community organisations, essential service providers and other relevant partners.

The MEMPC is responsible for:

- preparing, reviewing and approving the MEMP
- ensuring the Plan is consistent with the EM Act, SEM, REM and Ministerial Guidelines
- contributing agency expertise, local knowledge and operational capability
- ensuring local arrangements reflect shared responsibility principles
- strengthening interoperability and coordination across agencies
- ensuring the Plan is relevant and accessible to the community.

Through this collaborative structure, the MEMPC ensures that the Plan is not just a legislative requirement but a practical, evidence-informed framework that reflects Hepburn's emergency risks, community needs and sector capability.

## **Why This Plan for the Community**

Council and the MEMPC prepare this Plan to:

- reduce the exposure of the community to emergency risks
- improve local preparedness and awareness
- support effective response, relief and recovery
- ensure consistent, coordinated and accountable emergency management
- protect life, health, property, the environment and essential services.

The Plan provides the community with confidence that local arrangements are robust, compliant and aligned with state and regional arrangements—and that Council and its partners are working together to support safer and more resilient communities.

## **Scope**

The Plan adopts an all-communities, all-emergencies approach. It applies to:

- Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 emergencies
- natural, technological and human-induced hazards
- residents, visitors, workers and communities of interest
- the full emergency management spectrum (mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery).

## **Guiding Principles**

The Plan is guided by:

- the State Emergency Management Priorities
- the National Principles for Disaster Recovery
- the Victorian Preparedness Framework
- principles of shared responsibility, inclusion, interoperability and continuous improvement
- respect for the leadership, rights and knowledge of Traditional Owners.

These principles ensure that emergency management decisions support the protection of life, well-being, essential services, economic continuity and environmental and cultural values.

## **Shared Responsibility**

Emergency management works best when everyone plays a part. The law that guides emergency management in Victoria, the Emergency Management Act 2013, and the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) both emphasize shared responsibility.

Council and emergency services plan and coordinate how emergencies are managed. Local organisations, businesses and essential services prepare for disruption and support their communities. Individuals and households prepare for local risks, stay informed and look out for each other.

By working together, the whole community is safer, better prepared and more able to recover from emergencies.

### **State Emergency Management Priorities**

Victoria's emergency services and local governments operate to a consistent set of priorities during emergencies:

- Protect life – the safety of community members and emergency personnel, supported by clear, timely and accessible information and warnings.
- Maintain essential services and critical community assets – including power, water, wastewater, telecommunications, transport networks, hospitals, schools and other facilities that enable response, support wellbeing and sustain continuity.
- Reduce impacts on homes, businesses and local economies – limiting disruption to daily life, employment, supply chains and community stability, and supporting transition into relief and recovery.
- Protect the natural environment and cultural heritage – recognising the ecological, cultural and tourism values across Hepburn Shire and the importance of preserving these assets for long-term community and environmental outcomes.

These priorities provide a clear foundation for coordinated action by agencies and the Council and ensure decisions remain aligned with what matters most to the community.

### **Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2022-2025**

The Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2022–25 (SAP) sets the statewide priorities for strengthening emergency management capability, governance and community resilience. Endorsed by the State Crisis and Resilience Council and overseen by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management, the SAP provides direction that all councils and agencies must align with.

These priorities guide Hepburn's MEMP to ensure local planning, exercising, and review activities reflect state objectives for risk reduction, workforce capability, shared responsibility and continuous improvement across all phases of emergency management.

### **Risk Management, Continuous Improvement and Lessons Management**

This Plan is founded on the principles of AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management, ensuring that decision-making is structured, evidence-based and responsive to uncertainty.

This standard promotes continual identification, analysis and treatment of risks, and the regular review of the effectiveness of controls. By aligning with ISO 31000, the MEMP embeds a culture of continuous improvement, recognising that effective emergency management depends on learning from both planned exercises and real-world events to adapt to emerging hazards, technologies, and community needs.

Continuous improvement within Victoria's emergency management sector is also supported through the Emergency Management (EM) Learn Lessons Management Framework, which provides a statewide process for capturing, analysing and applying lessons from incidents and exercises.

Through the MEMPC, Hepburn Shire Council will participate in this framework to share learnings, implement improvement actions, and monitor their effectiveness across all phases of emergency management—mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery.

This approach ensures that the MEMP remains a living document, strengthened by reflection, collaboration and the collective experience of Victoria's emergency management network.

### **Authority**

In 2020, the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018 (EMLA Act 2018) amended the Emergency Management Act 2013 (EM Act 2013) to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning at state, regional, and municipal levels in Victoria.

The amended EM Act 2013 created an obligation for a MEMPC to be established in each municipal district of Victoria, including the alpine resorts, which, for the act, are taken to be municipal districts. Each MEMPC is a multi-agency group whose members bring organisation, industry, or personal expertise to 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 s77, Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

## **1.4 Plan Assurance and Approval**

### **Assurance**

Pursuant to the [EM Act 2013 s77 Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans](#), the MEMPC are responsible for preparing and submitting to the REMPC, a Statement of Assurance to confirm that this MEMP complies with the requirements of the *EM Act 2013* and guidelines.

A Statement of Assurance was submitted to the Grampians REMPC on

### **Approval**

This MEMP (*waiting approval*) by the Hepburn Shire MEMPC and the Grampians REMPC Sub-Committee for Assurance, on behalf of the REMPC.

This MEMP comes into effect when it is published on the Hepburn Shire Council website <https://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au> and remains in effect until superseded by an approved and published update.

## **1.5 Plan Review**

To ensure this plan provides a current, integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to emergency management and remains effective, it will be regularly reviewed and updated as required.

At a minimum, the MEMP must be thoroughly reviewed at least every 3 years. This plan will be reviewed no later than 10 February 2028.

This MEMP is current at the time of publication and remains in effect until modified, superseded or withdrawn. It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure they have the current version of the MEMP and Sub-Plans.

An urgent update of this plan is permitted if there is a 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 council's website and remain in force for a maximum period of three months.

## 1.6 Accessibility

In developing this Plan, due consideration has been given by the Hepburn Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to the Victorian Government's [Accessibility guidelines for government communications](#).

This MEMP has been written in plain English. The use of acronyms and jargon has been minimised wherever possible; however, a Glossary of Terms and Acronyms is included in Section 9 (Appendices).

The MEMPC is thoroughly committed to building community resilience by making emergency management planning accessible to all members of the community.

### Hyperlinks

Many of the documents, policies, and websites referenced in this MEMP are live and subject to ongoing review and amendment. As a result, hyperlinks are included throughout this MEMP so readers can access the current version of the reference materials.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that hyperlinks are current and functional, there may be occasions when a hyperlink no longer works.

### Operational Information

Historically, MEMPs have contained information on municipal council- and agency-specific emergency management. Under the reformed emergency management planning arrangements detailed in Section 1.2, ownership of this MEMP has been transferred from Hepburn Shire Council to the multi-agency MEMPC.

As a result, municipal council- and agency-specific emergency management information has been removed and is now included in complementary plans, standard operating procedures, and sub-plans. Please note that sub-plans are considered an extension of this MEMP and are referenced as such throughout this MEMP. Sub-plans are relied upon to provide hazard-specific information.

### Support

If you have specific questions about this MEMP or have any other queries relating to emergency management planning arrangements within Hepburn Shire, please send an email to [MEMPC@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:MEMPC@hepburn.vic.gov.au).

Please note that this email is not monitored 24/7, and response times to inquiries will depend on operational requirements and staff availability. If you require emergency assistance, please ring 000.

## 1.7 Distribution of the MEMP

The Hepburn Shire MEMP is for the use of the members of the Hepburn Shire MEMPC, Emergency Management Organisations and the community. The Hepburn Shire MEMP and amended copies will be distributed to the MEMPC membership electronically.

- A Public Copy is available from the:
- Hepburn Shire Council website: [hepburn.vic.gov.au](http://hepburn.vic.gov.au)
- State Library of Victoria: [www.slv.vic.gov.au](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au)
- Emergency Management Victoria

Please refer to the Disclaimer of this plan for further details about the intended uses and appropriate distribution of this document.

Please note that the Public Version has information and contact details removed to comply with confidentiality and privacy requirements. The Restricted version includes full details and is available only to MEMPC members or approved agencies with a role or responsibility detailed in this plan.

The current version of this sub-plan is maintained by the MEMPC on the “Crisisworks” emergency management platform for Council and approved agency staff access.

## 1.8 Disclaimer

No individual, organisation or other entity should consider this plan to be entirely without error or omission, and by using this document, the user acknowledges that this plan is subject to amendment and revocation without notice at the discretion of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee.

The authors and publishers of this plan disclaim all and any liability to any individual, organisation or other entity, in respect to anything done or omitted to be done by any individual, organisation or other entity in reliance upon any aspect of this publication.

Some sections of the plan may be withheld by the public to protect confidentiality.

Section 60AI(2) of the EM Act 2013 allows the MEMPC and Emergency Management Victoria to exclude information from this published version, that is related to critical infrastructure, personal information or information that is of a commercially sensitive nature.

## 2. Municipal Profile

### 2.1 Introduction

The municipal profile and its social, community, topographic, environmental, transport, industry, and economic features offer important context for understanding the hazards within Hepburn Shire.

These characteristics influence the shire's exposure to risk, affect the scale and complexity of emergency impacts, and determine the capabilities needed for prevention, preparedness, response, relief, and recovery.

The State Emergency Management Priorities lay the groundwork for managing these risks and ensure that life, community wellbeing, vital infrastructure, and environmental values remain central to all emergency management decisions.

### 2.2 Overview

Hepburn Shire is in the Central Highlands of Victoria, over an hour's drive north of Melbourne, situated between the provincial cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. Covering 1,470 square kilometers, the Shire lies along the Great Dividing Range, with land draining to the north, making it an important water catchment area for drinking water and irrigation.

Most of the Shire is rural and undulating. The western half, including the business districts of Clunes and Creswick, mainly features large-scale broad-acre farmland and pockets of dense forest. The eastern half, including the business districts of Daylesford and Trentham, is heavily treed with native forest and contains scattered areas of farmland.

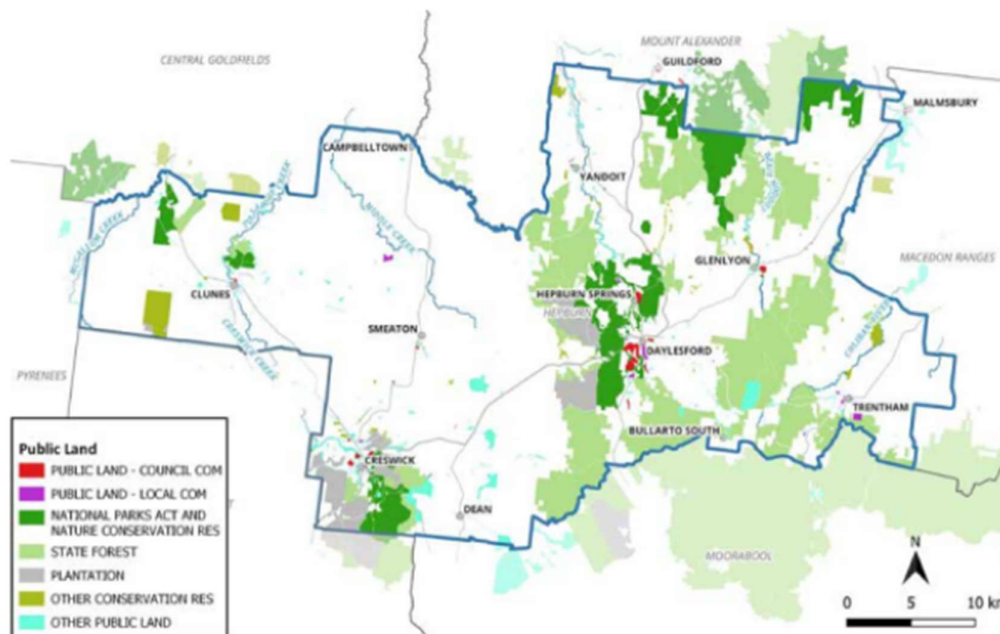


Figure 1. Map of Hepburn Shire Council

## 2.3 Social Environment and Demographics

Understanding Hepburn's social environment and population characteristics is central to effective emergency management. The Shire's demographic makeup, economic conditions, and community diversity influence how different people experience risk, access information, and recover from emergencies.

Examining these factors helps identify where additional support, communication, or planning focus is needed, ensuring that preparedness, response, relief, and recovery arrangements are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all members of the Hepburn community.

Hepburn Shire's identity is shaped by its people, place, and landscape, a community that is proud, connected, and resilient, yet exposed to a dynamic natural environment.

The combination of an ageing and dispersed population, forested terrain, rich heritage townships, and a strong tourism presence means the Shire faces complex emergency challenges, particularly from bushfires, floods, storms, and extreme heat.

These characteristics also underpin its strength: a culture of volunteering, creativity, and cooperation that enables residents, emergency services, and partner agencies to work together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

## 2.4 Population Profile

Hepburn Shire's population profile is vital in shaping how emergencies are experienced, managed, and recovered from across the municipality. This section explores how the Shire's social and demographic characteristics relate to its top three emergency risks — bushfire, flood, and extreme heat — to better understand the needs, vulnerabilities, and strengths that influence local emergency management planning.

The Shire's population is modest but stable, supported by lifestyle migration, proximity to Ballarat and Melbourne, and a strong tourism economy.

- Hepburn Shire is home to 16,604 residents (ABS 2021), reflecting steady growth of around 20% since 2001.
- The community is dispersed across rural and forested landscapes with major townships in Daylesford (2,780), Creswick (3,255), Clunes (1,892), and Trentham (1,377).
- The region's population density (11.3 persons/km<sup>2</sup>) is relatively low, influencing accessibility, service delivery, and emergency logistics.

The Shire's ageing population, dispersed townships, high visitor numbers, and local economic diversity create unique patterns of exposure and resilience. These characteristics influence how individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from major emergencies.

### Age Structure and Population Dynamics

Hepburn Shire has an older demographic profile than both the Grampians region and the State. The median age of 52 (Victoria: 38) reflects a higher proportion of retirees and fewer young adults, driven by outward migration for education and employment.

Key features include:

- 14.2% aged 0–14, below the state average of 17.6%.
- 37% aged over 60, highlighting increased vulnerability to heat, health, and mobility risks.
- High volunteering rates (over 25%), showing strong social connectedness and civic pride.
- Population growth projections indicate steady but modest increases (0.6% per annum) through 2036, primarily in Creswick and Daylesford.

### **Socio-Economic Conditions**

Hepburn's SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (~1006) sits around the national average but masks pockets of disadvantage. According to the Grampians Regional Environmental Scan (2025):

- 13% of Hepburn residents live below the poverty line — one of the higher rates within the region.
- Older residents, single-person households, renters and casual workers are more likely to experience financial stress.
- 22.7% of dwellings were unoccupied on Census night, reflecting high numbers of holiday homes and short-stay accommodation, complicating emergency communication and recovery logistics.
- 39.5% of employed residents work part-time, and median weekly incomes are below state averages (household \$1,281; individual \$666).

These conditions heighten economic vulnerability, particularly for those employed in the tourism, hospitality, and care sectors.

### **Health, Disability and Access to Services**

More than 1,000 residents require assistance with core activities, a 16% increase since 2016—emphasising the need for accessible communication, mobility assistance, and continuity of care during emergencies. Dispersed geography and limited public transport increase the risk of isolation, particularly for older and mobility-impaired residents.

Primary healthcare is concentrated in Daylesford and Creswick, with acute services provided through Ballarat Base Hospital.

### **Cultural diversity and inclusion**

Hepburn is one of the more diverse LGAs in the Grampians region:

- 22.3% of residents were born overseas, with the most common countries of birth being the UK, Italy, Germany, and China.
- 87.4% speak only English at home, while 6.8% speak a language other than English, primarily Italian, German, and Mandarin.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 1.1% (~180 residents), mostly younger families (median age 25).
- The Dja Dja Wurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples are recognised Traditional Owners across the Shire.

The combination of cultural diversity and a large short-term visitor population reinforces the need for plain-language, multilingual, and culturally safe emergency communication.

### Vulnerable and At-Risk Groups

| At-Risk Group                                            | Vulnerability Factors                                  | Emergency Management Implications                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Older people (65+)</b>                                | High proportion; limited mobility; health dependencies | Heat-health alerts, welfare checks, and evacuation support                                                                         |
| <b>People with disability and carers</b>                 | 1,000+ need daily living assistance                    | Accessible warnings, tailored refuge and shelter options                                                                           |
| <b>Low-income households and renters</b>                 | 13% poverty rate; limited insurance coverage           | Targeted preparedness materials, access to FAQ's and recovery grants                                                               |
| <b>Tourism and hospitality workforce</b>                 | Casual or part-time work and income disruption risk    | Business continuity education and hardship assistance                                                                              |
| <b>Visitors and non-residents</b>                        | Large transient population; unfamiliar with hazards    | Emergency management information available online, Visitor Information Centres, VicEmergency QR and sharing of multilingual alerts |
| <b>Aboriginal community</b>                              | Cultural and connection-to-Country factors             | Partnership with DJAARA on recovery and land-based healing                                                                         |
| <b>Culturally &amp; linguistically diverse residents</b> | Language barriers; social isolation                    | Multilingual resources, translated emergency messaging                                                                             |

Figure 2 - Vulnerable and At-Risk Groups

### Social Environment Summary

Hepburn Shire's social environment reflects a highly engaged, civically active community that is deeply connected to its place. However, it is also characterised by an ageing population, scattered settlements, and a reliance on the service and tourism sectors.

These factors create a complex setting where structural challenges such as limited transport, housing insecurity, and uneven access to health and emergency services are offset by strong local networks and volunteer efforts.

The community's experiences with repeated bushfires, major storms and floods, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have fostered practical awareness and local initiative but have also exposed fatigue, inequities in recovery, and gaps in service delivery between rural and township areas.

Hepburn's social profile requires a people-centered, community-focused approach to emergency management, which strengthens local capacity, supports isolated and ageing residents, and promotes inclusion and preparedness across all communities and sectors.

### Person-Centered Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP)

Hepburn Municipal Emergency Management recognises that inclusion and equity are fundamental to effective emergency management. Several Council officers have undertaken Person-Centered Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) and Disability Inclusive Emergency Management (DIEM) training to strengthen their understanding of accessibility and lived experience within emergency preparedness and recovery.

While further work is required, the MEMPC is committed to embedding inclusive design and accessible practice across all stages of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

### **Gender and Disaster**

Research consistently shows that women's experience of family violence can escalate in communities affected by disaster, and that traditional gender expectations and post-crisis stress often strain men's health and wellbeing. These factors are now considered in Hepburn's planning to ensure that relief and recovery environments remain safe, trauma-informed, and supportive, reducing the likelihood that any person or group is further disadvantaged by the impacts of an emergency.

## **2.5 Topography and Landscape**

Hepburn Shire's landscape is defined by its volcanic origins, mineral springs, forested ranges, and fertile valleys within the Central Highlands. The Shire sits in the upper catchments of the Loddon and Campaspe river systems, spanning a diverse topography of rolling hills, volcanic cones, plateaus, and deeply incised gullies.

Extensive public land, including the Wombat State Forest, Hepburn Regional Park, and Creswick State Forest, provides vital biodiversity, recreation, and tourism value but also increases the municipality's exposure to bushfire, storm, and heat-related emergencies.

Topography and elevation strongly influence the type and behaviour of emergencies that affect Hepburn communities:

### **Bushfire and Grassfire**

The forested ridges, steep slopes, and dry gullies across the Shire create conditions for rapid fire spread and ember attack. North- and west-facing slopes experience the highest fire intensity during hot, dry winds.

At the same time, forest-fringe communities such as Lyonville, Glenlyon, and Sailors Falls face elevated risk due to proximity to heavy fuels and limited egress routes. The elevation differences between the Wombat Plateau and lower valleys accelerate fire movement and complicate suppression.

### **Flood**

The Shire's low-lying catchments and historic creek valleys—including Creswick Creek, Birch Creek, and Jim Crow Creek—make several townships vulnerable to overland flooding. Runoff from steep volcanic slopes during heavy rainfall quickly channels into these systems, often overwhelming old drainage networks in heritage centres like Creswick and Clunes. Localised flash flooding also occurs where impervious surfaces and undersized culverts concentrate water flow.

### **Storm and Wind**

Elevated settlements such as Trentham, Musk, and Mount Franklin are exposed to high wind gusts and falling trees during severe storm events. The combination of mature forest cover, shallow volcanic soils, and saturated ground following rain increases the likelihood of treefall and road blockages.

In contrast, sheltered valleys can experience intense microbursts and localised flooding, isolating smaller rural communities.

## Extreme Heat

Despite its cooler highland climate, Hepburn experiences significant temperature variation between upland and lowland areas. Northern plains around Clunes and Smeaton regularly record higher maximum temperatures than elevated towns like Trentham.

Prolonged heatwaves dry vegetation, elevate bushfire risk, and place additional pressure on power supply, aged care, and health services. Older housing stock and limited tree canopy in some townships reduce natural cooling, increasing vulnerability for older residents and those without access to air conditioning.

This complex topography means emergency conditions can vary markedly between towns only kilometres apart. For emergency services, the landscape presents challenges in access, communication, and coordination, requiring pre-identified staging areas, refuge sites, and alternate routes.

For the community, it reinforces the need for localised risk awareness, early preparedness, and neighbour support, recognising that bushfire, flood, storm, and extreme heat events are all shaped by the Shire's unique physical environment.

## 2.6 Climate, Climate Change and Environmental Conditions

Hepburn Shire has a cool, temperate climate influenced by its elevation in the Central Highlands. Average annual rainfall varies from 700 to over 1,000 millimetres, with higher rainfall recorded in the forested highlands around Trentham and lower levels near Clunes and Smeaton.

Summer temperatures can rise above 35°C during heatwaves, while winter months are cool and damp, with regular frosts and occasional snowfalls on higher ridges. These climate variations create a landscape that is both productive and prone to hazards — where long dry spells increase the risk of bushfires, heavy rains can cause flooding and landslips, and extended heatwaves threaten community health, energy supply, and critical infrastructure.

### Climate change

Climate change is directly affecting emergency management by increasing the severity and frequency of extreme weather events. A continued rise in daily maximum and minimum temperatures will result in more prolonged heatwaves and longer, less predictable fire seasons. Storms and extreme rainfall events are also expected to become more intense, while annual rainfall continues to decline.

Climate change forecasts for the Central Highlands suggest warmer average temperatures, more frequent heatwaves, and longer dry periods punctuated by brief, intense rainfall events. These changes will likely increase the frequency and intensity of bushfires, flash floods, and extreme heat events across Hepburn.

For emergency services and the community, this highlights the importance of adaptive planning, resilient infrastructure, and climate-informed emergency education to protect the Shire's people, economy, and natural environment in the future.

While committed to mitigating climate change through multiple Council-led and collaborative initiatives, as detailed in Sustainable Hepburn. Hepburn Shire is also focused on maximising climate resilience to lessen climate-related impacts and empower communities to better prepare for and recover from the challenges to come. For more information, read the Council Plan 2025-2029.

## 2.7 Vulnerable Persons Register (Community Organisations and Facilities)

The Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR) is a secure register managed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). It identifies a small number of individuals within Hepburn Shire who have been assessed in accordance with the Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy as being particularly at risk.

Persons on the register are unable to make emergency plans and cannot identify any community supports who may be able to assist them during an emergency. Hepburn Shire coordinates the Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR) by working with service providers to enter and maintain records of eligible clients.

During an emergency, the VPR will be accessed by Victoria Police to ascertain the safety of those individuals who may be at risk from the emergency. A regularly updated Vulnerable Facilities Register is also available to emergency service agencies in the event of an emergency. This register contains details of facilities where people may require extra consideration during an evacuation, such as aged care facilities and kindergartens.

## 2.8 Essential Infrastructure and Major Hazard Facilities

### Regional and local context

The Grampians REMP identifies that critical and essential infrastructure in Hepburn Shire supports community resilience and economic continuity across energy, water, transport, communications, and health systems.

These systems are interdependent, particularly through the energy network, which underpins water pumping, digital communications, and the continuity of emergency services. The regional plan also highlights cascading risks across these sectors during compound events (e.g. storm + power failure + communications disruption).

Critical infrastructure and Major Hazard facilities providers can offer specialised advice to the Hepburn MEMPC and sub-committees as needed, which helps improve mutual understanding of risk.

### Essential infrastructure – Regional and Local Context

At a regional level, the Grampians network of shared energy, transport and water assets connects Hepburn with Ballarat and surrounding municipalities, meaning any regional disruption can affect local systems. Hepburn's hilly topography, heavily treed environment, and dispersed settlements make much of this infrastructure vulnerable to bushfire, storm damage, flooding, and prolonged power outages.

Within Hepburn Shire, essential infrastructure includes:

- approximately 1,206 km of electricity distribution lines, 61.8 km of gas pipeline
- two water-treatment plants at Daylesford and Creswick,
- three waste transfer stations
- extensive road and rail network linking Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Trentham.
- Fourteen mobile towers and three NBN exchanges support telecommunications, though several rural areas still experience black spots and power-dependency issues.

- The Shire's Daylesford Hospital, community health centres and aged-care facilities provide vital medical and social services to an ageing population and large visitor base.

These facilities sustain everyday life and are essential for emergency coordination, relief operations, and recovery.

### **Link to Hepburn's Emergency Risks and Hazards**

Local infrastructure resilience underpins Hepburn's top three emergency risks—bushfire, storm and flood, and hazardous-materials incidents.

- During a bushfire, powerlines, communications towers and transport corridors are potential ignition or failure points that can isolate communities.
- Storm and flood events regularly cause road closures, power outages and wastewater overflows, disrupting access and health services.
- The movement of fuel and chemicals along the Midland Highway and Daylesford-Ballan route links infrastructure failure directly to hazardous-materials risk.
- Close coordination between Council, Powercor, Central Highlands Water, Coliban Water, Telstra, NBN Co, CFA and VicSES remains critical to protect continuity of services and ensure rapid restoration following disruption.

### **Essential infrastructure**

Essential infrastructure includes those physical facilities, supply chains, systems, assets, information technologies and communication networks which, if destroyed, degraded or rendered unavailable for an extended period, would significantly impact the social or economic well-being of the community.

The Hepburn MEMPC considers essential infrastructure within its planning to mitigate service disruptions and their subsequent impacts on the community.

Essential infrastructure within Hepburn Shire includes:

- communications infrastructure,
- 61.8 kilometres of gas pipelines,
- 1206.7 kilometres of major electricity transmission lines,
- 89.6 kilometres of rail network
- 203.6 kilometres of major roads.

Critical infrastructure providers can provide specialised advice to the Hepburn MEMPC and sub-committees as required, which assists in improving the mutual understanding of risk.

For detailed information on essential infrastructure within and surrounding Hepburn Shire, visit [Emergency Management Victoria](#) .

### **Major hazard facilities**

Major hazard facilities are locations such as oil refineries, chemical plants, and large fuel or chemical storage sites where significant quantities of hazardous materials are present. These facilities are managed and regulated by WorkSafe Victoria, with assistance from the Environment Protection Authority Victoria. Regionally, the Grampians REMP notes a small number of chemical-handling facilities, including one located in Hepburn.

The Arch Wood Protection (Arxada) site at 10 Station Street, Trentham, is a licensed Major Hazard Facility (MHF) regulated by WorkSafe Victoria. It stores and treats timber with industrial preservatives and maintains a WorkSafe-approved Safety Case and Off-Site Emergency Plan.

Smaller-scale risks also arise from LPG depots and fuel storage in Creswick and Daylesford, as well as agricultural-chemical depots and the transport of dangerous goods along the Midland Highway and Ballan–Daylesford Road. These create continuous risk corridors for mobile fuel and chemical loads that traverse town centres and forested terrain.

The Hepburn Shire MEMPC has committed to consistently engaging with the major hazard facilities to promote cooperation between the operator and all agencies represented on the MEMPC. This engagement promotes regularly exercising plans and the mutual development of knowledge, capability, and capacity.

### **Relevance to Hepburn’s Emergency Risks and Hazards**

The Trentham MHF elevates Hepburn’s exposure to technological and industrial emergencies within a township setting.

Although a major release is unlikely, potential consequences include toxic smoke, fire, and environmental contamination extending beyond the site boundary.

This hazard interacts with Hepburn’s broader risk profile:

- A bushfire or severe storm could compromise containment systems at the MHF or smaller depots.
- Transport accidents involving dangerous goods may block evacuation routes or threaten waterways.
- Power or communication outages could delay response and community warning.

The Hepburn MEMPC, in partnership with WorkSafe Victoria, CFA, VicSES and the site operator, ensures that the Trentham facility’s Off-Site Emergency Plan is fully integrated with the MEMP and exercised biennially. This collaboration enhances readiness for rare, high-impact events and aligns local planning with regional strategies under the Grampians REMP and Emergency Risks in Victoria 2023 framework.

## **2.9 Major Industry, Transport and Economy**

Hepburn Shire has a varied economic foundation supported by well-established industries and an expanding visitor sector. Agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services play key roles in local employment and business activity.

These sectors provide a stable economic foundation for the municipality and support year-round services for residents, workers, and visitors. Tourism continues to be a key economic driver, with the region’s mineral springs, heritage towns, and recreation assets attracting a significant number of visitors from across Victoria.

### **Transport**

The transport network is mainly road-based and supports daily movement across the municipality and into neighbouring centres.

- The Midland Highway provides the primary north–south connection, linking Hepburn Shire with Ballarat, Bendigo and major regional transport corridors.

- Other key routes include the Daylesford–Trentham Road, Daylesford–Malmsbury Road, Ballan–Daylesford Road and Creswick–Newstead Road. These roads support local travel, freight activity and access for emergency services.
- Council maintains an extensive local road network that includes sealed and unsealed roads, footpaths, kerb and channel assets and associated signage.
- This includes a local road network of 612 km sealed roads and 844 km unsealed roads – with corresponding infrastructure: 82 km of kerb & channel, 35 km of footpaths and 5,000 road signs.

Rail transport plays a smaller role but provides an important connection for Creswick. The regional passenger service supports access to Ballarat and Melbourne and offers an additional transport option for residents, workers and visitors. Coach services supplement this network and provide links between townships with lower public transport availability.

### **Link to Hepburn’s Emergency Risks and Hazards**

Rail and coach services intersect with the municipality’s emergency risk environment in several ways.

- Passenger movements increase the number of people relying on timely information and coordinated arrangements during disruptive events.
- Rail lines and coach routes can be affected by extreme weather, fallen trees, telecommunication outages or road blockages that disrupt scheduled services.
- These disruptions may impact the mobility of residents with limited transport alternatives and increase demand for local relief services.
- Transport corridors can also intersect with bushfire-prone landscapes, raising considerations for smoke impacts, line closures and emergency access.

Integration of rail and public transport considerations into the MEMP supports coordinated planning, continuity arrangements and communication strategies across partner agencies.

### **Economy, Tourism and Recreation**

Hepburn Shire’s economy is underpinned by a diverse mix of industries that together support community prosperity and service delivery. The accommodation and food services sector employs approximately 850 people, accounting for around 15% of total employment in the municipality.

Agriculture remains a significant contributor: the sector’s output generates an estimated gross value added of \$75 million and over 86 % of its output is exported. The visitor economy further strengthens the local economic base with a total tourism spend of \$434 million recorded for the 12 months ended March 2022; overnight visitor spends alone reached \$276 million.

These industry streams create employment, broaden business diversity, and shape the Shire's economic footprint in ways relevant to emergency management planning and risk-resilience frameworks.

### **The Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails)**

The Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails) mountain-bike network is a significant new asset for the municipality. The network includes approximately 60 kilometres of purpose-built trails of varying difficulty and offers facilities at the Hammon Park trailhead, such as accessible amenities, parking, bike wash and charging points.

Its proximity to the Creswick town centre, regional rail services and the Midland Highway enhances access for riders from across Victoria. Community feedback since its opening indicates an increase in local activity, business visitation and recreational use, reflecting its growing role in the municipality's visitor economy.

Together, these economic, transport and recreational features form an important part of Hepburn Shire's municipal profile. They shape local risk and influence emergency management planning considerations.

### **Economy, Tourism and Recreation link to Hepburn's Emergency Risks and Hazards**

This economic and visitor profile interacts with Hepburn's broader risk environment:

- Bushfire, severe storm or extreme heat can affect visitors in forested areas, outdoor recreation sites and along the Creswick Trails.
- Road or transport incidents may disrupt visitor movement, delay emergency access or affect key tourism routes and event locations.
- Power, water or telecommunications outages can interrupt business continuity for accommodation and hospitality providers and increase demand for community information and support.
- Flooding in Creswick, Clunes or drainage corridors can affect businesses, visitor access and the safety of people unfamiliar with local conditions.
- Hazardous materials incidents involving agricultural chemicals, small industry sites or freight movement may affect town centres, rural communities or the transport network.

## **2.10 Emergency Management Regions**

Hepburn Shire sits within the Grampians Emergency Management Region and shares its northern boundary with the Loddon Mallee Region. This location places the municipality within a network of regional partners that support preparedness, response and recovery during emergencies.

Weather systems, bushfire behaviour, and flood patterns often cross regional boundaries, so Hepburn works closely with neighbouring councils and agencies from both regions. These partnerships ensure that the Shire can access specialist skills, additional crews and coordinated recovery support when local needs increase, and they form an important part of how Hepburn plans for and manages emergencies.

## 2.11 History of Emergencies

The emergencies listed below are significant incidents that have required a multi-agency response. Non-major emergencies (also known as single incidents) are not captured below. The locations listed were the townships' hardest hit; however, other places within the Shire may have been impacted to a lesser degree. The Hepburn MEMPC acknowledges that emergencies of any type or size can have long-term impacts on individuals and communities.

| Incident               | Location                                                                                  | Date           |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Bushfire</b>        | Bullarto                                                                                  | February 2009  |
| <b>Major flood</b>     | Creswick and Clunes                                                                       | September 2010 |
| <b>Major flood</b>     | Creswick and Clunes                                                                       | January 2011   |
| <b>Major flood</b>     | Shire wide                                                                                | September 2016 |
| <b>Bushfire</b>        | Hepburn                                                                                   | February 2019  |
| <b>Pandemic</b>        | Global                                                                                    | March 2020     |
| <b>Storm</b>           | 45% of Shire, primarily in the East<br>(Trentham, Bullarto, Glenlyon, Musk,<br>Lyonville) | June 2021      |
| <b>Flood</b>           | Creswick                                                                                  | January 2022   |
| <b>Flood</b>           | Statewide                                                                                 | October 2022   |
| <b>Major collision</b> | Daylesford                                                                                | November 2023  |
| <b>Fire</b>            | Clunes                                                                                    | January 2024   |
| <b>Fire</b>            | Creswick                                                                                  | December 2024  |
| <b>Fire</b>            | Daylesford                                                                                | April 2025     |

Figure 3 History of Emergencies in Hepburn

### 3. Planning

Section 3 explains how Hepburn Shire and emergency services plan for emergencies. It shows how agencies and community organisations work together, share information and prepare for events such as bushfires, storms, floods and public health emergencies. The section also outlines how Council meets its legislative responsibilities and keeps plans up to date through training, exercises and regular reviews. These arrangements help ensure the community is supported before, during and after emergencies.

#### 3.1 Victoria's Emergency Management Framework

The EM Act 2013 requires three tiers of emergency management planning in Victoria – state, regional and municipal. The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) specifies who does what in an emergency and documents arrangements for mitigation, response and recovery. It acknowledges that everyone has a role to play, from individuals and businesses to emergency service agencies.

The Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) provides further detail and context relevant to emergency management in the region. For emergency management purposes, Hepburn Shire sits within the Grampians region, which includes 10 other local government areas.

The Plan provides localised information and context specific to the Hepburn Shire municipality. In line with the legislation's intention, the Hepburn MEMPC has made every effort to avoid duplication with the higher-level documents.

Figure 4 outlines the emergency management planning hierarchy. This Plan should be read in conjunction with the SEMP and the REMP.

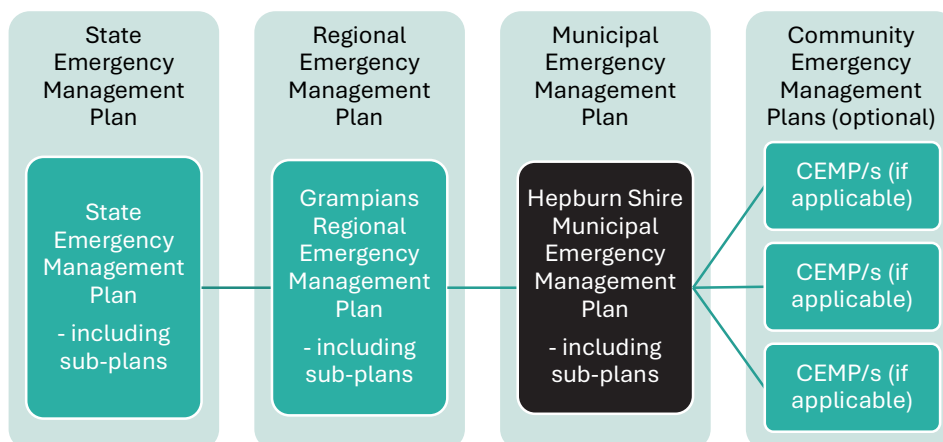


Figure 4 Victoria's Emergency Management Hierarchy

#### 3.2 Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

Inter-agency collaboration is paramount to effective emergency management planning. In accordance with Section 59A of the EM Act 2013 the following agencies and individual(s) are represented on the MEMPC:

- Victoria Police
- Ambulance Victoria

- Australian Red Cross
- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Victoria State Emergency Service
- Central Highlands Rural Health
- A Nominated Community Representative

### **MEMPC Chairperson**

In accordance with the EM Act 2013 (s59B) the Hepburn Shire Council Chief Executive Officer is responsible for nominating a member of staff to be the MEMPC Chairperson.

The MEMPC Chairperson role is currently held by the Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM). The Chairperson is responsible for (EM Act 2013 s 59B(2)):

- chairing meetings of the MEMPC;
- facilitating the MEMPC to perform its functions;
- on behalf of the MEMPC, providing information and recommendations to the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee for the region that includes the municipal district.

With regards to responsibility 59B(2)(c), the liaison between the Hepburn Shire Council MEMPC and the Grampians REMPC will be maintained through the Hepburn Shire Council representative on the REMPC, which is currently held by the Manager Community Safety and Health.

The MEMPC may choose to invite any agency or individual it deems suitable by invitation of the Chairperson, who is nominated by the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

This may include Traditional Owner groups, critical infrastructure managers and others with key skills and knowledge. The Hepburn MEMPC is committed to ensuring diverse and equitable representation in its membership to promote effective and engaged municipal emergency management planning.

### **3.3 Requirement of the MEMP**

The Hepburn Shire MEMP outlines how emergencies are prevented, prepared for, responded to and recovered from across the municipality.

The plan is required under the Emergency Management Act 2013 and must align with the State Emergency Management Plan, the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan and all approved sub-plans.

The MEMP sets out local emergency management arrangements, clarifies roles and responsibilities and supports coordinated action across agencies, community organisations and Council. The MEMPC maintains it and remains in effect at all times.

The development of the MEMP included:

- reviewing state, regional and local plans to ensure alignment
- analysing local hazard and risk information, including historical records and emerging trends
- working with emergency services, health providers, community organisations and utility services to understand local capability and capacity
- incorporating community feedback received through Council engagement activities, hazard-specific consultations and ongoing communication channels
- reviewing lessons from past events, including recent bushfires, floods and severe storms
- applying the principles of continuous improvement, shared responsibility and community-centred planning

The Hepburn MEMP:

- aims to reduce the likelihood of emergencies and the effects they have on communities
- sets out a comprehensive and integrated approach to emergency management across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery
- supports community resilience by recognising local risks, strengths and needs
- encourages coordination and interoperability across agencies, systems and emergency management partners

These requirements align with Sections 60AA(2), 60ADB(1) and 3.6.3 of the Emergency Management Act 2013.

### 3.4 State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

The Victorian State Emergency Management Plan is prepared under the Emergency Management Act 2013 by the Emergency Management Commissioner and endorsed by the State Crisis and Resilience Council. It sets out statewide arrangements that guide planning, coordination and decision-making across all emergencies.

The SEMP reflects the objectives of the Act to:

- support a sustainable and efficient emergency management system
- minimise the likelihood, effects and consequences of emergencies
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of agencies
- strengthen cooperation across the emergency management sector
- coordinate emergency management reform
- apply an “all communities, all emergencies” approach
- establish integrated arrangements for emergency management planning at the state level

The SEMP guides planning at state, regional and municipal levels and outlines mitigation, response and recovery arrangements for Victoria. It also sets out the responsibilities of agencies that lead or support emergency management functions.

The SEMP is available on the Emergency Management Victoria website.

### 3.5 Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP)

The Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan is prepared by the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee and approved by the Emergency Management Commissioner. It provides the regional context for emergency management and supports the implementation of the SEMP at the regional level.

Under the Emergency Management Act 2013, each Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee must prepare and maintain a plan that:

- reduces the likelihood of emergencies
- reduces the effects of emergencies on communities
- reduces the consequences of emergencies for communities

The Grampians REMP outlines regional risks, shared capability needs and coordinated arrangements for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery across the region. It aligns with and supports the SEMP.

The Grampians REMP is available on the Emergency Management Victoria website.

### 3.6 Sub-Committees and Sub-Plans

Sub-committees and working groups are appointed to take on the responsibilities of planning for fire management, flood and relief and recovery. The MEMPC and respective Sub-Committees determine if a sub-plan is required. Sub-plans typically address a specific risk and are functionally considered an extension of the Plan. As a result, sub-plans are subject to the same preparation, consultation, assurance, approval, and publication requirements as this Plan, in accordance with Section 60ADB of the EM Act 2013.

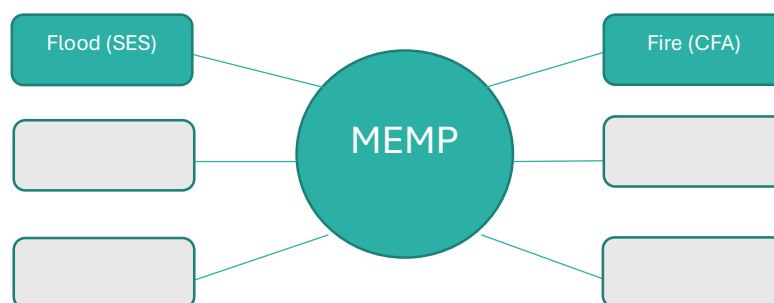


Figure 5 Plan and Committee Hierarchy

### 3.7 Complementary Plans

Complementary plans are prepared by agencies, authorities and industries for emergencies that do not fall within Part 6A of the EM Act 2013. 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 the same approval, consultation, and other requirements; however, they may be relevant to the cohesive and coordinated emergency management arrangements in Hepburn Shire.

A list of both Sub-Plans and Complementary Plans can be found in Appendix C.

### 3.8 Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2022–25

The Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2022–25 (SAP) provides the strategic framework through which all emergency management organisations in Victoria—including local government—align their planning, capability and governance.

The SAP identifies five key priorities:

- understanding and reducing risk
- strengthening data, analytics and decision-making
- supporting communities to prepare for and recover from emergencies
- building a sustainable and skilled emergency management workforce; and,
- improving governance, accountability and cooperation across the sector.

For Hepburn Shire, the SAP informs how the MEMPC structures its planning and continuous-improvement processes. It shapes how local risks are assessed, how lessons are captured through EM-LEARN, and how partnerships with agencies, community networks and regional stakeholders are developed.

The MEMPC uses the SAP as a guide to integrate municipal actions with the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan and to align with state-endorsed assurance and capability frameworks.

Across the emergency management continuum, the SAP guides Hepburn’s focus on:

- mitigation (risk reduction and climate adaptation),
- preparedness (training, exercising and planning integration),
- response (effective control, communications and consequence management),
- relief (timely assistance and coordination with regional partners)
- recovery (sustainable rebuilding and community wellbeing).

By aligning the MEMP with the SAP, the MEMPC demonstrates that its municipal planning directly supports Victoria’s goal of safer, more connected and resilient communities.

### 3.9 Community Plans

Community plans, within the context of emergency management, are usually referred to as a Community Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). A CEMP is typically driven and developed by a specific community group to mitigate a key hazard or risk and capture the unique aspects of the community that might be significant in an emergency. They may consider localised resources and identify ways of increasing community preparedness and resilience.

Hepburn Shire currently has one community plan, referred to as a Community Emergency Management Action Plan (CEMAP), “Building Resilience in Creswick: A Community Emergency

Management Action Plan for Creswick and District”, which is held by the Creswick Readiness Group.

### 3.10 Grampians Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG)

Collaboration within emergency management provides an opportunity for more robust planning and discussions, leading to better outcomes and learnings for the community.

Council works closely with neighbouring councils in the Grampians region through the MEMEG to strengthen Council’s capability and capacity to undertake its role in Victoria’s emergency management arrangements.

This includes sharing resources and training, developing collaborative plans and guidelines and providing joint submissions to regional and state stakeholders via the MEMEG Chairperson.

### 3.11 Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) resource sharing protocol

Following the complexities experienced during/after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, the MAV and the State Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG) developed the protocol for inter-council resource sharing.

The protocol is a mechanism for requesting or offering resources (equipment or personnel) amongst participating councils and includes a memorandum of understanding, authority, processes, request procedures and financial responsibilities.

Council is a current signatory on this protocol, which formally indicates Council’s support for its principles.

### 3.12 Cross-Boundary, Region Hazards and Risk

#### **Grampians and Loddon Mallee**

Hepburn Shire is positioned in the heart of Victoria’s Central Highlands and forms part of the Grampians Emergency Management Region. Directly to the north, Hepburn borders the Loddon Mallee Region, creating a natural interface between the two regions.

This boundary runs through rural landscapes, forested areas and shared waterways, linking Hepburn with Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields Shires. Emergency events in this corridor often influence both regions, especially storm, flood and bushfire activity that crosses municipal and regional boundaries. Because of this shared landscape, Hepburn regularly works with agencies and councils in the Loddon Mallee Region during preparedness, response and recovery.

#### **Local government neighbours**

Hepburn Shire shares boundaries with six neighbouring councils across the Grampians, Loddon Mallee and Hume emergency management regions.

Emergencies such as bushfires, storms, floods and public health incidents do not stop at municipal borders, and the hazards that affect Hepburn often influence – or are influenced by – conditions in neighbouring areas.

Shared landscapes, waterways, road networks and community movement mean that cross-boundary risks are a regular part of how emergencies unfold in the Central Highlands.

Hepburn Shire shares its southern and western boundaries with three councils that also sit within the Grampians Emergency Management Region: the City of Ballarat, Moorabool Shire and Pyrenees Shire.

These municipalities form Hepburn's closest regional partners for cross-boundary emergency management, shared transport routes and coordinated response activities.

- City of Ballarat borders Hepburn to the south-west and provides major regional services including health, policing, emergency operations and logistics.
- Moorabool Shire sits to the south and connects Hepburn with communities and transport routes toward Melbourne's outer growth areas. Shared forested landscapes and road corridors mean storm, bushfire and transport incidents often affect both municipalities.
- Pyrenees Shire lies to the west and shares agricultural landscapes, rural townships and regional roadways. Emergencies such as bushfires, storms and floods can affect both LGAs, leading to regular joint response activity.

### Cross-boundary emergencies

Hepburn Shire shares interconnected landscapes, catchments and transport corridors with these neighbouring municipalities, which means bushfire, storm, flood and transport-related emergencies can move across boundaries and affect multiple communities.

- Bushfire can move between forested areas in Hepburn, Moorabool, Pyrenees and Mount Alexander when strong winds carry fire through connected vegetation.
- Storm cells often track across Hepburn's boundary into Ballarat, Central Goldfields and Macedon Ranges, creating similar impacts on trees, powerlines and local roads.
- Flooding in Creswick and Clunes is influenced by catchments that extend north into Central Goldfields and Mount Alexander, so rainfall in one municipality can affect water levels and impacts in another.
- Major transport routes such as the Midland Highway and the Daylesford–Ballarat corridor link communities across borders, meaning road incidents, evacuations and relief arrangements often involve neighbouring councils.

Since these hazards operate across shared environments, Hepburn works closely with Ballarat, Moorabool and Pyrenees within the Grampians Region, as well as with Central Goldfields and Mount Alexander in the Loddon Mallee Region and Macedon Ranges in the Hume Region.

These relationships support coordinated planning, timely warnings, cross-boundary response and consistent recovery arrangements. They also help ensure that communities receive the proper support even when an emergency affects multiple municipalities.

| Neighbouring Council    | Shared boundary with Hepburn | Emergency Management Region | Relevance to Hepburn                                                           |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>City of Ballarat</b> | Yes                          | Grampians                   | Central service hub for health, police, emergency operations and supply routes |
| <b>Moorabool Shire</b>  | Yes                          | Grampians                   | Shared forest areas, storm and bushfire activity, strong transport links       |

| Neighbouring Council            | Shared boundary with Hepburn | Emergency Management Region | Relevance to Hepburn                                                     |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pyrenees Shire</b>           | Yes                          | Grampians                   | Shared rural landscapes, cross-boundary weather events                   |
| <b>Central Goldfields Shire</b> | Yes                          | Loddon Mallee               | Shared catchments and storm and flood corridors                          |
| <b>Mount Alexander Shire</b>    | Yes                          | Loddon Mallee               | Bushfire, storm and public-land interface; strong community travel links |
| <b>Macedon Ranges Shire</b>     | Yes                          | Hume                        | Eastern boundary connection; shared forest and severe weather conditions |

Figure 6 Neighbouring LGAs

### 3.13 Agency Footprint and Boundaries

Overlaying Hepburn are regional structures and boundaries to coordinate mitigation preparedness, response and recovery. These arrangements sit over Hepburn and guide how warnings are issued, how resources are shared and how multi-agency coordination takes place during emergencies. Although these regions do not always align with local government boundaries, they work together to provide consistent support for communities.

- CFA – Central Fire District and Grampians Region**  
 Hepburn Shire sits inside the Central Fire District for fire-weather warnings and alerts. CFA brigades in Hepburn operate under CFA District 15 within the Grampians Region, which provides coordinated bushfire response, planning and surge capacity across the Central Highlands.
- VICSES – Grampians Region (Mid-West Area)**  
 Hepburn is part of the VICSES Grampians Region. Local flood and storm response is delivered through the Mid-West Area, led by the Daylesford SES Unit. The region supports the Shire during major weather events and provides access to specialist resources.
- Victoria Police – Western Region and Police Service Area 10 Ballarat**  
 Community safety and emergency coordination for Hepburn operate through Victoria Police Western Region. Local policing sits within PSA 10 Ballarat, which supports Daylesford, Creswick, Clunes and surrounding communities.
- Ambulance Victoria – Central Highlands and Ballarat Area**  
 Ambulance Victoria manages pre-hospital care through the Central Highlands operational area, coordinated from Ballarat. This region supports local emergency medical response and links into regional hospitals and health services.
- DEECA and Forest Fire Management Victoria Grampians Fire and Land Region**  
 DEECA and FFMVic manage public land, forest operations and bushfire activity through the Grampians Fire and Land Region. This region covers the Wombat Forest and other key landscapes that influence Hepburn’s fire risk.

- **Bureau of Meteorology – Central Forecast District**  
Hepburn falls within the Central Forecast District for all weather, storm and fire-weather forecasts and warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.
- **DFFH – West Division and Central Highlands Area**  
DFFH supports human services coordination through the Central Highlands Area, which covers Hepburn and surrounding municipalities. This can include personal support services and community wellbeing functions.
- **Department of Health – Grampians Public Health Unit**  
The Grampians Public Health Unit leads public health emergency coordination for Hepburn. The region supports disease control, environmental health, public health alerts and health protection activities.
- **Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) – Grampians Region**  
ERV leads state-coordinated recovery for communities after major emergencies. Hepburn sits within ERV's Grampians Region, which supports housing, economic recovery, psychosocial support, clean-up programs and long-term community rebuilding after emergencies.

## 4. Mitigation (Including Preparedness)

### 4.1 Introduction

Mitigation decreases the likelihood and impact of emergencies by addressing the underlying risk factors. It is a fundamental part of Victoria's emergency management framework and is guided by the Emergency Management Act 2013, the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP), the Victorian State Emergency Risk Assessment, the Victorian Preparedness Framework, and sector-specific legislation such as the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Local Government Act 2020, the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, and relevant national frameworks.

These laws and frameworks provide the foundation for how risks are identified, assessed and treated across the state. They emphasise shared responsibility, evidence-based risk reduction and coordinated mitigation activities across agencies, government, community and industry.

At the municipal level, mitigation is a shared responsibility. Council works with emergency services, state agencies, essential service providers, local organisations and communities to understand local hazards, identify priority risks and implement measures that reduce exposure and vulnerability. These measures can include land-use planning, vegetation management, infrastructure improvements, public health regulation, community education and environmental management.

Effective mitigation strengthens community safety, supports better preparedness, and contributes to more stable and sustainable recovery. It provides the conditions for safer response operations and reduces the physical, social, economic and environmental consequences of emergencies.

This Plan reflects the collective work of the Hepburn Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC). The committee brings together agencies, organisations and community representatives who each contribute to reducing risk within their areas of responsibility. Their cooperation ensures that mitigation activities across the municipality are coordinated, consistent and aligned with state and national frameworks.

Government and non-government organisations, businesses, and community members each play a role in maintaining mitigation measures within their respective spheres of responsibility. This shared approach supports safer communities and strengthens Hepburn's capability to manage emergencies now and into the future.

#### **Risk assessment**

To be effective, preparedness, prevention and mitigation strategies must address known and relevant risks. Hepburn MEMPC is required to undertake comprehensive risk assessments regularly to ensure the localised risk profile remains current. This is achieved through the adoption of the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process.

#### **Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA)**

The CERA is an integrated 'all hazards' risk assessment approach developed and facilitated by the Victorian State Emergency Service (VICSES) to assist in identifying and prioritising emergency risks. It combines intelligence from several sources to explore causes, likelihood, community impacts and consequences and identify opportunities for improvement to prevention, control, mitigation measures and collaboration.

The CERA approach aims to understand the likely impacts of a range of risks upon the built, economic, natural, and social environments. CERA provides an opportunity for multiple hazards and consequences to be evaluated, and its results are used to target and maximise mitigation strategies, highlight emerging trends and direct future planning. In addition, it allows for focused education and support for particularly high-risk areas to promote empowered and resilient communities.

The CERA review is conducted a minimum of every three years using International Standard ISO 31000 processes. A full review of the CERA for Hepburn Shire was last completed in July 2025 with key risks listed below.

| Risk                               | Residual Risk Rating | Control Agency                          |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Bushfire or Grassfire</b>       | High                 | CFA/FFMVic                              |
| <b>Extreme temperatures</b>        | High                 | Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) |
| <b>Human disease (pandemic)</b>    | High                 | Department of Health                    |
| <b>Storm</b>                       | Medium               | VicSES                                  |
| <b>Flood</b>                       | Medium               | VicSES                                  |
| <b>Transport accident-road</b>     | Medium               | VicPol                                  |
| <b>Transport accident-rail</b>     | Medium               | VicPol                                  |
| <b>Mass gathering events</b>       | Medium               | VicPol                                  |
| <b>A warlike act</b>               | Medium               | VicPol                                  |
| <b>Hazardous materials release</b> | Medium               | CFA                                     |

Figure 7 Emergency Risks in Hepburn

### Community education and resilience

Community education and resilience building are vital components of mitigation of the impacts of emergencies, in addition to being central to prevention and preparedness. In addition, resilient communities are better able to respond to emergencies and recover from their impacts.

Resilient communities are mindful of their risks and share several important characteristics. The [Victorian Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management](#) lists the characteristics of a resilient community as:

- Connected, inclusive and empowered
- Sustainable built and natural environment
- Reflective and aware
- Culturally rich and vibrant
- Safe and well

- Dynamic and diverse local economy
- Democratic and engaged

The Hepburn MEMPC and its member agencies are committed to working across the Shire to increase connectedness, awareness and resilience in our communities and encourage active participation in emergency planning. This engagement and support take place in a variety of ways with some recent initiatives documented on the table below.

| Mitigation Function and Area                       | SEMP Responsibility Description                                                                                                                                   | Hepburn Shire Council Role                                                                                                                                                    | Application within Hepburn Shire                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk identification and assessment</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, analyse and evaluate emergency risks that may impact communities, infrastructure and the environment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead and Facilitate: Conduct and maintain the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) for the municipality.</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertakes annual CERA review through MEMPC; integrates findings into Council planning, asset management and community engagement.</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>Land-use planning and development controls</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure planning schemes and building approvals consider emergency risk and resilience objectives.</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead: Apply overlays (BMO, LSIO etc.) and planning permit conditions consistent with SEMP mitigation principles.</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporates updated hazard mapping in the Hepburn Planning Scheme; conditions new developments to limit exposure to bushfire, flood and geotechnical hazards.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Infrastructure and asset resilience</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and maintain critical infrastructure to minimise service disruption during emergencies.</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead and Support: Build resilience into design, maintenance and renewal of Council-owned assets.</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies risk-based maintenance for roads, bridges and drains; integrates resilience metrics in capital works and asset-management plans.</li> </ul>                       |
| <b>Environmental management and risk reduction</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage land, vegetation and waterways to mitigate natural-hazard impacts.</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead and Support: Implement vegetation, roadside, drainage and waterway programs that reduce fire, flood and storm impacts.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates annual roadside vegetation program; partners with DEECA and CCMA on erosion and floodplain restoration.</li> </ul>                                            |
| <b>Community education and awareness</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote shared responsibility by building community understanding of local risks and preparedness actions.</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and Partner: Deliver awareness programs and promote agency campaigns (Fire Ready Victoria, FloodSafe etc.)</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses Council communications and events to share prevention messaging; supports VICSES and CFA community sessions.</li> </ul>                                              |

| Mitigation Function and Area                               | SEMP Responsibility Description                                                                                                                                 | Hepburn Shire Council Role                                                                                                                                                               | Application within Hepburn Shire                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Business continuity and organisational preparedness</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain Council's ability to deliver essential services and coordinate emergency support during disruptions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead: Maintain and test Business Continuity and Crisis Management Plans aligned with EMV guidelines.</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducts annual BCP tests; ensures critical systems (IT, depots, fleet) are protected and redundant.</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Partnerships and collaboration</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with agencies, utilities and neighbouring councils to coordinate risk reduction initiatives.</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner and Collaborator: Engage through MEMEG and Grampians REMPC on cross-boundary mitigation.</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shares data and participates in regional mitigation projects (fuel-load, flood-mapping, infrastructure resilience).</li> </ul>             |
| <b>Climate change adaptation</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate climate-resilient approaches into emergency management planning.</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead and Integrate: Embed adaptation measures across Council policies and strategies.</li> </ul>                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implements "Future Hepburn" climate-adaptation actions; includes risk considerations in sustainability and planning frameworks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Data, intelligence and lessons management</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect, analyse and share data to inform continuous improvement of mitigation activities.</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and Contribute to: Record and report local observations and post-event lessons into EM-Learn and regional reporting processes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MEMPC reviews after each emergency; applies learnings to update risk treatments and community education priorities.</li> </ul>             |
| <b>Advocacy and funding</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for mitigation funding and programs that strengthen local capability.</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate and Partner: Seek and administer grants under DRFA and other mitigation programs.</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies for resilience infrastructure and fire-mitigation grants; reports progress to MEMPC and Council.</li> </ul>                        |

Figure 8 Hepburn Shire Council Mitigation Roles and Responsibilities (All-Hazard)

### Mitigation Roles and Responsibilities for Hazards and Sub-Plans

While Hepburn Shire adopts an all-hazards approach to mitigation, specific responsibilities vary according to the nature of the hazard. Each hazard type is addressed within the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) Sub-Plans, which detail the control agencies, support agencies, and functional arrangements for prevention and risk reduction.

Council's responsibilities under these sub-plans reflect its statutory authority in land use planning, environmental management, community safety, and local infrastructure. The table below summarises Hepburn Shire Council's key mitigation roles across hazard sub-types, ensuring that local actions remain consistent with State and Regional arrangements.

| Fire                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Description</b>           | Grass or bushfires that can impact life, property, access and environment                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Consequences</b>               | Loss of life, property, infrastructure, animals; impacts on environment and business and potential for trauma and smoke and heat related health issues                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Local Example</b>              | Musk Vale-Hogans Road fire 2009, Blampied-Kangaroo Hills fire 2013                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Control Agency</b>             | CFA/FFMVic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Council Role</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce Fire Prevention Notices.</li> <li>• Maintain roadside vegetation and fuel breaks.</li> <li>• Apply Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) and planning controls.</li> <li>• Promote community preparedness.</li> </ul>                 |
| <b>Local Application</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts annual roadside slashing and inspections.</li> <li>• Implements township protection plans in partnership with CFA.</li> <li>• Manages Neighbourhood Safer Places.</li> </ul>                                                     |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know your risk and prepare your property <a href="#">Your Guide to Property Preparation</a></li> <li>• Have a detailed plan and practice it <a href="#">CFA Bushfire Plan</a> or <a href="#">Australian Red Cross Rediplan</a></li> </ul> |

| Extreme Temperature               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Description</b>           | Heatwaves that can impact health and infrastructure                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Consequences</b>               | Heat stress, dehydration, heat stroke, mortality, pressure on health system, power failure, impacts on infrastructure, increased risk of bushfire                                                                                                         |
| <b>Local Example</b>              | Recent heat waves in December 2024, January, February and March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Control Agency</b>             | Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Council Role</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Heat Health communication plans.</li> <li>• Identify and support vulnerable community members.</li> <li>• Integrate cooling and shading in urban design.</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Local Application</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activates local Heat Health Alerts.</li> <li>• Coordinates with DFFH on vulnerable persons register (VPR).</li> <li>• Enhances shade and tree canopy in town centres.</li> </ul>                                 |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay cool and hydrated, check in with vulnerable neighbours, family and friends, know the signs of heat related health problems, subscribe to heat alerts</li> </ul> <p>Extreme heat   Better Health Channel</p> |

| Flood                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Description</b> | Heavy rain leading to flash or riverine flooding impacting homes and businesses                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Consequences</b>     | Dangerous road conditions, damage to buildings, cars and other infrastructure, reduced access and egress, disruptions to supply chains, loss of essential services, potential for injury or death. |
| <b>Local Example</b>    | Flooding in Clunes and Creswick in January and October 2022                                                                                                                                        |

| Flood                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Control Agency</b>             | VICSES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Council Role</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage stormwater drainage and flood-prone infrastructure.</li> <li>• Apply Land Subject to Inundation and Floodway Overlays.</li> <li>• Support VICSES in local flood intelligence and public education.</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Local Application</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains drainage and culvert networks.</li> <li>• Collaborates with CCMA on floodplain mapping.</li> <li>• Integrates flood data into planning permits.</li> </ul>                                                          |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never drive through flood water, clean your gutters, downpipes and drains, plan and be prepared Flood - Victoria State Emergency Service</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| Storm                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Risk Description</b>           | A severe weather event that could impact homes, businesses, critical and community infrastructure                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Consequences</b>               | Dangerous road conditions, trees down on private and public properties, damage to buildings, cars and other infrastructure, reduced access and egress, disruptions to supply chains, loss of essential services, potential for injury or death.                        |
| <b>Local Example</b>              | Storm events in June and October 2021                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Control Agency</b>             | VICSES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Council Role</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage tree risk on municipal roads and open spaces.</li> <li>• Maintain local drainage systems.</li> <li>• Promote storm preparedness and safe property maintenance.</li> </ul>                                              |
| <b>Local Application</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements vegetation management near powerlines.</li> <li>• Delivers pre-season StormSafe communications.</li> <li>• Assesses high-risk infrastructure prior to storm season.</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b> | <p>Park away from trees, secure loose items, prepare to be isolated for extended periods, prepare for loss of essential services, and monitor weather warnings: <a href="#">Australia's official weather forecasts &amp; weather radar - Bureau of Meteorology</a></p> |
| Pandemic                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Risk Description</b>           | Emergence & spread of a viral illness to which the population has little or no immunity                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Consequences</b>               | Health implications, death, disruption to health services, business, education, infrastructure, social and psychological impacts                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Local Example</b>              | Covid-19 2019-2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Control Agency</b>             | Department of Health                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Council Role</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain organisational pandemic and business continuity plans.</li> <li>• Support public health education and local compliance.</li> </ul>                                                                                   |

|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pandemic</b>                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide welfare coordination through local relief networks.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Local Application</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activates Council's Pandemic Plan and remote working arrangements.</li> <li>• Assists DH with local communication and vaccination site coordination.</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice good hygiene, stay home when unwell, and keep immunisations up to date. Infectious Disease – Emergency Preparedness</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Health</b>                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Risk Description</b>                                        | Emergencies or incidents that pose a significant risk to the health and well-being of the community, including disease outbreaks, food or water contamination, and other public health threats that require a coordinated health system response                                                         |
| <b>Consequences</b>                                            | Increased illness or mortality, strain on local health services, disruption to essential services and supply chains, impacts on vulnerable populations, loss of workforce availability, and reduced community confidence or wellbeing.                                                                   |
| <b>Local Example</b>                                           | Gastroenteritis outbreaks linked to contaminated water in small town supplies (historical examples within the Grampians region).                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Control Agency</b>                                          | Department of Health (DH)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Council Role</b>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain environmental health services (food, water, waste).</li> <li>• Support disease prevention and local public health messaging.</li> <li>• Ensure continuity of health inspection functions.</li> </ul>                                                   |
| <b>Local Application</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts routine inspections of food premises.</li> <li>• Communicates DH alerts to the community.</li> <li>• Maintains infection-control standards for Council facilities.</li> </ul>                                                                          |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a basic home first-aid kit and an up-to-date list of personal medications and health contacts.</li> <li>• Follow health alerts from the Department of Health and local public health units, especially during outbreaks or contamination events</li> </ul> |
| <b>All-Hazards (Climate, Environmental and Systemic Risks)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Risk Description</b>                                        | Broad and compounding risks from climate change, severe weather, infrastructure failure, or cascading system disruptions affecting multiple sectors and communities simultaneously.                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Consequences</b>                                            | Disruption to essential services such as power, water, transport and communications; economic losses; environmental degradation; health and wellbeing impacts; and reduced community and organisational resilience.                                                                                      |
| <b>Local Example</b>                                           | Prolonged power and telecommunications outages during concurrent storm and flood events; supply chain disruptions affecting food and fuel access across Hepburn Shire.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Control Agency</b>                                          | Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and all agencies under shared responsibility arrangements.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Council Role</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate climate adaptation across planning and asset management.</li> <li>• Participate in regional mitigation and learning networks.</li> <li>• Apply CERA methodology to emerging multi-hazard risks.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Local Application</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embeds risk mitigation into Council Plan, Asset Management, and Sustainability Strategies.</li> <li>• Contributes to regional exercises and data sharing via MEMEG and REMPC.</li> <li>• Advocates for energy resilient infrastructure.</li> </ul>                                                                                             |
| <b>What the Community Can Do?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay informed about local hazards by reviewing Council’s emergency risk information and maintaining a household emergency plan and kit (72-hour self-sufficiency).</li> <li>• Participate in community resilience or climate adaptation programs (e.g. neighbourhood planning, sustainability or emergency preparedness workshops).</li> </ul> |

These hazard sub-type responsibilities ensure that mitigation actions are not generic but tailored to the unique characteristics and risk drivers of each emergency type.

The consistent integration of hazard-specific risk controls—such as firebreak maintenance, drainage management, vegetation planning, and heat health adaptation—enables the municipality to reduce residual risk and improve resilience across multiple hazards.

Together with the all-hazard functions, these responsibilities provide a comprehensive view of Hepburn’s prevention and mitigation system, ensuring that both broad and hazard-specific risks are systematically addressed through coordinated planning, partnerships, and community engagement.

## 4.2 Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfire (VFRR-B)

The VFRR-B is a systematic process that helps to identify assets and values in human settlement, cultural heritage and economic contexts that are at risk from bushfire. It assesses the level of that risk, highlights treatments in place and informs planning at a local level.

## 4.3 Emergency Markers

Hepburn Shire recognises that in rural landscapes, forested areas and large recreation zones, the lack of a standard street address can delay emergency response. The Emergency Marker Program provides a critical mitigation measure by placing clearly visible, uniquely coded signage in specified open-space locations such as trails, reserves and remote access roads.

These markers link to emergency services dispatch systems and allow callers to quickly communicate their location.

The table below outlines the current emergency marker sites in Hepburn. Emergency marker locations and owners can be viewed here: <https://emergencymarkers.com.au/emergency-markers-map/>.

| Location                             | Marker codes                   | Owner                        |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| The Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails) | DJB010, 20, 30, up to DJB 400. | Hepburn Shire Council        |
| Creswick                             | HVP711 to 720                  | Hancock Victoria Plantations |

| Location      | Marker codes       | Owner                        |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Egans Town    | HVP733 and HVP 731 | Hancock Victoria Plantations |
| Sailors Falls | HVP732             | Hancock Victoria Plantations |
| Leonards Hill | VFP401             | VicForests                   |
| Bullarto      | VFP405             | VicForests                   |
| Lyonville     | VFP404             | VicForests                   |

Figure 9 Emergency Markers in Hepburn

#### 4.4 Mitigation to Preparedness

Mitigation and preparedness are closely connected phases of emergency management. Mitigation reduces the likelihood and impact of emergencies by addressing risks through actions such as land use planning, vegetation management, and strengthening critical infrastructure.

The Victorian Preparedness Framework links these phases by using the information and outcomes from mitigation, such as updated risk maps and hazard data, to shape training, exercises, and community awareness programs.

In Hepburn, mitigation activities like bushfire fuel reduction, drainage upgrades, and risk-based planning directly support preparedness measures that improve coordination and readiness. This connection ensures that emergency plans and capabilities are based on current risk understanding.

The Victorian Preparedness Framework identifies readiness as the culmination of planning, resourcing, and exercising — where agencies and councils stand ready to implement arrangements under the SEMP and relevant sub-plans.

In Hepburn, preparedness activities such as Emergency Relief Centre training, multi-agency exercises, and community information campaigns directly enable effective incident management and timely decision-making under the control agency structure.

By embedding readiness into all preparedness activities, Hepburn Shire’s response capability remains adaptive, coordinated, and focused on minimising harm and disruption across its communities.

#### 4.5 Linkages Between Mitigation and Preparedness

| Mitigation Focus                          | Purpose (Risk Reduction Objective)                                                                                                                                 | Preparedness Link (Capability / Framework Principle)                                                                                                                                      | Examples in Hepburn Context                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Land Use Planning and Risk Mapping</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces exposure to hazards by directing development away from high-risk areas (flood zones, bushfire overlays).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and capability alignment – uses the Victorian Preparedness Framework (VPF) “Planning” and “Risk Assessment” core capabilities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushfire Management Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlays inform MEMPC risk reviews and township planning.</li> </ul> |

| Mitigation Focus                                         | Purpose (Risk Reduction Objective)                                                                                                      | Preparedness Link (Capability / Framework Principle)                                                                                                                                                       | Examples in Hepburn Context                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Infrastructure Protection and Maintenance</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens physical systems to withstand and recover from hazard impacts.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Infrastructure Resilience – ensures continuity of essential services (energy, transport, water, telecoms) under VPF “Infrastructure Systems.”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of drains, roads, and bridges to maintain access routes and protect ERC facilities during flood or storm.</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Environmental Management and Fuel Reduction</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimises hazard intensity (e.g. fire behaviour, stormwater flow, heat absorption).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interoperability and resource planning – aligns control agency programs (CFA, DEECA, VICSES) for seasonal readiness.</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council roadside fuel management and vegetation clearing to reduce ignition potential.</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Community Risk Education and Engagement</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds understanding of local risk and encourages self-reliance.</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared responsibility and community capability – aligns with VPF “Community Engagement” and “Public Information” capabilities.</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local preparedness workshops, VICSES “Plan and Stay Safe” and CFA “Fire Ready” programs co-delivered with Council.</li> </ul>        |
| <b>Health Protection and Biosecurity Measures</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevents disease spread and protects public health and animal welfare.</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Preparedness and consequence management – aligns with Health Emergencies and Biosecurity Sub-Plans.</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EHO surveillance and communication protocols to activate early under pandemic or gastroenteritis outbreaks.</li> </ul>               |
| <b>Climate Adaptation and Sustainability Planning</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrates mitigation into long-term municipal strategies to manage chronic risks.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive capacity and continuous improvement – embedded in SEMP’s resilience principle and VPF’s “Risk Management” domain.</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree-canopy programs, cooling infrastructure audits, and sustainable design in public buildings to mitigate heat impacts.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Business Continuity and Organisational Resilience</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that critical council and partner services continue through disruptions.</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability and continuity – consistent with ISO 22301/31000 standards and SEMP “Preparedness through readiness.”</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council BCP exercises annually tested to maintain service delivery (works, customer service, relief activation).</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Risk Assessment and Data-Driven Decision Making</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies priority hazards and vulnerabilities for treatment and investment.</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence-based preparedness – links to VPF “Risk Assessment and Intelligence.”</li> </ul>                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEMPC’s Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) informs the municipal risk register and training priorities.</li> </ul>           |
| <b>Partnerships and Shared Responsibility</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributes ownership of mitigation actions across government,</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative preparedness – aligns with SEMP’s “Six Cs” (Collaboration, Communication,</li> </ul>                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional working groups (MEMEG, REMPC) coordinate cross-municipal</li> </ul>                                                         |

| Mitigation Focus                         | Purpose (Risk Reduction Objective)                                                                                                            | Preparedness Link (Capability / Framework Principle)                                                                                                     | Examples in Hepburn Context                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | agencies, and community.                                                                                                                      | Cooperation, Coordination, Capability, Capacity).                                                                                                        | exercising and shared training.                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Evaluation and Lessons Management</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures and applies learnings from incidents and exercises to refine mitigation efforts.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous improvement and EM-Learn Framework – supports preparedness maturity and readiness review.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-incident reviews from floods and storms incorporated into MEMPC risk treatment updates and training schedules.</li> </ul> |

Figure 10 Linkages Between Mitigation and Preparedness

## 4.6 Training and exercising

Training and exercising are essential components of preparing for emergencies. Emergency management training and exercising is a controlled, objective driven activity used for testing, practicing or evaluating processes or capabilities. Exercises can range from simple discussion style to full scale field-based operations involving multiple agencies and often neighbouring councils. Exercises should use the principles of the [Managing Exercises Handbook](#).

A list of relevant exercises undertaken can be found in Appendix F.

## 5. Response

Response is defined in the EM ACT 2013 as “the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue services”. The SEMP further details emergency response as being “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.”

Response arrangements draw on the Emergency Management Act 2013, the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP), the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan, and the principles of shared responsibility.

This Plan outlines the emergency response arrangements for the municipal (incident) level. Non-major emergencies are managed only at the incident tier.

### 5.1 State Emergency Management Priorities

The State Emergency Management Priorities underpin and guide all decisions during a response to any emergency at any level:

- Protection and preservation of life and relief of suffering is paramount. This includes:
  - Safety of emergency response personnel; and
  - Safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists.
- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members make informed decisions about their safety.
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that support community resilience.
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence.
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that supports individual and community financial sustainability.
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, biodiversity, and social values of the environment.

### 5.2 Community Focus in Response

The “Six Cs” (Collaboration, Communication, Cooperation, Coordination, Capability and Capacity) form the foundation of Victoria’s emergency management system and are embedded across all phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery.

While these principles guide how agencies and governments interact, their real value lies in how they shape community experience, ensuring that the people, businesses and organisations of Hepburn Shire are informed, involved and supported before, during and after an emergency.

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration means agencies, councils, community groups and individuals working collectively toward shared outcomes.

In a community context, it means recognising that emergency management starts and ends with people, residents, volunteers, businesses, and neighbourhood networks and that all have a role to play.

Hepburn Shire fosters collaboration through:

- The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), which brings together emergency services, community organisations, health agencies and Council.
- Partnerships with community networks and local halls, service clubs, and neighbourhood houses that enable local leadership during emergencies.
- Engagement in regional and state forums such as the Grampians MEMEG to share lessons and capabilities.

Community Outcome: People know who to turn to, have trusted connections, and are part of the solution.

## **Communication**

Effective communication ensures that people receive timely, accurate and accessible information before, during and after an emergency.

For Hepburn, this means:

- Using multiple channels (VicEmergency, local radio, social media, township noticeboards and Council networks) to reach all parts of the community.
- Delivering plain-language messages that explain risks, actions and available support — not just warnings.
- Providing inclusive communication for vulnerable groups, CALD communities and visitors through visual and multilingual formats.

Community outcome: The right information reaches the right people at the right time — empowering them to make safe, informed decisions.

## **Cooperation**

Cooperation extends collaboration into action. It recognises that while responsibilities may differ, no single agency or person can manage emergencies alone.

Hepburn's cooperative approach includes:

- Working side-by-side with CFA, VICSES, Victoria Police, DEECA, DH, and volunteer groups in planning, response and recovery.
- Supporting and being supported by neighbouring councils through the MAV Resource Sharing Protocol.
- Enabling local businesses, schools and community groups to contribute to preparedness and recovery activities.

Community outcome: A culture of helping and being helped — where cooperation reduces duplication, speeds up response, and builds trust.

## **Coordination**

Coordination ensures that actions, resources and information flow efficiently between responders, Council, agencies and community members.

At the local level, coordination focuses on:

- Ensuring clear command and control arrangements using AIMS principles.
- Activating the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC) to coordinate relief and community information during incidents.
- Linking seamlessly with regional and state tiers (through the Grampians REMPC and EMV systems) to align local actions with broader response and recovery priorities.

Community outcome: Emergencies are managed in an organised way — the community sees clarity rather than chaos.

### **Capability**

Capability is about having the knowledge, training and systems to respond effectively.

For Council and community, this means:

- Ensuring trained Council staff and volunteers can fill key emergency management roles.
- Running community education sessions, tabletop exercises and seasonal briefings that strengthen household and business preparedness.
- Supporting neighbourhood resilience programs that teach practical skills like first aid, bushfire planning and flood readiness.

Community outcome: Residents and local responders are confident, capable and proactive — not reliant or reactive.

### **Capacity**

Capacity refers to the resources, people and systems available to manage emergencies — and the ability to sustain them over time.

For Hepburn, capacity is built through:

- Maintaining mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring councils to share staff and assets during emergencies.
- Investing in local facilities (relief centres, community hubs, backup power and water supplies) that can support residents in isolation.
- Encouraging volunteer participation and retention through recognition and inclusion in planning processes.

Community outcome: When emergencies happen, the community and Council have the resources and support to respond and recover effectively.

## **5.3 Incident Classification, Categorisation and Levels**

Emergencies in Hepburn Shire range from small, localised events to complex, multi-agency incidents with regional impacts. Victoria's emergency management framework provides a consistent structure that identifies who leads the response, how coordination occurs, and how support is activated across agencies, Council and the community.

Understanding this structure helps everyone in Hepburn Shire know what to expect, who is in charge, and how information and assistance will flow during an emergency.

Emergencies in Victoria are classified and managed in accordance with the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). In Victoria, incidents are categorised as Class 1, 2 or 3, depending on their type and control agency. They are further assigned an incident level (1, 2 or 3) based on their size, complexity and potential consequences.

These arrangements ensure that emergency response in Hepburn Shire is aligned with Victoria's all-hazards, all-agencies framework, with Council's role increasing from local support to regional consequence and recovery coordination as the level of the emergency escalates.

Emergency events are organised into three categories:

- Operational Tier
- Emergency Class
- Incident Level Classification

### Operational Tier

| Tier            | Purpose                                              | Functions                                                                                 | Hepburn Context                                                                                   |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Incident</b> | Managed locally by the control agency.               | Incident Controller, field crews, frontline response.                                     | CFA brigades, VICSES Units, DEECA personnel and partner agencies operating within Hepburn.        |
| <b>Regional</b> | Managed at the regional level by the control agency. | Regional Control Centre (RCC), Regional Controller, regional planning and prioritisation. | Supported by the Grampians Region. Council liaises through MERC, MEMO and MRM.                    |
| <b>State</b>    | Managed at the state level by EMV.                   | State Control Centre (SCC), State Controller, SEM arrangements.                           | Ensures Hepburn receives state-level information, warnings and relief coordination when required. |

Figure 11 Operational Tiers of Emergencies

Emergency events are managed at the appropriate operational tier until the event may require escalation to a higher tier. Together, these provide a common language and consistent framework for planning, response, and coordinating support across the municipality.

### Classes of Emergency

| Class          | Definition                                                                                                         |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Class 1</b> | A major fire or any other major emergency for which FRV, the CFA or the VICSES is the country agency under the SEM |
| <b>Class 2</b> | A major emergency that is not a Class 1 or Class 3 emergency                                                       |
| <b>Class 3</b> | A warlike act or act of terrorism: a hijack, siege, or riot                                                        |

Figure 12 Emergency Classes

## Classifications of Emergencies

| Level   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale emergency (less than 24-hour impact).</li> <li>• Level one incident typically requires the use of local resources and limited to the incident area only.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Level 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium-scale emergency (more than 24 hours).</li> <li>• Medium scale requiring resources beyond the initial response</li> <li>• There are one or more incident areas</li> <li>• Multiple hazards are involved</li> <li>• There is potential for escalation of the emergency</li> </ul>                                                                                           |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Level 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale with high complexity</li> <li>• Multiple days in duration</li> <li>• Multiple incident areas</li> <li>• Is, or is likely to become, of state or national significance</li> <li>• Will require forward planning as the emergency continues and will specifically require recovery planning during the early stages of the response phase of the emergency.</li> </ul> |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Figure 13 Classifications of Emergencies

## 5.4 Command, control, and coordination

Effective emergency management relies on clear arrangements for command, control and coordination. These functions ensure that agencies understand their roles, decisions are made efficiently and information flows to where it is needed. In Victoria, these arrangements follow the State Emergency Management Plan and apply consistently across all hazards and all agencies.

### Command

Command refers to the internal direction of personnel and resources within an agency. It operates “vertically” within each agency. Each agency—such as CFA, VICSES, Victoria Police or DEECA—maintains its own command structure for managing its crews, assets and operational decisions. Command does not extend across agencies. Council’s internal command arrangements guide its own staff and resources during emergency operations.

### Control

Control is the authority to direct response activities across one or more agencies. The control agency is defined by legislation or the State Emergency Management Plan based on the type of emergency. It operates “horizontally” across all agencies. The Control Agency sets objectives, strategies and priorities for managing the incident. Council supports the control agency through information sharing, resource provision and municipal coordination.

## Coordination

Coordination ensures that agencies, Council and partners work together to manage the emergency effectively. At the municipal level, coordination is led by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), who works closely with the Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM), Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM). Coordination integrates plans, allocates resources, resolves competing demands and supports a consistent approach between municipal, regional and state tiers.

## 5.5 Phases of Activation

Victoria's emergency management arrangements support a scalable and structured activation process that enables agencies, Council and partners to respond quickly and effectively. Activation recognises that emergencies can develop rapidly and that early readiness, clear communication and timely escalation are essential to protecting life, property and the environment. The phases below reflect commonly applied activation stages used across municipal, regional and state arrangements

### Alert

The Alert phase begins when information indicates that an emergency may occur or affect the municipality. Agencies, Council and partners are notified to increase situational awareness and ensure readiness to respond if required.

Activities may include:

- notifying key personnel and confirming contact arrangements
- reviewing and testing communication systems
- establishing information flow between the municipality and control/support agencies
- confirming availability of personnel, contractors and critical resources
- monitoring conditions and maintaining situational awareness

### Standby

The Standby phase is activated when the threat becomes imminent or when conditions indicate that the municipality is likely to be affected. Agencies and Council prepare to deploy resources and implement operational arrangements at short notice.

Activities may include:

- preparing relief centres and municipal facilities for possible activation
- assembling personnel, equipment and vehicles
- confirming traffic management, mapping and logistical support
- identifying staging areas or assembly points
- strengthening information-sharing between the MERC, MEMO, MRM and control agency

### Action

The Action phase represents the active response to an emergency. Control agencies lead response operations, supported by Council, Victoria Police (as MERC), and other partner organisations. Depending on the nature of the event, activation may proceed directly to Action without prior Alert or Standby phases.

Activities may include:

- mobilising Council and agency personnel and resources upon request
- establishing or supporting the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC)
- contributing to impact and situation reporting
- deploying additional resources or relief arrangements
- supporting evacuations, traffic management, community information and logistical functions

### **Stand Down**

Stand down occurs when response objectives have been met and operational activities are no longer required. Following consultation between the Incident Controller, MERC, MEMO and relevant agencies, the MERC confirms that response operations have concluded and advises all participating organisations.

Activities may include:

- notifying agencies of Stand Down
- demobilising personnel and equipment
- completing final situation and impact reporting
- handing over information to relief and recovery coordination
- participating in debriefs and continuous improvement processes

## **5.6 Emergency Management Group**

To support coordination during an imminent or ongoing major emergency, the Hepburn Municipal Emergency Management Group (MEMG) may be convened at the discretion of the Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM), Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) or the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), who is a member of Victoria Police. The MEMG provides a forum for shared situational awareness, coordinated decision-making and alignment of municipal, agency and regional activities.

Membership typically includes:

- Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM)
- Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)
- Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)
- Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)
- Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)
- Chief Executive Officer, Hepburn Shire Council, or delegate
- Representative of the control agency

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
- Additional agencies, utilities or support organisations as required

The MEMG does not assume command or control of an incident. Its function is to bring together key municipal and agency representatives to coordinate local actions, manage consequences, and ensure a seamless transition through response, relief and recovery.

## 5.7 Roles and Responsibilities

### **Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)**

The Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) is a Council officer appointed pursuant to section 59G of the EM Act 2013. The MEMO and their deputies are appointed by the Council CEO via the Hepburn Shire Council Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation. This role is ordinarily combined with the MEM, but the MEMO responsibilities are outlined in the Act and SEMP.

The responsibilities of the MEMO during the response to an emergency are:

- Coordinate municipal resources in emergency response.
- Provide Council resources when requested by emergency services or police during response activities.
- Maintain effective liaison with emergency agencies within or servicing the municipal district.
- Maintain an effective contact base so municipal resources can be accessed on a 24-hour basis.
- Keep the MECC prepared to ensure prompt activation if required.
- Liaise with the MEM and MRM on the best use of municipal resources.
- Organise a response debrief if requested by the MERC.
- Ensure procedures and systems are in place to monitor and record expenditure by Council in relation to emergencies.
- Perform other duties as required

The MEMO is responsible for the coordination of municipal resources in responding to emergencies and has fully delegated powers to deploy and manage Council's resources during emergencies.

### **Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)**

The Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) is a Hepburn Shire Council officer appointed under section 59H of the Emergency Management Act 2013. The MRM and any deputies are formally appointed by the Chief Executive Officer through Council's Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation. The MRM leads municipal recovery coordination and provides the connection between Council, Emergency Recovery Victoria and the community during the transition from response to recovery.

Responsibilities:

- Coordinates municipal and community resources to deliver effective relief and recovery support.

- Assists in collating, validating and analysing information gathered through secondary impact assessments to understand emerging needs.
- Establishes priorities for restoring community services, infrastructure and essential support functions.
- Works closely with the MEM and MEMO to ensure municipal resources are allocated efficiently and in alignment with recovery objectives.
- Sets up and manages a recovery information and coordination centre at appropriate Council or community facilities.
- Liaises with recovery agencies, internal Council teams and community recovery committees to support local recovery planning and action.
- Maintains communication with the Regional Recovery Committee and Emergency Recovery Victoria to ensure consistency between municipal and regional efforts.
- Engages with the Incident Controller to support a smooth and coordinated transition from response to recovery.
- Undertakes additional activities required to meet the recovery needs of affected communities.

These responsibilities may be delegated to ensure recovery functions are sustained and managed effectively throughout the event.

### **Municipal Fire Prevention Officer**

The Country Fire Authority Act 1958 and Fire Rescue Victoria 1958 require each Municipal Council to appoint a fire prevention officer (generally known as a Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO) and any number of assistant fire prevention officers. The Council CEO appoints the MFPO and their deputies via the Hepburn Council Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Work with the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP) (a subcommittee of the MEMPC, if and as established by that body)
- Advise and assist the MFMP and the MEMO on fire prevention and related matters.
- Report to Council on fire prevention and related matters.
- Carry out statutory tasks related to fire prevention notices and infringement notices.
- Investigate and act on complaints regarding potential fire hazards.
- Advise, assist, and make recommendations to the public on fire prevention and related matters.
- Issue permits to burn (under s38 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958).

## 5.8 Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC)

The Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC) is where Council and emergency services work together during an emergency to coordinate support for the community. When activated, the MECC helps share information, direct resources and make sure people receive the help they need. It provides a clear and organised way for Council to support emergency response, relief and early recovery.

- It is staffed by a multi-agency coordination team, supported by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), MEMO, MRM, control agency representatives and trained Council personnel. Council also maintains a surge workforce to sustain operations as required.
- It is a central point for coordinating municipal support during emergencies. Its functions include maintaining situational awareness, coordinating human and material resources, processing requests for assistance, sharing information across agencies, and supporting relief and early recovery planning.
- It is activated when an emergency impacts Hepburn Shire or when the municipality is required to provide significant support to neighbouring councils. Activation level is scaled to the nature, complexity and duration of the incident.
- It exists to ensure that the Council's responsibilities under the Emergency Management Act 2013 and the State Emergency Management Plan are fulfilled. It enables coordinated action, efficient resource use, and a common operating picture across agencies, supporting an effective response and a smooth transition to relief and recovery.
- It operates through a structured coordination model consistent with Victorian emergency management doctrine. Council staff deliver administrative and logistical support, maintain communication channels, prepare situation and impact reports, and coordinate resource deployment. Processes are trained, exercised and regularly reviewed to ensure readiness, interoperability and sustained operations.

Hepburn Shire has a primary and secondary MECC. It also has a virtual MECC as a contingency. The MCS, MEM, MEMO or MERC may direct the establishment of the MECC. The MECC is not activated in all emergency situations but at the discretion of Council officers. The MCS, MEM, or MEMO with support personnel, activate, manage and eventually deactivate the MECC.

## 5.9 Incident Control Centre (ICC)

Incident management and control will be set up and activated by the controlling agency at a pre-determined ICC.

The ICC operates using the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). AIIMS provides a management system that facilitates coordination among all parties involved in resolving any emergency.

Hepburn Shire is in the footprint of the Ballarat ICC which is in Mt. Rowan.

## 5.10 Evacuation

Evacuation is the planned and supported movement of people from an area assessed as unsafe to a safer location, and their subsequent return when conditions permit. Evacuation may occur voluntarily when individuals and households choose to leave early, or following a formal recommendation issued by the control agency through public information and warnings.

Under the Emergency Management Act 1986, compulsory evacuation is only possible when a State of Disaster has been declared, and the relevant Minister exercises those powers.

Early, well-supported movement of people remains the safest and most effective approach. Evacuation decisions are informed by hazard intelligence, forecast conditions, local access constraints and the needs of at-risk individuals. The responsibility to recommend evacuation or alternative protective actions—such as shelter-in-place—rests with the control agency, in consultation with Victoria Police and relevant experts.

### **Victoria Police**

Victoria Police leads evacuation. This includes confirming the geographic extent of the evacuation area, identifying preferred routes, ensuring those routes remain safe, and determining suitable transportation and assembly options. Police also consider the presence of vulnerable persons and the availability of local support to assist them.

### **Control Agencies**

Control agencies provide hazard intelligence, identify when evacuation should be recommended, and coordinate warnings and public information with VicPol and VICSES. They ensure evacuation advice reflects current and emerging risk.

### **Hepburn Shire Council**

Council plays a key supporting role through the MEMO, MRM and relevant operational teams. During an evacuation, Council:

- Provides local intelligence to Police and control agencies on community characteristics, access routes, vulnerable populations and settlement patterns.
- Advises on the most appropriate ERC based on location, access, facility capacity and functional needs.
- Stands up and manages ERC operations when activation is confirmed.
- Coordinates immediate relief services including information, shelter, basic needs, psychosocial support and animal management.
- Supports community messaging through Council communication channels to reinforce state warnings and instructions.
- Works with relief partners to ensure evacuees receive consistent information on transport, services and eventual transition to recovery.

### **Support agencies**

Support for evacuation may be provided by:

- VICSES – traffic management assistance, route intelligence, and community notifications.
- Regional Roads Victoria – road access, traffic control and debris clearance.
- Ambulance Victoria – medical transport and support for people with health needs.
- Local transport operators – buses or other vehicles for supported transport when required.
- Adjacent councils (e.g., Moorabool, Central Goldfields, Macedon Ranges) – cross-boundary coordination, especially during regional-scale events.

Hepburn's dispersed townships, tourist population, forested environments and road network require careful consideration during evacuation events. Seasonal population surges, high bushfire risk areas, and historic flood pathways mean early movement and clear public information are central to local evacuation strategies.

## 5.11 Community Information and Warnings

Timely, accessible and accurate information enables communities to understand emerging conditions, make informed decisions and take protective action. During an emergency, public information and warnings help reduce harm by ensuring people are aware of the situation, understand what it means for them and know what to do.

In Hepburn Shire, where communities are dispersed across forested, agricultural and tourism-driven environments, consistent information is essential. Seasonal visitors, short-stay accommodation users, and day-trippers may have limited local knowledge, making clear, authoritative, action-based warnings especially important.

### Community Information

During emergencies, individuals should not expect personalised, door-to-door warnings. Emergency services focus on the direct management of the event and rely on statewide information systems to inform communities. While emergency personnel may provide localised warnings in specific circumstances, this is not guaranteed and should not be relied upon.

Residents, visitors and businesses should use multiple trusted information sources to stay aware of local conditions. Key channels include:

### VicEmergency

- Visit the VicEmergency website ([www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)) or use the VicEmergency app to receive real-time incident information and warnings.
- Create Watch Zones to receive notifications for incidents within a selected radius.
- Call the VicEmergency Hotline – 1800 226 226 for current advice.
  - TTY users: 1800 555 677, then ask for 1800 226 226
  - Speak and Listen users: 1800 555 727, then ask for 1800 226 226
  - Internet relay users: connect to the National Relay Service, then ask for 1800 226 226
  - For translated information, call TIS National – 131 450 and request translation for the VicEmergency Hotline.

### Local ABC and Emergency Broadcasters

Hepburn communities should be familiar with emergency broadcasters servicing the region, including:

- ABC Ballarat – FM 107.9
- ABC Melbourne – AM 774
- ABC News Radio – AM 1026
- ABC Listen app (mobile data required)

ABC Local Radio is the primary emergency broadcaster for Victoria and will issue official warnings and situation updates.

#### **Hazard-Specific Information Sources**

- CFA Website ([www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)) – Fire Danger Ratings, bushfire advice and preparedness information.
- Bureau of Meteorology ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)) – Severe weather warnings, flood watches, heatwave alerts and real-time weather observations.

### **5.12 Emergency Warnings**

Emergency warnings provide clear, authoritative information about an immediate or emerging threat. They help the community understand the level of danger, what actions are recommended, and when protective steps are needed.

The control agency issues warnings through the VicEmergency platform and are consistent with statewide public information standards under the SEMP Public Information and Warnings arrangements and Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) 02.03.

In Hepburn Shire, where bushfire, storm, flood and heat events can escalate quickly, adequate warnings are central to community safety.

#### **Warning Structure and Issuing Responsibilities**

Control agencies issue warnings that reflect the severity of the situation and the urgency of required actions. These follow the Victorian three-tier structure:

- Advice – awareness of a situation that may affect the community.
- Watch and Act – conditions changing; community members should prepare to act.
- Emergency Warning – immediate danger; action required to protect life.
- Additional Calls to Action, such as Prepare to Evacuate, Evacuate Now, Shelter Indoors, or Monitor Conditions, may be incorporated to provide clear direction.

Warnings are published simultaneously through the VicEmergency website, app, hotline and emergency broadcaster networks. They may also be supported by localised public messaging, social media updates and, in specific circumstances, community sirens or direct engagement by emergency services.

#### **Warning Delivery Channels**

Warnings are distributed through multiple channels to maximise reach:

- VicEmergency website and app – primary platform for warnings and incidents.
- VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226) – recorded and operator-supported information.
- ABC Radio and emergency broadcasters – official broadcast partner for Victoria.
- Social media – used by control agencies and Council to share verified updates.
- Localised messaging – including VMS boards, community facilities, local networks and accommodation providers.

Council encourages the community—residents, businesses and visitors—to rely on official channels rather than informal social media or unverified sources.

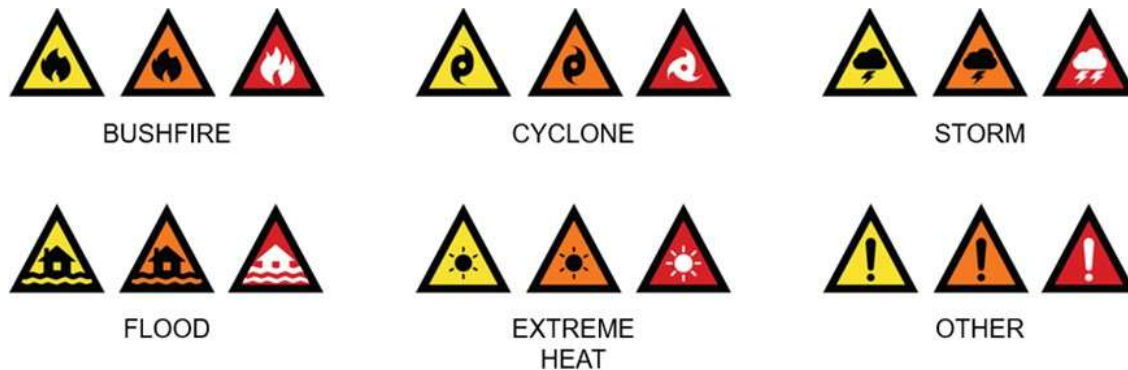


Figure 14 Australian Warning System Icons

Evacuation orders are aligned with the above three levels of warning. Two levels of evacuation warning exist:

- Prepare to evacuate
- Evacuate immediately

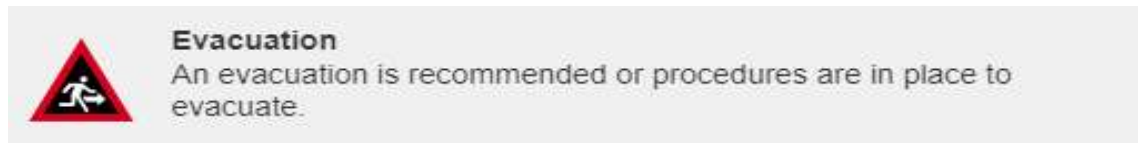


Figure 15 Evacuation Icon

### 5.13 Municipal Roles Supporting Emergency Response

The table below outlines functions activated during emergencies and clarifies whether Council leads or supports each role. It provides a concise description of core actions and links each function to the relevant state or regional sub-plans and control agencies. It identifies how Council supports the control agencies, coordinates local consequence management, and contributes to public safety, information, logistics and relief activation.

| Function                    | Role Type | Description and Key Actions                                    | Linked Sub-Plan and Agency               |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Incident support</b>     | • Support | • Provide facilities, logistics, and staff for ICC operations  | • SEMP, Grampians REMP                   |
| <b>Public information</b>   | • Support | • Share warnings and information locally; ensure accessibility | • Bushfire, Flood, Storm, Heat Sub-Plans |
| <b>Relief centres</b>       | • Lead    | • Open and manage ERCs; coordinate local relief                | • SEMP Relief & Recovery, ERV            |
| <b>Environmental health</b> | • Lead    | • Assess food, water, waste, vector, and sanitation issues     | • Health & Pandemic Sub-Plans            |

| Function                        | Role Type | Description and Key Actions                                    | Linked Sub-Plan and Agency     |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Animal welfare</b>           | • Support | • Coordinate animal shelter and welfare                        | • Biosecurity Sub-Plan         |
| <b>Infrastructure and roads</b> | • Lead    | • Clear debris, restore access, assist with traffic management | • Flood & Storm Sub-Plans      |
| <b>Community connection</b>     | • Lead    | • Provide local advice, welfare checks, and support networks   | • Health & Relief Arrangements |
| <b>Impact assessment</b>        | • Support | • Collect and share impact data with RCC and ERV               | • All hazard sub-plans         |

Figure 16 Municipal Roles Supporting Response

## 5.14 Council's Emergency Response Roles Across Key Hazards

Council's functions are shaped by the municipality's risk profile under the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) and align with the arrangements of the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP).

The following table outlines Hepburn Shire Council's roles and responsibilities during the response phase of an emergency, mapped across the relevant State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) Sub-Plans.

It identifies how Council supports the control agencies, coordinates local consequence management, and contributes to public safety, information, logistics and relief activation. These roles reflect the principle that response is multi-agency, locally informed, regionally coordinated and state supported.

| Hazard and Sub-Plan                           | Lead and Support Agency           | Hepburn Shire Council Role | Key Response Actions (Local Application)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Linked Arrangements and Guidance                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bushfire (SEMP Bushfire Sub-Plan 2023)</b> | CFA (Control), FRV, DEECA, VICSES | Support and Coordination   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide local intelligence to ICC.</li> <li>• Support CFA in community warnings, evacuation support, and relief centre establishment.</li> <li>• Coordinate traffic management and road closures (with VicPol).</li> <li>• Manage waste, debris, and environmental health risks post-impact.</li> <li>• Support animal welfare and displaced residents.</li> </ul> | SEMP; JSOP 02.03; CFA & VICSES doctrine; AFDRS; Grampians REMP |

| Hazard and Sub-Plan                                               | Lead and Support Agency | Hepburn Shire Council Role                           | Key Response Actions (Local Application)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Linked Arrangements and Guidance                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Flood (SEMP Flood Sub-Plan Ed. 4, 2025)</b>                    | VICSES (Control)        | Support and Relief Lead                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with sandbag distribution and community notifications.</li> <li>• Support VICSES and RCC with local access and impact intelligence.</li> <li>• Open and manage ERCs.</li> <li>• Coordinate temporary housing and welfare with ERV.</li> <li>• Conduct environmental health inspections (water, waste, food).</li> </ul>                                                       | VICSES OMM; EM-COP; JSOP 02.03; SEMP Flood Sub-Plan                |
| <b>Storm (SEMP Storm Sub-Plan Ed. 3, 2025)</b>                    | VICSES (Control)        | Support and Coordination                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide logistics and plant for debris clearance, fallen trees, and road reopening. (Council roads)</li> <li>• Disseminate public information and warnings locally.</li> <li>• Conduct building and structural safety inspections.</li> <li>• Support impact assessment and relief operations.</li> <li>• Coordinate temporary shelter and animal management if required.</li> </ul> | SEMP Storm Sub-Plan; Grampians REMP; EMV SWIB                      |
| <b>Extreme Heat (SEMP Extreme Heat Sub-Plan 2022)</b>             | DH (Control)            | Support and Community Health Lead                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and disseminate heat health alerts.</li> <li>• Activate community cooling facilities and relief centres if required.</li> <li>• Conduct welfare checks on vulnerable residents via local networks.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                | Heat Health Plan; DH Heatwave guidance; SEMP Extreme Heat Sub-Plan |
| <b>Pandemic / Viral Respiratory (SEMP Pandemic Sub-Plan 2022)</b> | DH (Control)            | Support and Local Continuity and Communications Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support implementation of state health directions.</li> <li>• Provide local information and translation through Council channels.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | SEMP Viral (Respiratory) Pandemic Sub-Plan; HESP; EM Act 2013      |

| Hazard and Sub-Plan                                                                           | Lead and Support Agency  | Hepburn Shire Council Role                       | Key Response Actions (Local Application)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Linked Arrangements and Guidance                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                               |                          |                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain business continuity of essential services.</li> <li>• Support local testing or vaccination sites through facility access and logistics.</li> <li>• Coordinate local welfare support for isolated residents.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                           |
| <b>Health Emergencies (SEMP Health Emergencies Sub-Plan 2025)</b>                             | DH (Control)             | Support and Public Health Authority              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct environmental health and public safety inspections.</li> <li>• Support coordination of relief and welfare for health-affected populations.</li> <li>• Provide logistical support for emergency health operations.</li> <li>• Support vulnerable community members (aged, disabled, isolated).</li> </ul>                                                                                          | HESP; Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008; SEMP                                            |
| <b>Biosecurity – Animal, Plant, Marine and Environmental (SEMP Biosecurity Sub-Plan 2024)</b> | DEECA (Control)          | Support and Animal Welfare and Local Impact Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support DEECA in containment and quarantine operations.</li> <li>• Provide local advice and logistical access to properties.</li> <li>• Coordinate disposal of contaminated materials in line with EPA advice.</li> <li>• Facilitate community communication and welfare for affected landholders.</li> <li>• Support livestock and wildlife welfare in conjunction with Agriculture Victoria.</li> </ul> | Biosecurity Sub-Plan; Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan; Agricultural Response Plan |
| <b>Heat or Bushfire-related Health Emergencies (overlap events)</b>                           | CFA, DH, VICSES (shared) | Joint Support and Consequence Management Lead    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage compounded events (e.g. power outage, smoke impacts).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | SEMP Consequence Management                                                               |

| Hazard and Sub-Plan                        | Lead and Support Agency | Hepburn Shire Council Role              | Key Response Actions (Local Application)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Linked Arrangements and Guidance                       |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            |                         |                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate health messaging and ERC activation.</li> <li>• Liaise with energy and infrastructure providers for service restoration.</li> <li>• Collect and share local impact data for regional consequence management.</li> </ul>                                  | Framework; SCoT protocols                              |
| <b>Cross-hazard Consequence Management</b> | EMV / ERV / VicPol / DH | Lead for Local Consequence Coordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify cascading effects (health, social, infrastructure, environmental).</li> <li>• Coordinate cross-agency briefings.</li> <li>• Facilitate transition to relief and recovery operations.</li> <li>• Ensure information flow to MEMPC and community.</li> </ul> | SEMP; Grampians REMP; ERV Guidance; EM-Learn Framework |

Figure 17 Council Emergency Response Roles

## 5.15 Consequence Management

Consequence management is the coordinated process of understanding, assessing, and mitigating the secondary and cascading effects of emergencies on people, infrastructure, the economy, and the environment.

Consequence management underpins the State Emergency Management Priorities and is a shared responsibility led by the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) and supported by control and support agencies, local government, critical infrastructure operators, and communities.

Consequence management is not a standalone activity; it operates as a continuous thread across mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery. Risk information informs planning and prioritisation.

- Preparedness activities reduce impacts and enable early action by both agencies and the community.
- During response, consequence assessments guide resource allocation and operational decision-making.
- In relief and recovery, impact data supports targeted assistance, reinstatement of essential services and long-term community wellbeing.

It links response to relief and recovery, ensuring decisions made during an emergency consider long-term community impact.

Consequence management in Hepburn Shire ensures that the effects of emergencies are recognised, assessed, and managed in a coordinated way across all tiers of emergency management.

Council works with agencies and the community to maintain essential services, identify local impacts, and support the timely transition from response to relief and recovery.

### Community and Consequence Management

Community participation in consequence management reduces the duration and severity of emergency impacts across Hepburn Shire.

At the community level, consequence management is about the actions individuals and local organisations take to understand and manage those same impacts. This includes preparing households and businesses, maintaining insurance and property readiness, using trusted communication tools such as the VicEmergency app, and providing local information to Council or agencies when safe to do so.

| Hazard and Emergency            | Possible Local Impacts                                                | What You Can Do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Who Supports Community                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Flood</b>                    | Water over roads and bridges, property damage, power loss, isolation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your home and contents insurance covers floods.</li> <li>• Keep gutters and drains clear.</li> <li>• Know if your property is in a flood-prone area.</li> <li>• Use sandbags or flood barriers where advised.</li> <li>• Follow official warnings on the VicEmergency app.</li> <li>• Report hazards to Council or VICSES.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VICSES</li> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Water Authorities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Storm and Severe Weather</b> | Roof or tree damage, power or phone outages, blocked roads.           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your insurance for storm damage coverage.</li> <li>• Trim overhanging branches and secure loose items.</li> <li>• Keep torches, spare batteries, and first-aid kits ready.</li> <li>• Register for power outage alerts.</li> <li>• Support neighbours during prolonged outages.</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VICSES</li> <li>• Powercor</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Bushfire and Grassfire</b>   | Smoke, property loss, evacuation, road closures.                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep insurance up to date for bushfire damage.</li> <li>• Prepare and rehearse a family Fire Plan.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFA</li> <li>• DEECA</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>                |

| Hazard and Emergency                                         | Possible Local Impacts                                                | What You Can Do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Who Supports Community                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                              |                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear flammable materials around buildings.</li> <li>• Stay informed of fire danger ratings.</li> <li>• Leave early on high-risk days.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Extreme Heat</b>                                          | Heat stress, power outages, health risks for vulnerable people.       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for heatwaves and register for alerts.</li> <li>• Check your insurance for heat-related losses (e.g., food spoilage).</li> <li>• Keep cool indoors or visit a cool place.</li> <li>• Check on neighbours and pets.</li> <li>• Stay hydrated and avoid outdoor work in peak heat.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DH</li> <li>• Ambulance Victoria</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Health Emergency / Pandemic</b>                           | Illness, reduced services, isolation.                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow official health advice and stay updated.</li> <li>• Keep essential medications and supplies at home.</li> <li>• Support others through safe, contactless ways.</li> <li>• Check your private health cover and emergency contacts.</li> <li>• Join local recovery or wellbeing programs.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Health</li> <li>• Council</li> <li>• ERV</li> </ul> |
| <b>Infrastructure Failure (Power, Water, Communications)</b> | Loss of utilities, communication difficulties, business interruption. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep emergency kits with lighting, radio, and bottled water.</li> <li>• Maintain insurance for business or stock loss.</li> <li>• Know how to report outages and stay updated online.</li> <li>• Share information through local networks.</li> <li>• Check on isolated residents.</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility Providers</li> <li>• EMV</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>    |

Figure 18 Community Consequence Management

## 5.16 Debriefing Arrangements

The control agency is responsible for organising an operational debrief following a major emergency, involving all participating agencies and organisations, as soon as practicable after response activities finish.

All agencies that participated in the emergency should be represented to assess the adequacy of the response and to recommend any changes to the relevant agencies, plans, and future operational response activities.

The control agency should present any learnings that impact the arrangements outlined in this Plan to the Hepburn MEMPC and submit debriefing reports for consideration.

## 5.17 From Response to Relief and Recovery

Hepburn Shire Council's response arrangements are deliberately recovery-oriented — integrating local consequence management, environmental health, infrastructure, and welfare actions that ensure recovery is not a separate phase but a continuum from response.

The transition from response to recovery in Hepburn Shire is a progressive process. Relief operations commence during response and evolve into recovery through coordinated planning and shared situational awareness.

Many of Council's response activities, such as operating ERCs, providing public information, conducting impact assessments, and supporting vulnerable residents, form the bridge to the next phase of emergency management: relief.

## 6. Relief

Relief begins while response is still underway, ensuring that the immediate needs of individuals and communities are met as soon as possible.

The following section outlines how Hepburn Shire Council coordinates and delivers relief, in alignment with the State Emergency Management Priorities, the SEMP Relief and Recovery Arrangements, and the Grampians REMP, to support a seamless transition from response to recovery.

Relief services in Hepburn Shire are designed to provide immediate, compassionate, and practical support to affected residents during and after emergencies. Council maintains a network of preidentified Emergency Relief Centres (ERC) and community facilities equipped to deliver safe shelter, food, information, health, and welfare assistance.

These services operate through close collaboration with state agencies, community organisations, and trained volunteers to ensure that all residents, including vulnerable or isolated people, can access timely and equitable support. Regular exercises, community partnerships, and continuous improvement processes ensure that Hepburn's relief capability remains ready, adaptive, and aligned with the State Emergency Management Plan and the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan.

### 6.1 Relief Principles

The following principles guide relief in Hepburn:

- Relief protects life, health, and dignity through prompt and coordinated assistance.
- It recognises that community members are central to their own recovery and builds confidence through participation and communication.
- Local delivery is supported by regional coordination and state guidance, ensuring resources are directed where they are most effective.
- Relief is inclusive, equitable, and accessible for all people, including those who are vulnerable or isolated.
- Arrangements are scalable and flexible to suit the size and type of emergency.

### 6.2 Relief Coordination Framework

Relief coordination follows Victoria's three-tiered emergency management structure, ensuring that decisions and actions are consistent, efficient, and scalable from the municipal level through to regional and state tiers.

This structure enables clear lines of accountability, shared situational awareness, and resource prioritisation across agencies. At the municipal level, Hepburn Shire Council provides immediate leadership and coordination of local relief services through the MEMPC, MERO, and MRM.

When local capacity is exceeded, the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMP) provides regional coordination and surge support, linking directly with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) at the state level.

This approach ensures that Hepburn’s relief activities remain connected to broader recovery objectives, that communities receive the proper assistance at the right time, and that no part of the municipality is left unsupported during the transition from response to recovery.

| Tier                          | Coordination Responsibility                                                                                                                      | Description                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>State</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV)</li> </ul>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides strategic coordination, funding mechanisms (e.g. DRFA), and oversees activation of state-level support services.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Region (Grampians)</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Recovery Coordinator / REMPC</li> </ul>                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates cross-municipal relief and recovery efforts; supports resourcing to councils if overwhelmed.</li> </ul>                  |
| <b>Municipality (Hepburn)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) under MEMPC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leads local coordination and integration of relief services, aligns with regional and state frameworks.</li> </ul>                   |

Figure 19 Tiers of Coordination

Through these coordinated responsibilities, Council ensures that relief efforts are locally driven, well-integrated, and focused on protecting the community's immediate well-being. These responsibilities form the foundation for the practical delivery of relief services that support residents in the earliest stages of recovery. The following section outlines how these services are activated and delivered across Hepburn Shire.

### 6.3 Council’s Relief Roles and Responsibilities

Council plays a leadership role in coordinating relief within its municipality. These responsibilities align with the SEMP, Grampians REMP, and hazard-specific sub-plans. Council’s leadership ensures that local arrangements complement regional and state coordination structures, maintaining consistency and efficiency across all levels of emergency management.

By working in partnership with emergency services, government agencies, and community organisations, Council ensures that relief activities are collaborative, inclusive, and tailored to the needs and priorities of Hepburn’s communities.

| Function and Service Area              | Council Role                                           | Description of Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Relief Coordination</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council coordinates all municipal relief functions through the MEMPC, MERO, and MRM. It ensures information flow between agencies, community groups, and ERV.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council identifies, establishes, and manages ERCs across the municipality. Centres provide safe shelter, registration, information, food, and personal support.</li> </ul> |

| Function and Service Area                            | Council Role                                                                                     | Description of Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Impact and Needs Assessment</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (VICSES, DEECA, VicPol, DH)</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council supports initial impact assessments to understand community needs and guide the delivery of relief and recovery services.</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Public Information and Communication</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (DH, VICSES)</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council provides localised, verified information through social media, community networks, and relief centres to ensure consistent messages and prevent misinformation.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Emergency Shelter and Temporary Accommodation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead / Support (DFFH, Red Cross)</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council works with state and non-government partners to provide safe, accessible accommodation and welfare support for displaced residents.</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>Food, Water and Material Needs</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (DFFH, community organisations)</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council coordinates logistics for essential food and water supplies and supports community and volunteer groups in distribution.</li> </ul>                                        |
| <b>Health and Psychosocial Support</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (DH, AV, DFFH)</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council facilitates access to health, wellbeing, and mental health services, ensuring community members receive professional support as early as possible.</li> </ul>              |
| <b>Animal Welfare</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (AgVic, DEECA, RSPCA)</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council supports emergency shelter, feed distribution, and veterinary care for domestic animals and livestock impacted by emergencies.</li> </ul>                                  |
| <b>Environmental Health and Sanitation</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead / Support (Environmental Health Officers)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council monitors public health standards in ERCs and affected areas, including waste, water, and sanitation services.</li> </ul>                                                   |
| <b>Essential Infrastructure Restoration</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (Utilities, DEECA)</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council works with regional and utility partners to restore access to roads, water, and other essential services critical for relief.</li> </ul>                                   |
| <b>Vulnerable Persons Coordination</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (DFFH, DH)</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council applies the Vulnerable Persons Register to support outreach and welfare checks for residents needing additional assistance.</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>Financial and Material Assistance</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support (ERV, Red Cross, DFFH)</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council communicates and facilitates access to state, federal, or community-based relief funds and material aid.</li> </ul>                                                        |

Figure 20 Council's Relief Roles and Responsibilities

## 6.4 Relief Services in Hepburn

Hepburn Shire maintains the capacity to deliver essential relief services quickly and efficiently. ERC's are pre-identified, accessible facilities equipped to provide safe shelter, food, information, and welfare support. Each centre operates under the coordination of the MEMO or MRM and in accordance with the Australian Red Cross Emergency Relief Centre Guidelines.

Relief services include:

- Safe shelter and rest areas for affected individuals and families.
- Provision of food, water, bedding, clothing, and basic hygiene needs.
- Access to first aid, health advice, and psychosocial support.
- Information and registration services through Register.Find.Reunite.
- Animal care support for displaced or injured animals.
- Targeted outreach for isolated or vulnerable residents.

Council reviews and exercises ERC operations annually with emergency agencies and volunteers to maintain operational readiness.

## 6.5 Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs)

An ERC is a facility used during an emergency to provide affected community members with the basic and essential support services listed above.

While Council is responsible for the coordination and management of an ERC, agencies deemed 'relief support agencies' under the SEMP are accountable for supporting ERC operations in the following ways:

- Reconnecting families and friends (Victoria Police and the Australian Red Cross)
- Food and water (Australian Red Cross)
- Material aid (Salvation Army)
- Psychosocial supports (Victorian Council of Churches or Red Cross)
- Emergency shelter (Council and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)
- Emergency financial assistance (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and the Salvation Army)
- First aid (Ambulance Victoria or St John's)
- Community information (control agency)

The Incident Controller (IC) determines when and where an ERC will be opened and closed, in consultation with the Victoria Police Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) and Council's MRM.

Council has identified ERCs and they are listed in Appendix E.

In most situations, non-assistant animals cannot be housed in the central area of ERCs. It is also essential that household emergency plans consider animals. For more information, see Council's Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Plan or visit RSPCA Victoria.

## 6.6 Register.Find.Reunite

Register.Find.Reunite (RFR) is the national system used during emergencies to help people register their location and reconnect with family and friends. It is activated by the Australian Red Cross when large-scale emergencies displace communities or create uncertainty about people's whereabouts. RFR provides a safe and coordinated way for people to check on loved ones without placing additional demand on emergency services.

In an emergency affecting Hepburn communities, Council supports the activation and operation of RFR through its relief responsibilities.

This includes:

- assisting Red Cross to establish RFR services at relief centres
- providing staff to support registration processes where required
- ensuring information about RFR is communicated through Council channels
- helping residents and visitors access the system, particularly those without digital access
- working with the MEMPC agencies to ensure accurate information is shared with the community

Council does not operate the RFR system, but it plays an important coordinating and facilitation role at the local level.

### RFR in relief

RFR is a core relief activity because it helps maintain safety, wellbeing and stability during disruptive events. Its relevance includes:

- providing clarity to families when people are separated
- reducing anxiety by confirming people's safety
- supporting evacuees to reconnect with household members
- easing pressure on emergency services by centralising information
- supporting the broader recovery process by helping families reunite and stabilise sooner

## 6.7 Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Place of Last Resort

Council has identified and designated several Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Places of Last Resort (NSP-BPLR) in the municipality. These sites have been assessed in accordance with Country Fire Authority (CFA) guidelines and local planning requirements.

They are not community fire refuges or ERC's, but are locations nominated for use only if a person's primary bushfire plan has failed and no safer option exists. At an NSP-BPLR, you may still be exposed to heat, smoke, flying embers and residual fire activity, and the act of travelling to the site may carry significant risk.

These are Hepburn's NSP-BPLR:

- Clunes – Central Business District: Fraser Street (between Templeton and Service Streets)
- Creswick – Visitor Information Centre Car Park: 41-43 Albert Street (corner Victoria Street)
- Glenlyon: Eldon Street (between Molesworth Street and house number 21)
- Daylesford – Central Business District: Pavement areas bounded by Bridport, Albert and Camp Streets & Central Springs Road
- Trentham – Central Business District: Camp Street (between Cosmo Road & Bowen Street)

## 6.8 Animal Management and Welfare in Relief

Animals play an important role in households, farms and businesses across Hepburn Shire, and their welfare is a core consideration during emergencies. While the person in charge of an animal remains responsible for its care, many emergencies create situations where additional support is needed. Relief arrangements therefore include provisions for companion animals, livestock and wildlife to ensure their needs are met and the safety of owners and responders is maintained.

During and immediately after an emergency, support may be required to provide:

- food and clean drinking water
- safe and appropriate containment areas
- short-term shelter options for pets and livestock
- advice to owners about safe handling, movement and care of animals
- coordination for displaced or wandering animals

Hepburn Shire Council supports animal management in emergencies through its domestic animal services, local laws function and relief coordination role.

This includes:

- assisting with safe containment
- providing information to the public
- supporting relief centre operations when animals accompany evacuees
- working with local vets, shelters and neighbouring councils as needed.

Council also assists with the identification and management of displaced animals to support community safety and wellbeing.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is the relief coordinating agency for animal welfare, with Agriculture Victoria coordinating support for companion animals and livestock.

DEECA and Agriculture Victoria should be engaged as soon as animal welfare issues become apparent so specialist support can be provided. These agencies offer expertise in livestock care,

animal welfare assessment, disease risks and agricultural impacts, and play a central coordination role during medium and large-scale incidents.

## 6.9 Integration with Emergency Sub-Plans

Hepburn's relief arrangements are strengthened through alignment with all-hazard sub-plans and CERA. The following table summarises how relief applies to each relevant hazard.

| Sub-Plan                             | Relief Focus in Hepburn                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bushfire Sub-Plan</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate ERCs, provide emergency shelter, psychosocial and animal welfare support, and restore access to water and essential supplies.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Flood Sub-Plan</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support safe evacuation, coordinate clean-up, monitor water quality, and provide temporary accommodation and public health services.</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Storm Sub-Plan</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate tree-clearing coordination, restoration of utilities, and offer community relief centres for immediate assistance.</li> </ul>            |
| <b>Extreme Heat Sub-Plan</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote use of cool spaces, promote heat-health messaging, and support health services for at-risk populations.</li> </ul>                          |
| <b>Health and Pandemic Sub-Plans</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support continuity of essential services, isolation assistance, and wellbeing programs for affected staff and residents.</li> </ul>                 |

Figure 21 Hazard and Sub-Plan Relief Roles

## 6.10 From Relief to Recovery

### Relief

Relief in Hepburn Shire is centered on care, coordination and connection. By working collaboratively with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), partner agencies, volunteers and community organisations, Council ensures that people receive the right support at the right time.

Effective relief lays the foundation for a smooth transition into recovery, maintaining community confidence, protecting wellbeing and strengthening resilience. Through early planning, clear communication and a focus on dignity and inclusion, Hepburn Shire's relief arrangements help communities navigate the challenging journey of recovery and long-term resilience.

### Recovery

Transitioning to recovery begins concurrently with the final stages of response. Relief and recovery are not separate phases. They overlap and inform one another to ensure continuity of support for the community.

Decisions made during preparedness, mitigation, and the early stages of response directly influence how effective relief is provided to communities.

Actions such as opening an Emergency Relief Centre, restoring access to essential services, supporting displaced residents, and communicating with affected communities all form part of the recovery process.

Hepburn Shire Council begins coordinating recovery planning in partnership with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), regional agencies and community representatives as early as possible. This early and deliberate focus on recovery ensures that the transition from immediate response to long-term rebuilding is seamless, coordinated and community centred.

By embedding recovery considerations into all phases of emergency management, Council and partner agencies ensure a smoother transition from relief to long-term resilience, supporting community wellbeing, economic stability and environmental restoration.

## 7. Recovery

As immediate needs are met and community support systems are in place, the focus of Council and its partners shift from providing relief to coordinating recovery. Recovery in Hepburn Shire is a coordinated, inclusive and forward-focused process that strengthens the community's ability to adapt, rebuild and thrive after an emergency.

Through early integration of recovery into preparedness, mitigation and response, Council and its partners ensure that recovery planning begins well before an event occurs. Using the principles of shared responsibility, community leadership and collaboration with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), Hepburn Shire delivers recovery that restores wellbeing, revitalises the economy, rehabilitates the environment and honours Aboriginal culture and connection to Country. By continually reviewing and improving its recovery arrangements, Council supports a more resilient and connected community ready to face future challenges together.

Recovery planning and programs refer to the Victorian Government's recovery outcomes, which are:

- Victorians are safe, resilient, and healthy.
- Victorians are connected to people, places, and culture.
- Government responses and services are people-centred, adaptable, and sustainable.
- Victoria has thriving regions and a healthy environment.

### 7.1 Transitioning to Recovery

Transition to recovery is a critical part of Victoria's emergency management arrangements. It marks the point at which coordination of the event shifts from the response system, led by the control agency and emergency response coordinators, to recovery coordination, led by recovery agencies and local government.

By embedding recovery considerations into all phases of emergency management, Council and partner agencies ensure a smoother transition from relief to long-term resilience, supporting community wellbeing, economic stability and environmental restoration.

#### **Recovery planning**

Recovery planning starts well before an emergency, through effective preparation, community connection and risk reduction and it's done at every tier of government. The transition does not mean recovery "starts" at that point; relief and early recovery activities begin during response and continue after response winds down.

Decisions made during preparedness, mitigation, and the early stages of response directly influence how quickly and successfully Hepburn's communities recover.

Opening an Emergency Relief Centre, restoring access to essential services, supporting displaced residents, and communicating with affected communities all form part of the recovery process.

As control agencies move from response to relief, Hepburn Shire Council begins coordinating recovery planning in partnership with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), regional agencies and community representatives. This early and deliberate focus on recovery ensures that the transition from immediate response to long-term rebuilding is seamless, coordinated and community centered.

### Transition of control

[https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/documents/d/www/state-emergency-management-plan-storm-sub-plan-edition-3?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/documents/d/www/state-emergency-management-plan-storm-sub-plan-edition-3?utm_source=chatgpt.com) In Victoria, transition arrangements are described in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the Victorian Emergency Operations Handbook and supported by EMV's An Agreement for Transition of Coordination Arrangements from Response to Recovery.

The formal transition from response to recovery occurs when the Control Agency determines that the immediate threat has been managed and that coordination of longer-term community, economic, environmental, and infrastructure impacts is required.

This handover is documented through a formal transition of control statement issued by the Incident Controller (e.g., CFA, VICSES, DH), in consultation with the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV).

The transition process aims to:

- maintain continuity of support for individuals and communities
- ensure information, impact data and decisions made during response are handed over clearly
- align relief and early recovery activity with medium- and long-term recovery coordination
- provide clarity about who is in charge of what, at each tier, after response winds down
- support a safe and orderly change in coordination, while response agencies may still be operating in support of recovery.

Key concepts guiding transition in Victoria include:

- early planning for transition, starting soon after impact
- joint planning between control agencies, emergency response coordinators and recovery coordinators
- continuous services for affected communities throughout the transition
- phased transition, where recovery may commence in some areas while response continues in others.

The decision to transition from response to recovery is made jointly by:

- the control agency / Incident Controller (IC)
- the relevant Emergency Response Coordinator (Victoria Police) at incident, regional or state tier
- the relevant Recovery Coordinator and Recovery Manager (Emergency Recovery Victoria at state and regional tiers, and Council at municipal tier).

Factors considered when determining timing include:

- the nature of the emergency and whether further threats are expected
- the extent and type of impacts on communities
- whether Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) information is available

- the level of ongoing relief need
- whether recovery resources are ready to take on coordination responsibilities.

## 7.2 Recovery Principles and Framework

Recovery in Victoria is guided by the National Principles for Disaster Recovery and ERV's Recovery-Framework - Five Lines of Recovery. These frameworks identify the overarching principles that ensure all aspects of recovery are considered, recognizing that recovery extends beyond rebuilding physical assets to restoring wellbeing, connection, and cultural identity. This ensures consideration is given to:

- the emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical well-being of individuals and communities.
- the revitalisation of the economy of the community.
- the restoration of essential and community infrastructure.
- the rehabilitation of the environment.
- Aboriginal culture and healing.

Hepburn Shire Council applies these principles through its use of the Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Local Government.

| Line of Recovery                          | Focus Area (as outlined by ERV)                                                                             | Local Application                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Social</b>                             | Supports the emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical wellbeing of individuals and communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council coordinates health and wellbeing programs, psychosocial support, and community recovery meetings in partnership with ERV, Department of Health, DFFH, and local service providers.</li> <li>• The Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) ensures impacted community, including vulnerable groups, are supported and social cohesion is maintained.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Economic</b>                           | Revitalises the economy of the community and supports local businesses and livelihoods.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Economic Development Team works with local chambers of commerce and regional partners to support business continuity, recovery grants, and economic renewal strategies.</li> <li>• Local procurement and employment initiatives are prioritised during reconstruction.</li> </ul>                                                                     |
| <b>Built Environment (Infrastructure)</b> | Restores essential and community infrastructure to enable normal functioning.                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council assesses and restores local roads, bridges, parks, and community facilities in line with the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| Line of Recovery                                 | Focus Area (as outlined by ERV)                                                      | Local Application                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                  |                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure restoration is coordinated with utility providers and regional partners to prioritise community needs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                       | Rehabilitates and protects natural assets and ecosystems affected by the emergency.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council partners with DEECA, catchment management authorities, and local environmental groups to manage land, water and vegetation recovery.</li> <li>Actions include erosion control, weed management, and rehabilitation of parks, waterways and biodiversity areas.</li> </ul>                                                                                          |
| <b>Cultural (Aboriginal Culture and Healing)</b> | Recognises and supports Aboriginal cultural values, heritage, and healing processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges Dja Dja Wurrung, Wadawurrung, and Wurundjeri Traditional Owners in recovery planning and delivery.</li> <li>Council works with Traditional Owner organisations to ensure recovery activities respect cultural heritage, promote cultural healing, and incorporate Indigenous knowledge into land and environmental recovery.</li> </ul> |

Figure 22 Lines of Recovery and Disaster Recovery Toolkit

By embedding these Five Lines of Recovery into its recovery arrangements, Hepburn Shire Council ensures that recovery is not just about reconstruction, but about restoring wellbeing, rebuilding confidence, and strengthening community resilience.

The integration of the Disaster Recovery Toolkit with these frameworks enables Hepburn to deliver a coordinated, inclusive, and culturally sensitive recovery process that reflects the diverse needs, values and strengths of its communities.

| Toolkit Component                  | Purpose & Guidance                                                          | How Hepburn Shire Applies It                                                                                                                                                      | Primary Responsibility                | Community Outcome                                          |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Governance and Coordination</b> | Establishes leadership, accountability and alignment with ERV and the SEMP. | Incorporated into Hepburn's Recovery Management Structure and Sub-Plan. The Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) leads local coordination and links with Regional and State recovery. | MRM, MEMPC, Executive Leadership Team | Recovery leadership is clear, coordinated and transparent. |

| Toolkit Component                             | Purpose & Guidance                                                                                 | How Hepburn Shire Applies It                                                                                                                            | Primary Responsibility                                         | Community Outcome                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Community Engagement and Participation</b> | Encourages community-led recovery and inclusive decision-making.                                   | Council supports community recovery committees, local forums and engagement activities guided by the Toolkit's principles of empowerment and inclusion. | Community Development & Emergency Management Teams             | Recovery reflects community needs, voices and local priorities.                 |
| <b>Impact and Needs Assessment</b>            | Provides templates for assessing impacts across social, economic, built and environmental domains. | Used by Council to conduct rapid and detailed impact assessments after emergencies, feeding information into ERV and Regional Recovery reporting.       | Emergency Management, Environmental Health & GIS Officers; MRM | Impacts are understood early, ensuring targeted and equitable recovery support. |
| <b>Financial and Resource Management</b>      | Outlines financial governance and processes for cost tracking and funding recovery.                | Council applies Toolkit templates and DRFA guidelines to manage costs, track expenditure and seek state and federal recovery funding.                   | Finance & Governance; MRM                                      | Transparent, accountable use of public funds to support recovery.               |
| <b>Relief and Transition to Recovery</b>      | Integrates relief and recovery to maintain continuity of support.                                  | Toolkit checklists are used to guide ERC operations, welfare services and the formal transition to recovery process with ERV.                           | MRM; Relief Centre Coordinators; Environmental Health          | Smooth and coordinated handover from response to recovery.                      |
| <b>Communication and Public Information</b>   | Promotes consistent, accurate and timely recovery information.                                     | Council applies Toolkit communication templates in its Communication Matrix and works with VicEmergency and ERV to maintain message consistency.        | Communications Team; MRM                                       | The community receives clear, trusted information throughout recovery.          |

| Toolkit Component                          | Purpose & Guidance                                                       | How Hepburn Shire Applies It                                                                                                                        | Primary Responsibility                                         | Community Outcome                                                |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</b> | Supports reflection, lessons management and continuous improvement.      | Post-event reviews use Toolkit evaluation tools. Findings are shared through the MEMPC and EM-Learn to improve future preparedness and recovery.    | MEMPC; MRM; Executive Leadership Team                          | Ongoing learning builds organisational and community resilience. |
| <b>Resilience and Long-Term Recovery</b>   | Focuses on sustainability, wellbeing and preparedness for future events. | Council embeds resilience-building initiatives (e.g., mental health, local economy support, and environmental restoration) into long-term planning. | Community Development; Economic Development; Environment Units | Communities emerge stronger, more connected and better prepared. |

Figure 23 Disaster Recovery Toolkit and Community Outcomes

By applying the EMV Disaster Recovery Toolkit, Hepburn Shire Council ensures recovery is structured, inclusive and aligned with Victoria's best-practice framework. It strengthens coordination, supports community-led approaches, and embeds continuous learning to build a more resilient Hepburn Shire.

### 7.3 Linkages to Hazard Specific Sub Plans

Recovery arrangements at Hepburn Shire are informed by both the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and its suite of hazard-specific sub-plans. Each hazard presents unique recovery pathways, timelines, and partnership requirements.

By aligning local actions with these specialised plans, Council ensures that recovery remains targeted, coordinated, and adaptable, whether the emergency involves flooding, storm damage, bushfire, extreme heat, or public health events.

This alignment allows Council to connect local capability with state expertise, access recovery funding, and deliver assistance that meets community needs efficiently and equitably.

| Hazard and Sub-Plan           | Primary Recovery Focus                                                                          | Recovery Leads (State, Region, Local)                                                      | Council's What? How? Why?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Flood (2025 Edition 4)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoration of housing, roads, and waterways.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VICSES (Control)</li> <li>ERV (Recovery)</li> </ul> | <p><b>What:</b> manage clean-up and infrastructure repair.</p> <p><b>How:</b> coordinate local contractors and waste facilities.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> floods cause widespread property and infrastructure damage in Creswick and Daylesford catchments.</p> |

| Hazard and Sub-Plan                            | Primary Recovery Focus                                                                                            | Recovery Leads (State, Region, Local)                                             | Council's What? How? Why?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Storm (2025 Edition 3)</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vegetation management, power restoration, wellbeing support.</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VICSES</li> <li>ERV</li> </ul>             | <p><b>What:</b> facilitate debris collection and community information.</p> <p><b>How:</b> coordinate arborists and utilities.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> frequent windstorms isolate communities and disrupt tourism.</p>                                                              |
| <b>Bushfire (2023 Edition)</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land rehabilitation, fencing, stock water, property rebuilding.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CFA</li> <li>DEECA</li> <li>ERV</li> </ul> | <p><b>What:</b> coordinate local fencing and water programs.</p> <p><b>How:</b> link landholders with state grants.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> protecting agricultural and biodiversity values accelerates recovery.</p>                                                                |
| <b>Extreme Heat (2022)</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and wellbeing, continuity of services.</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMC (Control).</li> </ul>                  | <p><b>What:</b> activate Heat Health Plan and promote HEAT SAFE messaging</p> <p><b>How:</b> partner with health and community groups &amp; services.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> Various cohorts within Hepburn's population are at risk of poor health outcomes from extreme heat.</p> |
| <b>Health &amp; Pandemic (2022 &amp; 2025)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public health recovery, workforce wellbeing.</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DH (Control).</li> </ul>                   | <p><b>What:</b> support local clinics and service continuity.</p> <p><b>How:</b> coordinate messaging and community outreach.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> maintaining trust and access to care prevents cascading social impacts.</p>                                                    |

Figure 24 Hazards and Recovery Priorities

## 7.4 Impact Assessments

Impact assessments form a critical thread linking the response phase to relief and recovery. They align with the EM Act 2013, the SEMP, the Victorian Impact Assessment Framework and the Recovery Operations Handbook.

In Hepburn Shire, impact assessment arrangements:

- support immediate situational awareness for responders
- guide relief centre activation, welfare support and resource allocation

- provide evidence for state and federal recovery funding
- inform local recovery plans, programs and community engagement
- ensure impacts across built, natural, social, cultural and economic domains are understood and addressed
- underpin coordinated reporting across municipal, regional and state tiers

Impact assessments are therefore a core component of Hepburn's emergency management arrangements and ensure recovery is targeted, coordinated and community centered.

Impact assessments support a clear understanding of how an emergency has affected individuals, households, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment.

They identify the extent, location and type of impacts and provide the evidence needed to plan and prioritise relief and recovery activities. They also support information sharing with state and regional partners and allow targeted allocation of recovery funding and services.

Impact assessment in Victoria is guided by the Victorian Impact Assessment Framework (VIAF) and occurs in three stages:

- Initial Impact Assessment (IIA)
- Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA)
- Post-Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA)

These stages help ensure impacts are understood across built, social, natural, economic and cultural domains.

### **Initial Impact Assessments (IIA)**

The Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) is the earliest formal assessment of impacts and is conducted once it is safe for emergency services to access the affected area.

The IIA is a rapid visual inspection and collection of quantifiable early data. It is typically undertaken by response agencies and coordinated through the Incident Management Team (IMT).

IIA information may include:

- damaged or destroyed dwellings
- impacts on essential services and infrastructure
- displaced people remaining in affected areas
- disrupted road or access routes
- impacts on community facilities
- early information on agricultural, livestock or environmental damage

The IIA informs immediate relief activities and allows early recovery work to begin. It also helps prioritize where further assessment is needed and contributes to the Transition to Recovery process under the EM Act 2013. In most events, the IIA is completed within 24–48 hours after safe access is achieved.

### **Secondary Impact Assessments (SIA)**

The Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) is a structured, detailed and multidisciplinary assessment that builds on the IIA and provides a comprehensive understanding of the emergency's consequences across the community. The SIA occurs once response activities have stabilised and access is secure. Ideally, it begins within 4 weeks of entering the impact area.

The SIA examines impacts across the following domains:

- Built: residential, commercial and public buildings, roads, utilities, community assets
- Natural: waterways, forests, biodiversity, soil and environmental health
- Social: community wellbeing, access to essential services, displacement impacts
- Economic: business interruption, tourism disruption, agricultural and livestock impacts
- Cultural: heritage values, cultural sites, First Nations cultural assets

At the local level, Council coordinates the SIA as the Recovery Coordinator once control is handed over from response agencies. SIA teams are assembled from relevant Council staff and partner agencies, depending on the nature and scale of the event.

Assessments are conducted using Crisisworks, consistent with Victorian impact assessment procedures and Council's data management requirements.

The outcomes of the SIA directly inform:

- targeted relief assistance
- prioritisation of recovery operations
- eligibility and scope for state and federal recovery support
- deployment of community recovery officers and specialist teams
- communication updates to affected residents

### **Post-Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA)**

The Post-Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA) is the most detailed stage of impact assessment and focuses on understanding medium- and long-term community needs. It assesses how the emergency has affected the well-being of communities, local infrastructure, economic activity and the natural environment over time.

The PENA may consider:

- long-term displacement and housing needs
- ongoing mental health and psychosocial impacts
- recovery needs of impacted businesses and industries
- sustained disruption to tourism, events and local economy
- environmental degradation, forest recovery and water quality
- cultural and heritage impacts

- community development and resilience needs

The timeframe for PENA varies by event scale but typically continues for months to more than 12 months after the incident.

Council coordinates the PENA at the local level under the direction of the Recovery Coordinator, working with Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), community organisations, health providers and state agencies. PENA results inform the design of medium- and long-term recovery programs, including grants, health and wellbeing initiatives, business supports, environmental rehabilitation and community-led recovery activities.

### **EM-Impact portal and data sharing**

The EM-Impact program, led by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), supports the standardised collection, collation and sharing of impact-assessment data across all hazard types in Victoria. The program includes a portal and visualisation tools that allow agencies to upload impact data, compare it against baseline community resilience data and support decision making for relief and recovery.

This upload and data-sharing arrangement is embedded in the assessment processes outlined earlier (IIA, SIA, PENA). By including the EM-Impact Portal in Hepburn's MEMP, the municipality ensures alignment with state doctrine, supports multi-agency data sharing and strengthens its evidence-based approach to relief and recovery planning.

In Hepburn Shire, once the Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) and Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) teams collect data, output from those assessments is uploaded into the EM-Impact Portal (or the designated data platform under EMV's program). This allows:

- alignment of local impact data with regional and state-level frameworks
- sharing of impact metrics in standardised format with EMV and other agencies
- use of baseline and event data to inform future impact modelling and recovery funding decisions

Council and partner agencies should ensure that uploads to the portal include:

- agreed core impact data fields (as defined by EM-Impact) including number of damaged dwellings, displaced persons, impacted infrastructure and economic loss.
- data in formats compatible with the portal's visualisation tools and dashboards
- timely submission so regional and state systems can integrate local information into broader situational awareness and reporting cycles
- coordination with regional recovery lead (Emergency Recovery Victoria) and IMTs to ensure data quality, consistency and interpretation

Uploading impact assessment data to the EM-Impact Portal ensures that:

- relief and recovery priorities are informed by robust, shared evidence
- eligibility for state and commonwealth recovery funding is better supported through standardised metrics
- local impact patterns can be compared to regional baselines and inform future resilience investment

- Council's recovery planning aligns with regional and state frameworks and supports transparent reporting

## 7.5 Community Engagement

Victoria's Disaster Recovery Toolkit and SEMP Relief and Recovery outline the core principles that underpin community-led recovery. These include:

- Community-led approaches that empower people to identify priorities and shape solutions
- Local knowledge and leadership as the foundation of recovery decisions
- Inclusive and accessible engagement, ensuring all voices are heard
- Respect for cultural values and diversity, including Traditional Owner knowledge
- Support for existing community structures such as neighbourhood houses, service clubs and community groups
- Partnerships between community, Council and agencies
- Flexibility, recognising that different towns, communities and population groups recover at different paces

## 7.6 Recovery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples

Recovery planning in Hepburn Shire must uphold the rights, knowledge, cultural values and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These principles align with the Victorian Government's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination, the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and statewide emergency management doctrine.

Key principles include:

- recognition that Country holds cultural, spiritual and community significance
- respect for local Traditional Owners, Elders and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- cultural safety in all recovery environments and programs
- flexible and self-determined approaches that allow Aboriginal communities to identify priorities
- involvement of First Nations people in impact assessments, recovery decisions and program design
- acknowledgment of the cumulative and intergenerational impacts of disasters on Aboriginal communities

Hepburn Shire Council works with Traditional Owners and relevant Aboriginal organisations to ensure recovery is culturally safe, community-led and grounded in local experience. This includes ensuring culturally appropriate outreach, supporting connections to Country, and recognising cultural heritage values in environmental and land recovery.

## 7.7 Family Violence and Recovery

Family violence risk increases during and after emergencies. Recovery planning must therefore include measures that support safety, confidentiality and access to specialist services. This aligns with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework and SEMP Relief and Recovery doctrine.

Hepburn Shire Council embeds family violence considerations in recovery by:

- ensuring relief and recovery environments are safe, private and trauma-informed
- providing information about local and statewide family violence services
- coordinating with specialist family violence agencies, The Orange Door network and Victoria Police
- training staff and volunteers to recognise signs of family violence and respond appropriately
- ensuring outreach teams understand risk indicators and referral pathways
- designing community meetings, recovery centres and engagement spaces that protect privacy and safety

Family violence considerations apply across all household types, including older people, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ communities and families experiencing financial stress or housing instability.

Embedding family violence prevention in recovery supports safety, dignity and wellbeing while helping households stabilise and rebuild.

## 7.8 Recovery Communities

Recovery is most effective when it is community-led, locally informed and supported by strong partnerships between Council, agencies, community organisations and residents. Victoria's Disaster Recovery Toolkit, the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) doctrine emphasise that communities must be active participants in shaping their own recovery. Engagement, collaboration and shared decision-making strengthen resilience and ensure recovery programs match the needs and values of the people they serve.

Recovery communities are the networks, groups and local leaders who play a central role in supporting neighbourhoods, towns and rural areas after an emergency. These may include neighbourhood houses, service clubs, volunteer groups, Traditional Owners, schools, sporting clubs, community associations, faith groups, arts organisations and informal local networks. Their local knowledge, connections and capability are critical to a strong and inclusive recovery.

Hepburn Shire supports these networks by providing clear communication, outreach, funding pathways and access to recovery programs. Recovery activities build on community strengths and help reconnect residents, restore routine and create opportunities for people to support one another.

### **Community Recovery Committees (CRC)**

Community Recovery Committees are a recognised structure in Victoria for enabling community voices to shape local recovery priorities. They are commonly established after significant emergencies when community influence, local decision-making and targeted support are required.

A CRC:

- provides advice to Council and ERV on community needs
- supports the design and prioritisation of recovery programs
- helps identify emerging issues, local strengths and gaps in services
- ensures recovery activities reflect the unique characteristics of each township
- supports community-led projects and local initiatives
- strengthens communication between residents and recovery agencies

Membership may include residents, community leaders, business representatives, Traditional Owner representatives, youth members, local organisations and other stakeholders with strong local ties.

CRC arrangements are consistent with ERV doctrine and the principles set out in the Disaster Recovery Toolkit, which emphasise community-led approaches and decision-making at the most local level possible.

### **Municipal Recovery Committees (MRC)**

Municipal Recovery Committees provide the formal governance structure to oversee relief and recovery activities at the municipal level. They support the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and act as the coordination point between Council, ERV, community organisations and government agencies.

An MRC typically:

- coordinates municipal recovery operations and programs
- monitors community impacts and emerging needs
- provides strategic oversight and prioritisation
- facilitates agency collaboration
- supports information sharing and resource alignment
- integrates impact assessment data (IIA, SIA, PENA) into planning
- aligns municipal recovery with regional and state recovery arrangements

Membership may include:

- Hepburn Shire Council (MRM, recovery officers, senior staff)
- Emergency Recovery Victoria
- DH, DFFH, DEECA, Agriculture Victoria
- Victoria Police and local emergency services
- health, mental health and community support agencies
- education and local service providers
- representatives from Community Recovery Committees (where established)

The MRC structure ensures Hepburn's recovery system remains accountable, coordinated and aligned with statewide expectations.

### **Disaster recovery and funding arrangements**

Recovery funding for Hepburn Shire draws on multiple state and Commonwealth sources. These include Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other departmental programs that are activated depending on the hazard and impact.

The scale and type of funding available is shaped by the Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) and Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) data collected in the early stages of an event. This information allows funding bodies to target support to community needs and prioritise local recovery activities.

Relief funding supports the immediate needs of community members affected by an emergency. It may include food, water, shelter, health support, emergency accommodation, psychological support and essential services.

Relief activities may be funded through:

- Council's relief and emergency management budgets
- Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) relief programs
- Victorian Government hardship support mechanisms
- Non-government and charitable funding streams

Council may incur initial costs for relief centre operations, staffing, logistics, animal welfare support and essential support. These may later be reimbursed through DRFA or ERV programs, depending on the severity and classification of the event.

Depending on the emergency, the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments may activate:

- A. Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP)
- B. Business and primary producer recovery grants
- C. Concessional loans
- D. Clean-up support programs
- E. Temporary housing and displacement support
- F. Mental health and wellbeing funding
- G. Wildlife and environmental recovery funding

Council plays a role in:

- promoting available support
- helping residents access assistance
- providing verification or documentation (where required)
- coordinating local recovery activities funded through these programs

Recovery funding supports medium- to long-term activities that help individuals, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment recover from the impacts of an emergency.

Recovery funding may include:

- personal hardship assistance

- housing and displacement support
- mental health and wellbeing programs
- business and primary producer recovery support
- environmental rehabilitation
- reconstruction of municipal assets
- community recovery activities

Recovery funding streams available to Hepburn Shire may include:

- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) – joint state–Commonwealth program
- ERV recovery programs (clean-up, community recovery)
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Region business grants and recovery
- State Government grants targeted to specific hazards
- Sector-specific programs (Agriculture Victoria, DEECA, DH, DFFH, Transport, etc.)

The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) are the primary mechanism through which state and Commonwealth governments provide financial assistance following eligible disasters.

For Hepburn, the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) form the primary reimbursement pathway for eligible expenditure related to emergency clean-up, essential public asset restoration and counter-disaster operations.

DRFA is a cost-sharing model between Victoria and the Commonwealth and requires clear documentation, accurate financial records and transparent impact assessment. These arrangements ensure that Hepburn can act quickly during relief and recovery while maintaining long-term economic sustainability.

DRFA funding categories relevant to Hepburn include:

- emergency accommodation and relief payments
- restoration of essential public assets
- counter-disaster operations
- environmental recovery
- clean-up programs
- support for small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profits

Linking the MEMP with the relevant SEMP Sub-Plans creates a single, integrated recovery framework for Hepburn Shire.

The approach recognises that while hazards differ in their effects, the underlying priorities remain constant: protecting life and wellbeing, restoring community confidence, rebuilding essential infrastructure, revitalising the local economy, and caring for the environment and Country.

Through this alignment, Council maintains a consistent recovery philosophy across all emergencies, one that is proactive, community-led, and connected from the municipal level through to regional and state recovery arrangements.

## 8. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Monitoring and evaluation support the continuous improvement of emergency management arrangements in Hepburn Shire. These processes ensure the Plan remains contemporary, evidence-based and aligned with the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP), the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) and the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2023–26.

A structured approach to tracking performance also strengthens shared accountability across Council, agencies and the community. The plan adopts the principles of AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management, which identifies continuous improvement as a core component of a resilient and accountable system. Effective risk management relies on continual learning, reflection, and adaptation.

Within the emergency management context, continuous improvement involves a deliberate cycle of identifying, analysing, evaluating, and treating risks—supported by ongoing review, testing, and learning from both planned exercises and real incidents.

In Victoria, this is operationalised through the Emergency Management (EM) Learn Lessons Management Framework, which provides a statewide, evidence-based approach for identifying, capturing, analysing, and implementing lessons from emergencies, exercises, and reviews.

The EM-Learn Framework promotes a culture of accountability and collective learning—helping councils and agencies ensure that observations translate into improved capability, interoperability, and community outcomes.

### 8.1 Victoria's Lessons Management Life Cycle and EM-Learn

The emergency management sector's approach to identifying and learning operational lessons, including for all emergency risks and hazards, is documented in EM-Learn Lessons Management Framework and includes the lessons management life cycle.

Hepburn integrates lessons management across all stages of the emergency management cycle through:

- Post-incident debriefs and after-action reviews, aligned to the Victorian Preparedness Framework capabilities.
- Capturing lessons and observations within the EM-Learn platform, tagged by core themes such as coordination, communication, and consequence management.
- Assigning ownership and tracking actions through council's governance and the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMP) to ensure accountability.
- Feeding insights back into planning and training, ensuring procedural and cultural improvement across agencies.

For Hepburn Shire, this approach ensures that continuous improvement is embedded within its risk management framework, closing the loop between risk identification, control evaluation, and learning. This process ensures the MEMP remains a living, evidence-based document that evolves through shared experience, reflective practice, and sector-wide collaboration.

## Monitoring

Monitoring focuses on routine oversight to ensure the Plan and its sub-plans remain up to date and integrated with state and regional arrangements. Monitoring occurs throughout the year and is formally reported at MEMPC meetings. The MEMPC monitors:

- progress against identified actions, treatments and obligations
- updates to legislation, state doctrine or hazard-specific sub-plans
- changes to risk, capability, demographics and exposure
- outcomes of training, exercising and after-action reviews
- interdependencies with regional and cross-border partners
- insights emerging from statewide initiatives under the SAP.

## Evaluation

Evaluation considers how well emergency management arrangements are functioning across prevention, preparedness, response, relief and recovery. Evaluation findings inform revisions to the Plan, capability development, investment decisions and future MEMPC priorities. Evaluation activities include:

- Post-emergency reviews, including relief and recovery debriefs
- After-action reviews linked to EM-Learn
- Exercise evaluations, in line with the Victorian Emergency Management Exercising Framework
- Insights and lessons from the State Control Centre, Emergency Recovery Victoria, and other state agencies
- Community feedback, including targeted engagement with those most at risk
- Data analysis, including risk trends, intelligence products and changes in community needs.

## Exercising

Exercising tests the interoperability, decision making and readiness of municipal arrangements. Exercise findings contribute directly to continuous improvement. The MEMPC supports:

- at least one multi-agency municipal exercise per year
- participation in regional and state exercises
- scenario-based workshops on hazard-specific sub-plans
- exercises that assess relief, transition to recovery, consequence management and public information functions
- exercises aligned with relevant SAP actions, including workforce capability, public information, interconnected systems and risk-reduction initiatives.

### **Continuous improvement**

Continuous improvement connects monitoring, evaluation and exercising to a structured lessons management cycle. Hepburn Shire applies the EM-Learn principles:

- identify lessons through real events, exercises, reviews and sector insights
- analyse lessons to understand contributing factors
- assign agreed actions to responsible agencies
- track progress through MEMPC reporting
- incorporate improvements into this Plan, sub-plans, and agency doctrine.

Continuous improvement also draws on statewide reform projects delivered under the SAP 2023–26, ensuring municipal arrangements remain contemporary and aligned with best practice.

### **Plan review requirements**

In accordance with the EM Act 2013:

- the Plan is fully reviewed at least every three years
- urgent updates may be made under s60AM where required to protect life or property
- the MEMPC completes a Statement of Assurance, confirming legislative and guideline compliance
- the Plan remains a living document, updated following significant emergencies, changes in risk or major updates to state or regional doctrine.

Monitoring and evaluation strengthen the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of Hepburn’s emergency management arrangements. By aligning with the SEMP, REMP, SAP and Ministerial Guidelines, the MEMPC ensures the Plan remains responsive to changing risk, informed by lessons, and grounded in shared responsibility.

Through this structured approach, Hepburn Shire ensures that its emergency management arrangements remain current, evidence-driven, and continuously improving—enhancing both organisational capability and community resilience. This commitment supports safer, more connected and more resilient communities across Hepburn Shire.

## 9. Appendix

### A. Document History and Version Control

| Version                      | Date             | Summary                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DRAFT 1.0                    | 16 December 2021 | First draft version of the new MEMP prepared by Hepburn Shire Council and distributed/workshopped at MEMPC quarterly meeting. |
| DRAFT 2.0                    | 31 October 2022  | Second draft version of the MEMP prepared by Hepburn Shire Council based on feedback received from MEMPC members.             |
| DRAFT 2.0                    | 5 December 2022  | Final draft version prepared following MEMP review by the MEMPC and emailed to all members.                                   |
| 1.0                          | 15 December 2022 | Endorsement of final draft and adoption of v1.0 by the MEMPC.                                                                 |
| FINAL Controlled Version 1.0 | 15 February 2023 | Inclusion of REMPC submission and approval dates and plan amendment history update.                                           |
| FINAL Public Version 1.0     | 15 February 2023 | Redaction of sensitive information from the Controlled Version, for public release.                                           |
| Draft review                 | August 2025      | Review with community included in audience.                                                                                   |

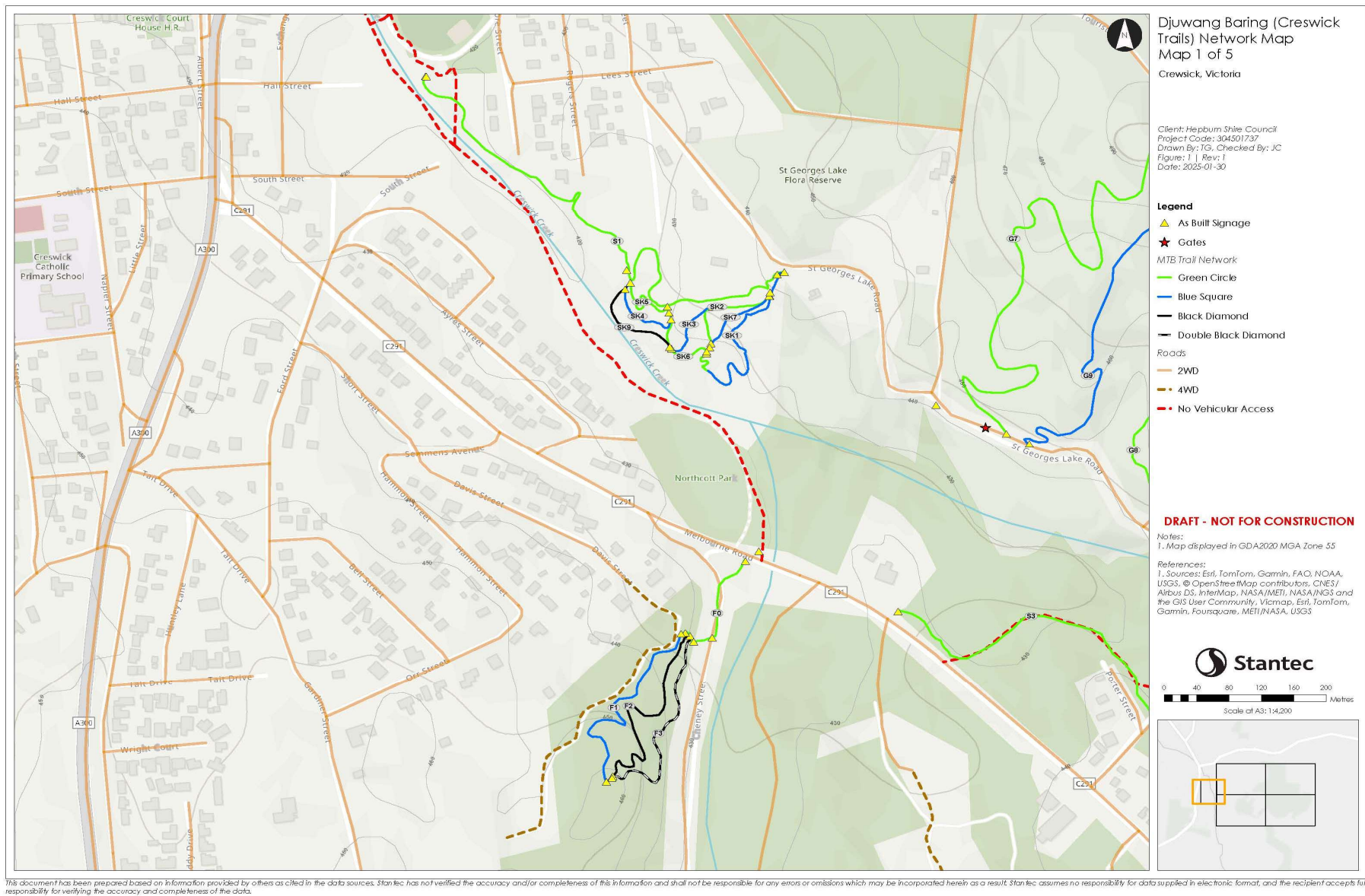
## B. MEMPC Membership and Agency Contact

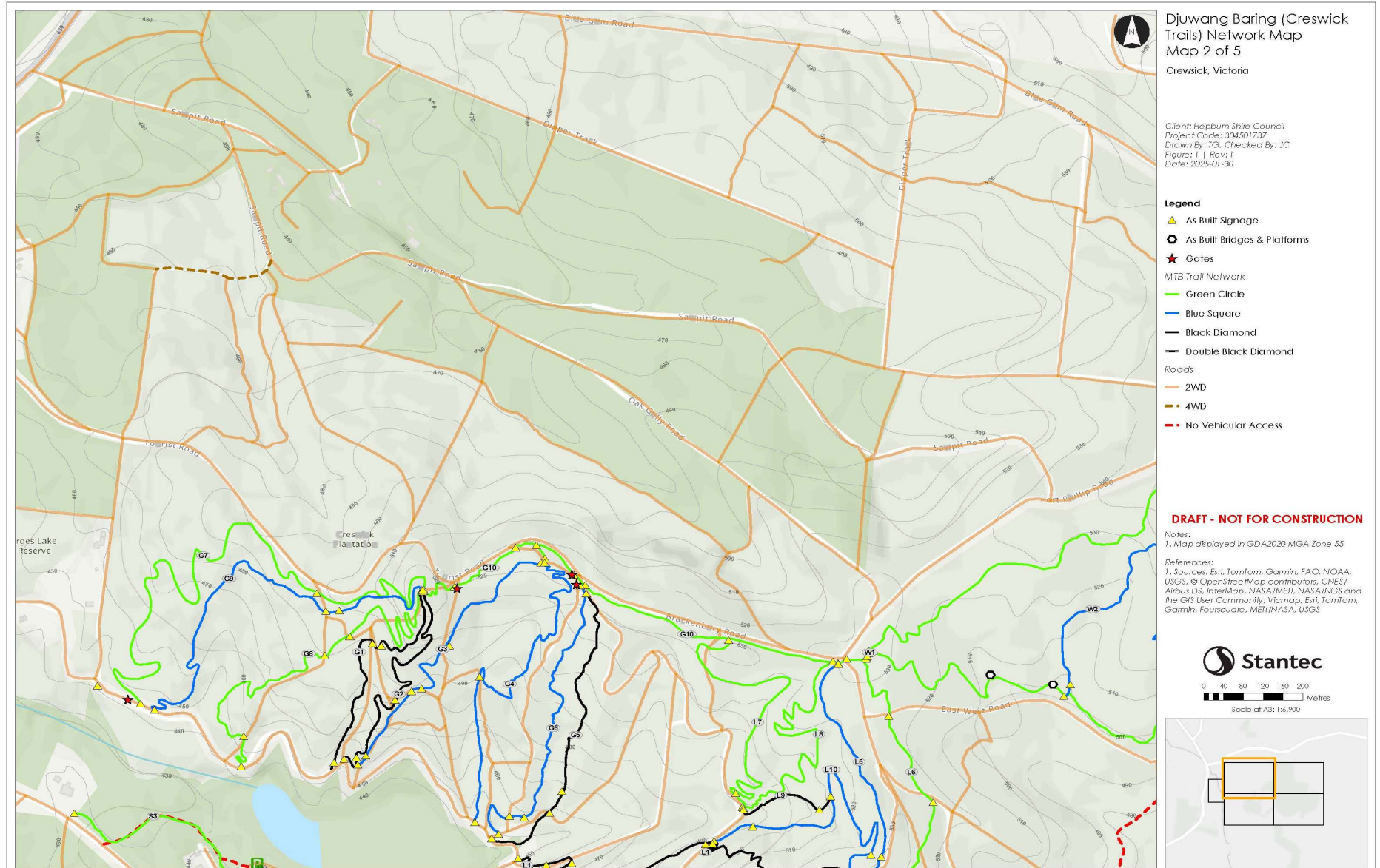
This contact list is restricted and there is an electronic contact list shared through Council officers outlook account which pushes out to their mobile phones.

| Agency                   | Representative   | Position                                                                   | Contact                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AgVic                    | Angela Clough    | Regional Leader, Grampians                                                 | 0417 207 529<br><a href="mailto:angela.clough@agriculture.vic.gov.au">angela.clough@agriculture.vic.gov.au</a>           |
| Ambulance Victoria       | Simon Vendy      | Senior Team Manager, Hepburn & Moorabool                                   | 0415 130 298<br><a href="mailto:HepburnMoorabool.stm@ambulance.vic.gov.au">HepburnMoorabool.stm@ambulance.vic.gov.au</a> |
| CFA                      | Damien Scott     | Commander, CFA West Region District 15                                     | 0498 349 066<br><a href="mailto:damien.scott@cfa.vic.gov.au">damien.scott@cfa.vic.gov.au</a>                             |
| Community Representative | Juliet Viney     |                                                                            | 0411 696 526<br><a href="mailto:julietviney@gmail.com">julietviney@gmail.com</a>                                         |
| DEECA                    | Crystal Clark    | Senior Fire Management Officer, Emergency Preparedness – Midlands District | 0458 352 275<br><a href="mailto:crystal.clark@deeca.vic.gov.au">crystal.clark@deeca.vic.gov.au</a>                       |
| DFFH                     | Simone Frasin    | Senior Emergency Management Coordinator, Grampians                         | 0428 201 069<br><a href="mailto:simone.frasin@dffh.vic.gov.au">simone.frasin@dffh.vic.gov.au</a>                         |
| DH                       | Nathan Durbridge | Manager – Emergency Management Sector Operations Readiness & Response      | 0498 631 520<br><a href="mailto:nathan.durbridge@health.vic.gov.au">nathan.durbridge@health.vic.gov.au</a>               |
| ERV                      | Belinda McKnight | Senior Regional Relief & Recovery Officer, Grampians                       | 0499 356 259<br><a href="mailto:Belinda.McKnight@erv.vic.gov.au">Belinda.McKnight@erv.vic.gov.au</a>                     |

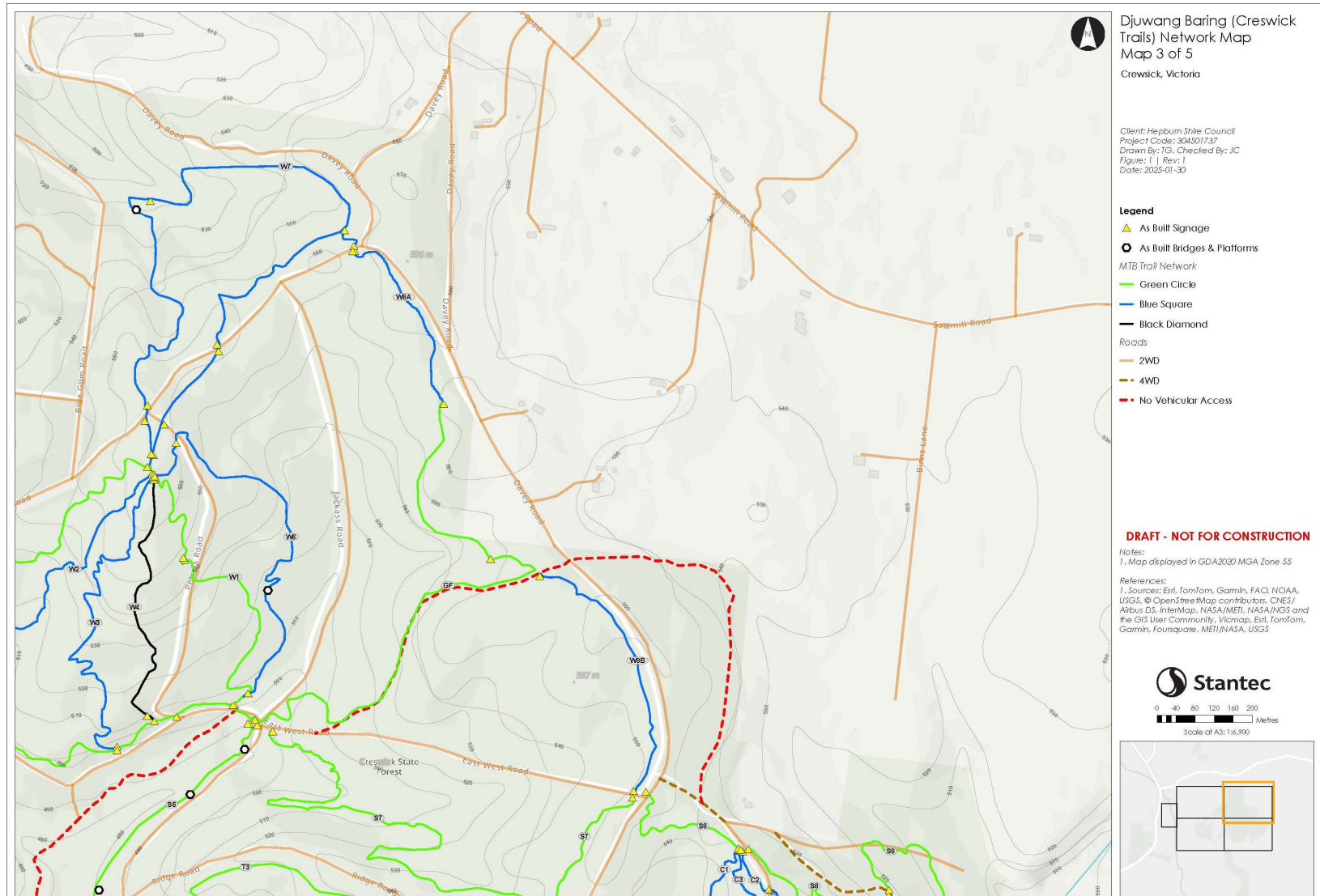
|                       |                                       |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hepburn Shire Council | Khalid Wright<br><br>Kylie Richardson | Manager Community Safety & Health<br><br>Emergency Management Officer | 0488 453 694<br><a href="mailto:kwright@hepburn.vic.gov.au">kwright@hepburn.vic.gov.au</a><br><br>0409 987 502<br><a href="mailto:krichardson@hepburn.vic.gov.au">krichardson@hepburn.vic.gov.au</a> |
| Red Cross             | Tonie Duffin                          | Divisional Operations Officer – Inner Grampians Division              | 0409 522 402<br><a href="mailto:tduffin@redcross.org.au">tduffin@redcross.org.au</a>                                                                                                                 |
| VCC EM                | Michael Downing                       | Chief Operating Officer                                               | 0418 691 490<br><a href="mailto:emergencies@vccem.org.au">emergencies@vccem.org.au</a>                                                                                                               |
| VicPol                | Ryan Newman                           | Officer in Charge, Daylesford, Hepburn MERC                           | 0419 321 818<br><a href="mailto:ryan.newman@police.vic.gov.au">ryan.newman@police.vic.gov.au</a>                                                                                                     |
| VicSES                | Gavin Kelly                           | Operations Officer – Emergency Management West Region                 | 0417 503 733<br><a href="mailto:gavin.kelly@ses.vic.gov.au">gavin.kelly@ses.vic.gov.au</a>                                                                                                           |

C. Map of Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails)

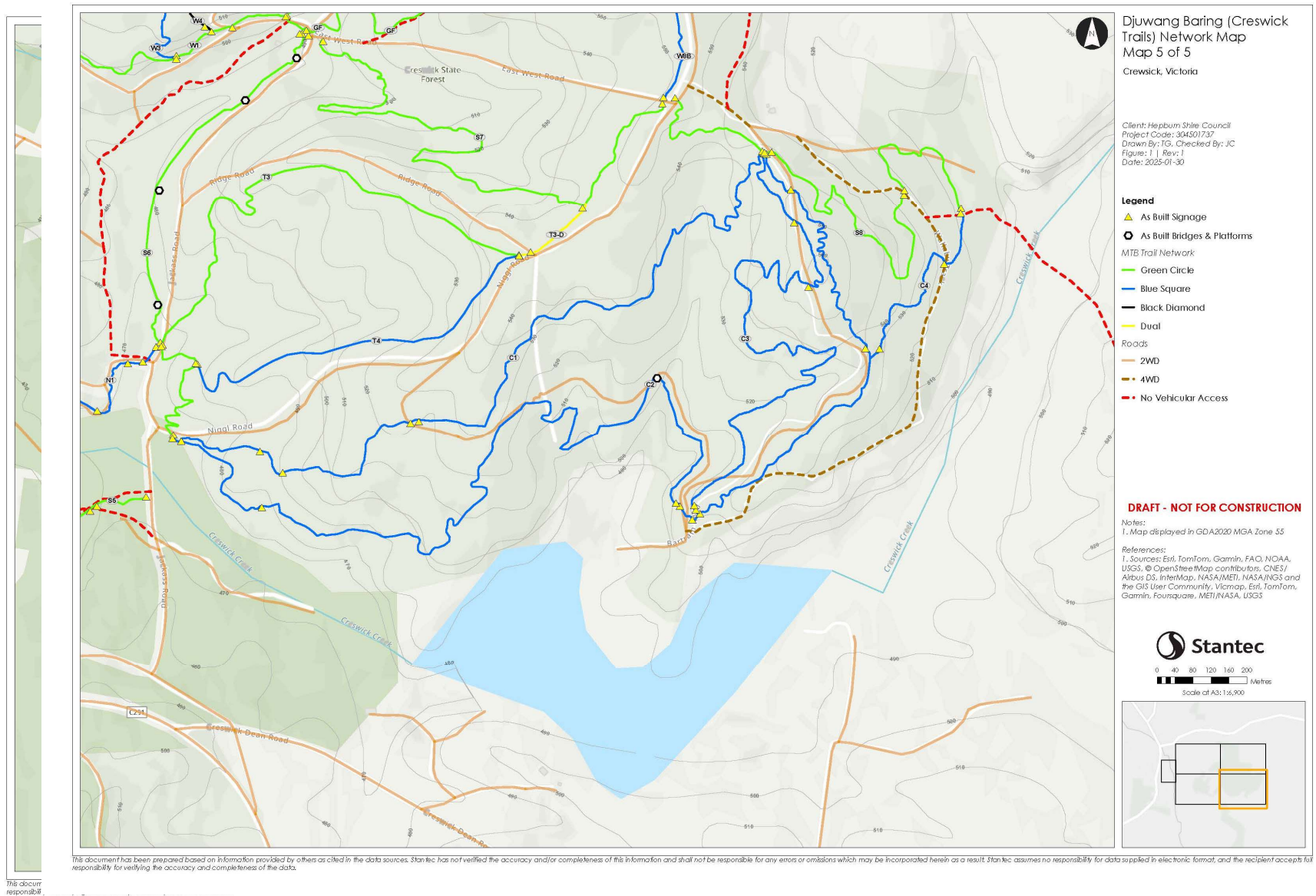




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## Appendix

### D. List of MEMP Sub-Plans and Complementary Plans

| Plan                                     | Version/Date | Review Date | Lead Agency |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>SUB PLANS</b>                         |              |             |             |
| Municipal Fire Management Plan           | 2022         | 2026        | CFA         |
| Hepburn Shire Flood Emergency Plan       | 2021         | 2026        | VICSES      |
| <b>COMPLEMENTARY PLANS</b>               |              |             |             |
| Heat Health Plan                         | 2021         | 2025        | HSC         |
| Pandemic Plan                            | 2022         | 2026        | HSC         |
| Emergency Animal Welfare Plan            | 2025         | 2028        | HSC         |
| BPLR-NSP's Plan                          | 2025         | 2026        | HSC         |
| <b>ADDITIONAL PLANS</b>                  |              |             |             |
| Djuwang Baring Emergency Management Plan | 2025         | 2029        | HSC         |

## Appendix

### E. List of Hepburn Shire Emergency Relief Centres

|                           |                                         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Doug Lindsay Pavilion     | Lindsay Park Drive, Creswick            |
| Newlyn Recreation Reserve | 2745 Midland Highway, Newlyn            |
| The Mechanics             | 66 High Street, Trentham                |
| Victoria Park Pavilion    | 3021 Ballan-Daylesford Road, Daylesford |

## Appendix

### F. Exercises

|                                                     |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Arxada multi-agency exercise, Trentham              | Sunday 11 August 2024      |
| Ballarat Incident Control Centre exercise, Mt Rowan | Wednesday 27 November 2024 |
| EMLO training tabletop exercise, Bungaree           | Monday 9 December 2024     |
| Evacuation tabletop exercise, Ararat                | Tuesday 2 September 2024   |

## Appendix

### G. Acronyms

|                |                                                           |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| AAR            | After Action Review                                       |
| AEMO           | Australian Energy Market Operator                         |
| AFDRS          | Australian Fire Danger Rating System                      |
| AV             | Ambulance Victoria                                        |
| BOM            | Bureau of Meteorology                                     |
| BPLR-NSP       | Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Place |
| CERA           | Community Emergency Risk Assessment                       |
| CFA            | Country Fire Authority                                    |
| CFA FMZ        | CFA Fire Management Zone                                  |
| CFA FOB        | CFA Fire Operations Branch                                |
| CFA FRD        | CFA Fire Response District                                |
| DEECA          | Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action      |
| DFFH           | Department of Families, Fairness and Housing              |
| DHS / DHHS     | Department of Health and Human Services (legacy)          |
| DJARRA         | Dja Dja Wurrung People                                    |
| DoT / VicRoads | Department of Transport                                   |
| DRFA           | Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements                    |
| EM Act         | Emergency Management Act 2013                             |
| EM-Learn       | Emergency Management Lessons Management System            |
| EMLO           | Emergency Management Liaison Officer                      |
| EMV            | Emergency Management Victoria                             |
| EPA            | Environment Protection Authority                          |
| ERC            | Emergency Relief Centre                                   |
| EW             | Emergency Warning                                         |
| FDR            | Fire Danger Rating                                        |
| GIS            | Geographic Information System                             |
| HF             | High Fire Danger                                          |

## Appendix

|              |                                                        |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| IC           | Incident Controller                                    |
| ICC          | Incident Control Centre                                |
| IMT          | Incident Management Team                               |
| JSOP         | Joint Standard Operating Procedure                     |
| MAV          | Municipal Association of Victoria                      |
| MECC         | Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre                |
| MEM          | Municipal Emergency Manager                            |
| MEMEG        | Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group       |
| MEMO         | Municipal Emergency Management Officer                 |
| MEMP         | Municipal Emergency Management Plan                    |
| MEMPC        | Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee      |
| MERC         | Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator               |
| MFPO         | Municipal Fire Prevention Officer                      |
| MHF          | Major Hazard Facility                                  |
| MRM          | Municipal Recovery Manager                             |
| NDRRA        | Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements      |
| NSP          | Neighbourhood Safer Place                              |
| PFA          | Psychosocial First Aid                                 |
| REMP         | Regional Emergency Management Plan                     |
| REMPC        | Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee       |
| RFDS         | Royal Flying Doctor Service                            |
| RFR          | Register.Find.Reunite                                  |
| RSPCA        | Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals |
| SAP          | Strategic Action Plan                                  |
| SEMP         | State Emergency Management Plan                        |
| SES / VICSES | Victoria State Emergency Service                       |
| SITREP       | Situation Report                                       |

## Appendix

|       |                                         |
|-------|-----------------------------------------|
| TS    | Thunderstorm                            |
| VFRRB | Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfire |