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ENDORSEMENT

This sub-plan was endorsed by Wodonga Council at the ordinary meeting of the council in October, 2015.

Patience Harrington
Chief Executive Officer
Wodonga Council


Version control:
This plan is to be reviewed annually as set out in the Action Plan.

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<td>April 2015</td>
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<td>Susan Bennett and Paul Leddy</td>
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<td>Paul Leddy and Susan Bennett</td>
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<td>September 2019</td>
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What is it all about?

As the country faces a future with an increased likelihood of hot weather, it is important Wodonga Council develops, maintains and implements a municipal-wide approach to dealing with heatwave events. The council’s plan provides a framework to support to the local community and vulnerable population groups so the city can be better equipped to handle more intense and frequent heatwaves.

The State Heatwave Plan 2014 sets out arrangements to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to the management of heat events, so as to reduce the impact and consequences of heatwaves on the community, infrastructure and services. It sets out responsibilities, a collaborative approach to be taken by government and emergency management agencies, and planning and arrangements to be made by functional sectors of government and industry to prepare for a heat event in order to reduce its impact on the community, infrastructure and services.

Legislation

The Victorian Government has a legislative framework relating to heat events. This includes:
- Emergency Management Act 1986;
- Emergency Management Act 2013;
- Planning and Environment Act 1987;
- Local Government Act 1989; and,

The Emergency Management Act 2013 outlines the governance arrangements in Victoria for managing all types of emergencies. The Emergency Management Act 1986 outlines the responsibilities of local government to develop a municipal emergency management plan.

The Planning and Environmental Act 1987 and the Local Government Act 1989 ensure building codes and municipal strategic statements foster better planning of the built environment in order to withstand the impact of a range of likely emergencies. The Local Government Act 1989 also outlines the responsibility of local government to protect the public health in emergencies. The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 strengthens that role through municipal public health planning processes.

As part of the state plan, the Wodonga Heatwave Plan will be used by the council and its partners in the planning for, and responding to, heatwave conditions. It has been developed using the general principles of emergency management as a guide to planning, preparation, response and recovery. The plan is underpinned by a long-term approach by Wodonga Council, in partnership with stakeholders, to reduce the impact on the local community.

The Wodonga Heatwave Plan has been written to:
- Be consistent with the council’s planning frameworks and guidelines;
- Outline health, community and emergency service actions and response arrangements to heatwave alert;
- Identify vulnerable persons within the Wodonga community;
- Propose a clear communication plan to initiate alert, response and recovery phases of the plan;
- Describe key stakeholder roles and responsibilities; and,
- Promote a community awareness and education component.
Why Wodonga needs a heatwave plan

Local councils in Victoria have been asked to prepare heatwave plans to support their local communities to adapt to heatwave conditions. By developing Wodonga’s own plan, the city can use its understanding of local conditions and resources to better prepare for, respond to and recover from heatwave conditions.

High temperatures can seriously impact on the health of people in the municipality, especially the very young, the elderly, people with a chronic disease, those who work and play outdoors, and people on a low income. The council needs to be well-prepared in advance to make sure the community has the necessary tools to cope in times of extreme heat.

By having a heatwave plan, the council can:
- Ensure that health information and support is readily available to the community;
- Increase the capacity of the community to respond during heatwaves;
- Manage a heatwave emergency more effectively; and,
- Develop long-term changes in behaviour to improve health and wellbeing.

The aim of the Wodonga Heatwave Plan is to:
- Support the Wodonga community to prepare for, respond to and recover from heatwave conditions.

The council will achieve this by:
- Identifying vulnerable population groups in the community and the risks they face during heatwaves;
- Developing partnerships with local organisations to better coordinate a response to heatwaves;
- Outlining effective strategies and actions to implement in the event of a heatwave;
- Building practices to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of the plan; and,
- Reviewing the plan annually, before the commencement of the summer season.
What the Wodonga community looks like

Location
The city of Wodonga is located in the Ovens-Murray Statistical Division of Victoria, on the New South Wales border, about 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne. It is bounded by the Murray River in the north, Towong Shire in the east and Indigo Shire in the south and west. The city itself encompasses the main urban centre of Wodonga, as well as significant rural hinterland and substantial industrial areas. It has a total land area of 434 square kilometres with the majority of the population living in urban areas. Rural land is used mainly for agriculture, including grazing and farming.

Population
Wodonga is one of Victoria’s fastest growing provincial cities, experiencing unprecedented growth during the past 30 years. It now boasts a residential base of more than 41,000 people. Regionally, Wodonga services a population of approximately 170,000 people, giving it a large critical mass.

Currently, the city’s population reflects:
- A significant share of family age groups with young children;
- A high proportion of people aged 18 to 34 years; and,
- A lower proportion of 60 to 84 year olds.

Over the last 10 years, the enumerated population has increased by 12.5 per cent (or 3638 people). Population is projected to have significant growth over the coming years.
Due to its relaxed, outdoor lifestyle and excellent facilities, Wodonga is a great place for people of all ages to live. Wodonga has more than 80km of bike and walking paths, providing the perfect opportunity to walk, cycle or jog by the river or around the city. Parks and gardens are dotted throughout the community and Wodonga's hillsides and parkland reserves provide bushwalking, cycling, bird watching and hiking tracks for the residents and visitors.

People living in Wodonga enjoy a range of community events and celebrations from neighbourhood barbecues to outdoor events. The city is serviced by Arts Space Wodonga, The Cube Wodonga, theatrical programs, exhibitions and community-generated activities.

Residents have access to a variety of quality health services from health care professionals and community services who work closely together to support the health needs of the area. The three funded health agencies, Albury Wodonga Health - Wodonga Campus, Gateway Health and the Primary Care Partnership, deliver a range of acute hospital, aged care, community and home-based support services. The council’s maternal and child health (MCH) service is well attended by children.

Education is valued in Wodonga with seven preschools, a range of childcare centres, 11 primary schools (including a special development school for children with a disability), six secondary schools and the Flying Fruit Fly School of Acrobatics. Tertiary students have access to five post secondary education providers which include La Trobe University, Charles Sturt University, Wodonga Institute of TAFE, Riverina Institute of TAFE and the Albury Wodonga Community College.

Wodonga is also known as a child and family-friendly city and is committed to building a city where children and families feel connected and valued. It achieves this by partnering with a wide range of government departments, local services, community organisations, families and children to offer a diverse mix of quality family services and experiences.

Climate

Currently, climate in the Wodonga area is typified by daily mean summer temperatures ranging from a minimum of 14°C to a maximum of 31°C. Mean daily winter temperatures range from a minimum of 2°C to a maximum of 12°C. Frosts can occur in Wodonga between April and October. Most rainfall occurs in winter and spring. Summer thunderstorms are common, contributing to the risk of fires and floods. On average, there are 97.4 days each year where at least one millimetre of rain falls.
How heatwaves affect Wodonga

The city of Wodonga, along with the rest of Victoria, experience high temperatures during the summer periods. The Victorian Government’s Chief Health Officer estimates additional deaths will occur state-wide during heatwave events.

Statistics also show a decline in the region’s rainfall over the past decade. There were recorded fewer rainy days each year on average. It is predicted that the number of hot days will continue to increase and rainfall totals will continue to drop. As these predictions, in relation to climate change, are that extreme weather events are going to become more frequent and severe in the comings years. Council has a duty to ensure that all residents and services of Wodonga are well-prepared to protect the most vulnerable members of its communities during such events.

The future climate of the Wodonga area is expected to be hotter and drier than it is today. By 2030, average annual temperatures are anticipated to be around 0.9°C warmer, with the smallest increases expected to be in winter (0.7°C). The number of hot days (days over 30°C) is also expected to increase. These climate change scenarios are dependent upon emissions growth in the region. Reductions in the total average annual rainfall of around 3 per cent are expected, with the greatest reductions occurring in spring (7 per cent). It is predicted over the coming years temperatures could increase to be above 2.9°C warmer, the number of hot days will continue to increase and rainfall totals will continue to drop.

Although average annual and seasonal rainfall is expected to decline slightly, the intensity of heavy daily rainfall is likely to increase in most seasons by 5 to 10 per cent. However, fewer rain days are anticipated with more droughts. These changes will increase the prevalence and extremity of heatwaves.
In Victoria, heatwave plans are activated by local councils when temperatures are forecast that are likely to impact on the health of the community. These activation levels are also called ‘heat health temperature thresholds’. A heatwave is a complex phenomenon resulting from a certain combination of temperature, humidity, air movement and duration. Heatwaves can mean different things to different people, with thresholds changing according to demographic and geographic circumstances.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) claims that there is no universal definition of a heatwave, although in a general sense it can be defined as a prolonged period of excessive heat. The difficulty in defining a heatwave in Australia has been in establishing an appropriate heat index with an acceptable event threshold and duration, and in relating it to the climatology of the area under investigation. Various heat or thermal comfort indices have been developed to evaluate heat-related stress combining air temperature and humidity, and in some cases, wind and direct sunlight.

In Wodonga the heatwave threshold is set at a mean temperature of 32°C over a 24-hour period, which is determined by calculating the daily maximum temperature and the overnight minimum and dividing them by two.

An example of how this calculation made is:

**Tuesday**
- Min: 23°C
- Max: 45°C

\[
\frac{45 + 26}{2} = 35.5°C
\]

The threshold for the city of Wodonga = mean of 32°C
Therefore, the temperature forecast indicates that the threshold will be exceeded.

**Wednesday**
- Min: 26°C
- Max: 31°C

The above calculation should be used to calculate the mean temperature of everyday within a seven day forecast which is available on the BOM website
bom.gov/weather/vic/maps/vic-forecast-map-7-day.shtml
How heatwaves affect health

As temperatures rise, so too does the risk of contracting a heat-related illness, a medical condition that results from the body’s inability to cope with heat and cool itself. If left untreated, a heat-related illness can lead to serious complications, even death. In fact, heat kills more people than tornadoes, hurricanes, lightning and flash floods – combined.

Heat-related illness can make people feel uncomfortable, not so much because they feel hot, but rather because they sense how difficult it has become to lose body heat at the rate necessary to keep their inner body temperature close to 37°C. The body responds to this stress progressively through three stages as outlined in figure one below.

Figure one: Heatwave affect on health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>What to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heat cramps</td>
<td>Muscle pains, spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs</td>
<td>Stop activity and sit quietly in a cool place, increase fluid intake, rest a few hours before returning to activity, seek medical help if cramps persist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat exhaustion</td>
<td>Pale complexion and sweating, rapid heart rate, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, fainting.</td>
<td>Get the person to a cool area and lay them down, remove their outer clothing, remove their clothing, wet their skin with cool water or wet cloths, seek medical advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat stroke (A life-threatening emergency)</td>
<td>Same symptoms as heat exhaustion. Dry skin with no sweating, mental condition worsens, confusion, seizure, stroke – like symptoms or collapsing, unconsciousness.</td>
<td>Call an ambulance, get the person to a cool area and lay them down, remove their clothing, wet their skin with water, fanning continuously, position an unconscious person on their side and clear their airway.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heat illnesses are preventable

High temperatures can also be related to:
- An increase in hospital admissions relating to heat stress, dehydration, or as a result of heat exacerbating existing conditions;
- Increased rates of certain crimes, particularly those related to aggressive behaviour such as homicide;
- Increased number of work-related accidents and reduced work productivity; and,
- Decreased sports performance.

To help prevent the onset of a heat-related illness, people in Wodonga are advised to:
- Carefully monitor the temperature and humidity outdoors, and plan activities and work hours accordingly by scheduling outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day;
- Stay in the shade or indoors in a cool location as much as possible;
- Drink plenty of water to replace fluids lost through sweating;
- Use a spray bottle to keep cool by misting;
- Wear lightweight loose-fitting and light-coloured clothing; and,
- Protect from the sun by wearing a hat and sunglasses, and using an umbrella.

General care for heat emergencies include cooling the body, giving fluids and minimising shock.

People most at risk to heatwave conditions

Although anyone can suffer from the effects of prolonged periods of heat at any time, some people are at greater risk than others. Those most vulnerable include the elderly, infants and young children, people with a disability, people with a pre-existing medical condition and people who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Other groups at risk to heat include people who are overweight, people who over-exert during work or exercise, and people confined to bed and unable to care for themselves.

While Wodonga’s Heatwave Plan plans for a whole-of-community response, it particularly focuses on those aged above 65 years of age, children between zero and 11 years of age, low-income earners, people with chronic disease, those with a disability, people on medication, those who work or play outdoors and visitors.

The elderly

From 2016 statistics, people in the over 60 age group comprised 17.4 per cent of the total Wodonga population. There were 8122 Wodonga residents in this age group, an overall increase of 1920 elderly residents since 2006. Further analysis of the age structure of Wodonga shows that the two largest increases between 2006 and 2011 were in the age groups 50 to 59 (a further 317 people) and 60 to 69 (a further 880 people). This is reflective of the nation-wide trend towards an ageing population.

Statistics show by 2100, the number of people in the 65-plus age group across Australia is expected to increase two to five times above current numbers. Future predictions for Wodonga show that the number of elderly residents will continue to increase to 7231 by 2021.
Babies and young children

Babies and young children are particularly sensitive to the effects of high temperatures and can quickly become stressed by heat. They may not always show signs or symptoms even though they have been affected. They rely on others to control their environment and keep them from becoming dehydrated or overheated and it is very important to watch them closely.

In 2016, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census recorded that there were 6626 children, or 17.4 per cent of the population, aged zero to 11 years of age living in Wodonga.

Wodonga’s childcare centres have ‘Sunsmart’ policies to prevent heat-related illness and will disseminate heatwave information provided by the council to their clients during stage two of the heatwave strategy.

Low-income earners

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Australia index of disadvantage measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. It provides a general view of the relative level of disadvantage in one area compared to others, and is used to advocate for an area based on its level of disadvantage.

The index is derived from attributes that reflect disadvantage such as low-income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. When targeting services to disadvantaged communities, it is important to also look at these underlying characteristics as they can differ markedly between areas with similar SEIFA scores and shed light on the type of disadvantage being experienced.

A higher score on the index means a lower level of disadvantage. A lower score on the index means a higher level of disadvantaged. Refer SEIFA Index link in appendix three for current information.

Research shows that low-income neighbourhoods tend to be hotter than their high-income counterparts during the summer. This can be attributed to low-income neighbourhoods tending to have more pavement and less substantial vegetation. This contributes to the so-called “heat island” effect where cities become giant heat sinks and radiators during the summer. Residents of low-income neighbourhoods are also less likely to have air-conditioning sufficient to counteract a major heatwave. In addition, some people who have air-conditioning won’t use it because of the additional cost. Elderly residents in low-income areas, who make up the majority of victims during a heatwave, are less likely to leave their windows open due to safety concerns. The council continues to work collaboratively to develop strategies that assist those most vulnerable.
People with chronic disease

Virtually all chronic diseases present a risk of death/illness due to heat. Wodonga has high rates of some chronic diseases when compared with the rest of Victoria. The leading main disease groups contributing to the burden of disease in Wodonga include:

- Cancer;
- Cardiovascular disease;
- Dementia; and,
- Diabetes.

Other groups with chronic disease at increased risk of illness and death associated with heat include people with mental illness.

The prevalence of chronic disease and modifiable chronic disease risk factors have increased over time, in conjunction with increases in life expectancy. As the population ages, the number of people with a chronic disease in Wodonga is expected to increase. This presents a significant challenge to the health system with important implications for the future health and wellbeing of the population in periods of extreme heat.

People with a disability

Some people with a disability can be affected by heat because their body may not be able to regulate body temperature. This means the body may not be able to lose heat through skin by sweating or by having blood flow to the surface of the skin which helps the body to cool down. Also excess fat or wearing too many clothes can cause heat stress. Dehydration or not drinking enough water also can cause heat stress as there may not be enough fluid in the body to facilitate sweating. Dehydration can also cause stress on the heart, known as cardiac stress.

A person with cognitive impairment, whether from disease or injury, may not be able to communicate distress. In some cases, they may not even “feel” the heat or discomfort because of changes in the brain’s abilities to process sensory information or regulate their body’s responses to heat.

People on medication

Some medications increase the risk of heat stress. This varies according to the medication, for example:

- Antidepressants, antihistamines, phenothiazines and anticholinergics (used for some psychiatric conditions) act on an area of the brain that controls the skin’s ability to make sweat;
- Beta blockers (heart tablets) reduce the ability of the heart and lungs to adapt to stresses including hot weather;
- Amphetamines raise body temperature;
- Diuretics (fluid tablets) act on the kidneys and encourage fluid loss. This can quickly lead to dehydration in hot weather; and,
- Opioids and sedatives can reduce the person’s awareness of physical discomfort, which means symptoms of heat stress may be ignored.
People who are outdoors

Many people in Wodonga work and play outdoors in hot conditions, irrespective of the weather. Air temperature, radiant temperature, air velocity, humidity, clothing and activity are recognised as factors that interact to determine heat stress. Anyone having to work or play outside in hot weather without appropriate protection, particularly if this involves heavy physical activity, is at increased risk of suffering health effects from heat. Therefore, certain occupational and sporting groups need to be informed about possible measures to prevent heat stress, how to recognise heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke, and what to do. Effective management systems for ensuring the health and safety of workers and sports people (especially children) must be in place.

Recommended cool areas

In the event of a heatwave it is recommended the public source cool areas. Easily accessible areas include public swimming pools, libraries, some community centres, local shopping centres and other areas. The council may identify and consider opening community spaces for people to attend to escape from the heat and may consider extending pool operating hours. Recommended cool areas, including the local pool opening hours, will be advertised by the council through council’s regular communication channels.
Visitors

During heat events, heat stress can also be a risk for non-acclimatised visitors. Wodonga attracts large volumes of visitors, both national and international, per annum, with the majority transiting from Melbourne and Sydney via the Hume Highway. These individuals are not influenced by traditional messaging as they are not necessarily traditional domestic radio listeners or television viewers.

Provision of managing heat health messaging and materials in relation to UV exposure, ensuring that they carry adequate water, wearing loose cool clothing and a hat, as well as using sun screen and reducing exercise in the hottest parts of the day can be accessed through social media messages.

Visitors should be aware of potable public water supplies. This is particularly important for the RV/motor home sector, where there is a need to fill 90 litres under floor water tanks for drinking, washing and cooling off purposes. Provision and advice regarding the location of taps and water availability is a key element of maintaining hydration and health during hot weather events is available through social media messaging services.

Other effects of heatwaves

Energy

During a heat event, the demand for electricity can exceed the available supply and unplanned power outages may occur. Electricity distributors such as AusNet Services register addresses of power dependent people (life support customers). Customers who depend on electricity for life support equipment must inform their supplier to ensure immediate relief is provided.

Water

As per the North East Water Heat Plan Statement, heat events can cause an increase in the demand for water services, particularly drinking water. Concurrent risks can occur to distribution and treatment when power supply is also lost.

Water supply to the community is provided by a regulated reticulated system. North East Water, on behalf of DELWP will ensure appropriate preparation and response arrangements are in place for supply of safe drinking water, which includes:

- Maximising storage of drinking water;
- Rescheduling planned works to protect integrity of the reticulated system;
- Monitoring performance of water systems;
- Implementing timely repairs or controls for damaged or broken water supply infrastructure;
- Implementing business continuity arrangements for loss of power supply events; and,
- Providing the Regional Control Team (RCT) consequence information for any loss of supply or loss of services to vulnerable or critical community services.

Animals

Animals must be cared for in a heat event. The Wodonga Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Plan 2014 – reviewed 2018 (available on council’s website) outlines the responsibilities, interactions and activities provided to ensure animals are cared for.
Heatwave planning

All Victorian councils are required to strive to meet the goals outlined in the State Heat Plan 2014 which is a sub plan of the State Emergency Response Plan Extreme Heat Sub Plan 2017. These goals include:

- For councils to activate their heatwave plans upon receipt of a Health Heat alert (see heat threshold diagram page 10) from the chief medical officer from the Department of Health. This will include enhanced actions from the pre-heatwave phase;
- Contact at-risk Victorians to ensure their safety and wellbeing during a heatwave; and,
- Use local media and community services networks to inform and convey important information and advice on staying healthy in the heat to the Wodonga community.

The Wodonga Heatwave Plan sits alongside other council plans and strategies. It has clear links to the Wodonga Council Public Health and Wellbeing Statement and the Council Plan, and is a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan. It also falls under the state-wide heatwave plan which details the different areas of response and action across government and the health and community sectors.
Wodonga Council in partnership with the Victoria Police (the control agency in an emergency event) will provide key messages and important information on heatwaves, consistent with the Chief Health Officer’s public health messages and communication resources to residents over the summer period. The council will outline how these messages are distributed, disseminated and worded there are outlined in the Heatwave Action Plan in appendix four.

The council’s heatwave plan is managed by its environmental health department. The council will work alongside partners from within the Wodonga community to act as key partners in heatwave planning. The council will partner with government, private sector, service provider and community group organisations that represent Wodonga’s vulnerable communities. These partners will include:

- Aged care providers (public and private);
- Albury Wodonga Health - Wodonga campus;
- Gateway Health;
- Upper Murray Family Care;
- Border Division of General Practice;
- Emergency services (Victoria Police, SES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross);
- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Department of Veteran Affairs;
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP);
- Community service providers (Senior Citizens’ Association, Wodonga childcare centres and playgroups, churches, Salvation Army, St John Ambulance);
- Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership;
- Recreation organisations;
- AusNet Services;
- Wodonga pharmacies;
- Victorian Council of Churches (Emergency Management);
- Educational institutions; and,
- Childcare centres.
Each of these partners has an important role to play in the event of a declared heatwave in Wodonga. Their interactions are outlined in appendix two. The council has consulted with its partners and identified four areas of priority considered as crucial to the development of an effective heatwave plan. These include:
1. The formulation of localised plans and interventions based upon sound research and results of community consultation;
2. The targeting of vulnerable groups and the building of networks within the community;
3. Health promotion and community education; and,
4. Encouraging resilience.
What the council is going to do

The Wodonga Heatwave Plan will be used to be better prepared for and respond to heatwave conditions during the summer months. The Wodonga Council will:

- Plan for and respond to heatwave conditions;
- Include heatwave preparation, response and recovery into existing municipal plans;
- Support strategies that contribute to reducing the effect of climate change and improve household energy efficiency;
- Maintain green, shady spaces in the city;
- Work with community services and organisations to support vulnerable populations;
- Engage in a communication and media campaign using heatwave messages consistent with the Department of Health and Human services materials;
- Respond to the state activated heat alert system in a planned and considered way; and,
- Promote the use of cool areas in key locations around the area.

The action plan

The core elements of the heatwave plan can be divided into three stages summarised in figure two below and outlined in appendix one.

Figure two: Three stages of heatwave planning

<table>
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<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Presummer preparation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>During summer prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Heatwave response</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each stage is characterised by a set of key actions (see figure three).

What the council does in stage one

Stage one of the heatwave plan occurs between April 1 and November 30 and requires the implementation of pre-summer actions. The best defence to heat-related illness is prevention. Its major components include the groundwork supporting a heatwave awareness campaign, identifying vulnerable groups and cool areas, and engaging key partners. During this stage the heatwave plan will be reviewed with any necessary changes or possible improvements made.
Heatwave awareness campaign

People living through a summer in Wodonga need to be informed adequately about heatwaves. This includes information about risk characteristics, preventative measures, and appropriate behaviours during a heatwave (as outlined in figure three) and an understanding of their own responsibility to be prepared. Wodonga Council will use the same key health messages as recommended by the Department of Health to prepare the general public and vulnerable groups in the community for the upcoming summer. The campaign will involve simple, specific tips around how to prevent and identify the symptoms of heat-related illness and provide advice on the appropriate actions to take if a person exhibits signs of a heat-related illness (as outlined in figure one).

As older people, young children, low-income earners, people with a chronic disease and outdoor workers and sports people have been identified as vulnerable groups during heatwaves, messages and resources will be used to particularly target these groups and their carers, employers and supporting organisations. Wodonga Council will use the electronic templates made available from the department and will distribute them through community services and organisations. A range of materials such as posters and brochures will be made available during this time. It will be a standalone campaign so that mixed messages are not relayed.

Identify vulnerable groups and update community registers

Key stakeholders who interact directly with vulnerable clients will be encouraged during stage one to maintain, as part of their individual care and response plan, a community register within their organisation or group. The registers will provide an opportunity to share public health information about heatwaves and heat-related illnesses to those who have enrolled voluntarily. In the event of a declared heatwave, this register would be used to phone high risk people, activate community phone trees and remind neighbours to check on each other every day during a heatwave.

Agencies responsible for assisting people on the Vulnerable Person’s Register (VPR) will be encouraged to develop support plans for heatwave conditions. The council will be responsible for updating the VPR.

We advise, if you have have not seen your neighbour for a while to contact the Wodonga Police.

Engage key stakeholders

Successful implementation of the heatwave plan is dependent upon key stakeholders understanding their role in the event of a declared heatwave in Wodonga. Stakeholders will have different responsibilities according to the stage of the plan and context of the heatwave conditions. They will be reminded of these in stage one. Key stakeholders are encouraged to have their own heatwave plans where possible and appropriate. A list of stakeholders’ is included in appendix two.
What key stakeholders can do in stage one

In stage one, key stakeholders will be advised by the council to consider:

- Revisiting their actions from the previous summer and evaluate their levels of effectiveness;
- Meeting with other stakeholders to revise and amend key heatwave messages and actions;
- Reviewing heat health alert protocols for workplace supervisors and staff;
- Updating their community registers;
- Preparing and revising pre-prepared key heat messages;
- Identifying cool areas within each group’s control which could be promoted to the general public during the awareness campaign;
- Restocking heat health information in relevant places;
- Participating in the council’s Heatwave Awareness Campaign;
- Educating any staff of key heatwave messages (especially customer service staff); and,
- Assisting vulnerable persons to include heat health planning in personal emergency management plans.

What the council does in stage two

Stage two includes a range of actions to further build resilience among Wodonga residents during the summer months. It directly involves the actions of most key stakeholders. This stage is implemented between December 1 and March 31 each year.

Implement the Heatwave Awareness Campaign

The campaign will provide key heat/health messages to the community during this time via media releases, council’s communication channels and events such as Senior Celebrations and the Children’s Fair. These will include those outlined in figure three below.

Figure three:
Key heat health messages
In stage two the council will:

- Advise key stakeholders to implement stage two of their plans. Sporting bodies and summer event organisers will also be informed of safe heat thresholds;
- Ensure designated cool areas within the city are ready for use in the event of a heatwave. City public pools will be informed of stage three actions. Air-conditioning and water access will be checked at key locations. Extra water will be provided to the Wodonga Library; and,
- Monitor BOM thresholds for Wodonga for daily weather updates.

In stage two key stakeholders will be advised by the council to consider:

- Participating in the council’s Heatwave Awareness Campaign;
- Identifying cool areas and access to water;
- Keeping in regular contact with vulnerable clients;
- Modifying client programs; and,
- Rescheduling staff work hours.
What the council does in stage three

Stage three is triggered when imminent heatwave temperatures are predicted by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) for Wodonga. The council will know to move to this stage when it is notified by the Department of Health and Human Services. Two staff members at the council, the manager environment and community protection and the environmental health team leader, will receive an email alert on the day when forecasted temperatures first exceed threshold levels. It will then be up to the council to continue to monitor forecast temperatures in the area and notify the relevant partners to activate stage three of this heatwave plan.

Efficient implementation of stage three is dependent upon Wodonga Council, informing all key partners of their responsibilities to enact stage three of their heatwave plan via email, fax or phone. The communication plan below will be followed to ensure this process is carried out smoothly and effectively.

What key stakeholders can do in stage three

Prompt action by stakeholders during stage three will ensure the impacts of heat on vulnerable groups are kept to a minimum. All key stakeholders will be advised by the council to consider:

- Contacting those listed on the Vulnerable Person’s Register or community registers by phone;
- Developing support plans for heatwave conditions for vulnerable clients;
- Prioritising tasks and clients;
- Assessing risk for clients and staff;
- Rescheduling staff work times and hours;
- Providing additional fluids for clients and staff;
- Modifying client programs;
- Transporting clients in cooler parts of the day;
- Cancelling sporting fixtures;
- Assessing risk when releasing vulnerable patients from hospital; and,
- Altering children’s outdoor activities and play times.
How the council evaluates the plan’s effectiveness

To ensure the *Wodonga Heatwave Plan* remains relevant and meets the changing needs of the community, the council will review the plan annually before each summer and use any amendments to inform an updated plan every four years. All relevant partners will actively participate in the evaluation. The following will be reviewed:

- Stakeholders
- Department of Health and Human Services heatwave data, strategies and communication tools
- Were the actions in stage three appropriate and timely
- What worked
- What didn’t work
- Was information communicated effectively to partners
- Was information communicated effectively to the general community
- What could be done differently next summer

The stage three communication plan is outlined in appendix four.
## Summary of heatwave plan actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Who is responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage one</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-summer preparation April 1 to November 30</td>
<td>Implement heatwave awareness</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate pre-prepared media releases (April to Nov);</td>
<td>Communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify vulnerable groups and update community register (April to Nov);</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify cool areas (April to Nov);</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restock heat health information in public places. GP clinics, community health, shopping centres, libraries and swimming pools (April to Nov);</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engage key partners (April to Nov).</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage two</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>During summer prevention December 1 to March 31</td>
<td>Implement Heatwave Awareness Campaign (Dec to March);</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advise key partners of roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>A/A and MEMP committee and Emergency Management Co-ordinator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organise cool areas for possible use if applicable</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor BOM reports for Wodonga</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage three</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heatwave response Trigger: DHS heat alert</td>
<td>Implement heatwave action plan following heat health alert trigger</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alert media</td>
<td>Communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advise key partners to enact specific actions</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection - All stakeholders - Emergency Management Co-ordinator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promote cool areas</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection - All stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inform emergency management team</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign (April to November)</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection - Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor BOM and Department of Health reports</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix two

Stakeholder interactions

Stage three communication plan

**LEAD ACTIONING AGENCY**
Wodonga Council, environmental health services

Declared heatwave
Lead actioning agency (Wodonga Council) activates stage three

**Key partners**
- Aged care providers (public and private)
- Albury Wodonga Health - Wodonga Campus
- Gateway Health
- Upper Murray Family Care
- Border Division of General Practice
- Emergency services (Victoria Police, SES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross)
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Veteran Affairs
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Community service providers (Senior Citizens' Association, Wodonga childcare centres and playgroups, churches, Salvation Army, St John Ambulance)
- Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership
- Recreation organisations
- AusNet Services
- Wodonga pharmacies
- Victorian Council of Churches (Emergency Management)
- Educational institutions
- Childcare centres
- Department of Education and Training

**Department of Health and Human Services**
- Advise to council on heatwave

**Bureau of Meteorology**
- Weather forecasts, warnings and observations

**General Community**
Vulnerable population groups
Appendix three

Resources and reference materials

Resources

Community resources include:
* Staying Healthy in the Heat: Brochure
* Staying Healthy in the Heat: Poster
* Staying Healthy in the Heat: Easy read poster
* Staying Healthy in the Heat: Promotional label
* Staying Healthy in Heat: Supporting People by Telephone
* Staying Healthy in the Heat: Fact sheet for clinicians
* Staying Healthy in the Heat: In Community Languages

Residential aged care services heatwave ready resource: Aged Care in Victoria – Victorian Government Health Information, Australia

Heat Stress and the Elderly – Better Health Channel

Pictorial emergency management guides

Calls to emergency services for people with a hearing or speech impairment - National Relay Service
relayservice.gov.au/making-a-call/emergency-calls/

Bureau of Meteorology
bom.gov.au/weather/vic/maps/vic-forecast-map-7-day.shtml

Socio-economic Index for Areas Australia Index (SEIFA)
abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa

The Department of Health and Human Services State Heatwave Plan 2014 has been updated to the Department of Health and Human Services State Heatwave Plan 2015 (https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heatwave-community-resources) is no longer the only guidance material on heat. Consideration should also be given to:

- Further to the sub-plan, the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) has issued a State Operational Arrangements – Extreme Heat guidance material that details the state and regional arrangements for heat events (see EM-COP).
Heatwave plan actions and communication plan

Scope: Wodonga Council's Heatwave Plan determines how the council will support the local community to adapt and minimise the impact of heatwaves.

Objectives:
- Support the community to prepare for, respond to and recover from heatwave conditions.
- Develop long-term changes in behaviour to improve health and wellbeing.
- Identify vulnerable population groups in the community and the risks they face during heatwaves.
- Develop partnerships with local organisations to better coordinate a response to heatwaves.
- Ensure health information and support is readily available to the community.
- Increase the capacity of the community to respond during heatwaves.
- Provide information and advice in a timely and appropriate manner to identified stakeholders.

Actions and responsibilities are set out in appendix five, heatwave and communication plan.
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Ambulance Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOM</td>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFA</td>
<td>Country Fire Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELWP</td>
<td>Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHHS</td>
<td>Department of Health and Human Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMV</td>
<td>Emergency Management Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>HACC</td>
<td>Home and Community Care</td>
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<td>MERC</td>
<td>Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERO</td>
<td>Municipal Emergency Resource Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRM</td>
<td>Municipal Recovery Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEIFA</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>State Emergency Services</td>
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<td>VicPol</td>
<td>Victorian Police</td>
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<td>VPR</td>
<td>Vulnerable Persons Register</td>
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### Heatwave action and communication plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare</td>
<td>Review of heatwave plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>All stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Review and order Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) resources</td>
<td>Attend DHHS heatwave training, Review DHHS website</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Distribute resources to key locations and restocking heat health information</td>
<td>Community Centres, Child care centres/Maternal and Child Health Centres/Preschools, Libraries, Sporting facilities</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Spread keeping cool messages (as outlined in figure four)</td>
<td>Council’s communication channels</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manager Communications, Marketing and Customer Focus</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Senior Celebrations</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td>Manager Cultural Services</td>
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<td>Active News</td>
<td>Manager Sport and Recreation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Children’s Fair</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td>Manager Cultural Services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting with other stakeholders to revise and amend key heatwave messages and actions</td>
<td>Those identified in appendix two</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td>October to December 1</td>
<td>Stage one</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Update Vulnerable Person’s Register</strong></td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Review and prepare media releases and pre-prepared key heat messages</strong></td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Develop/review FAQ on council website</strong></td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Manager Communications, Marketing and Customer Focus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The council will identify and consider community spaces to promote to the general public as cool areas during the awareness campaign</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Review heat health alert protocols for workplace supervisors and staff and educate staff</strong></td>
<td>Director Planning and Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Manager Planning and Infrastructure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The council will advise stakeholders (identified in appendix two) to:</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Review their heat alert plans;</td>
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<td>- Update their community registers;</td>
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<td>- Pre-prepare key heat messages:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Restock heat health information in relevant places; and,</td>
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<td>- Assist vulnerable persons to include heat health planning in personal emergency management plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ensure all persons on the VPR are aware of the activation of stage one</strong></td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>React</td>
<td>December 1 to March 31</td>
<td>Stage two</td>
<td>Council advised of the Heat Health Alert</td>
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<td>Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health</td>
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<td>Advise key stakeholders to implement stage two of their plans.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Activate the council’s Heatwave Awareness Campaign:</td>
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<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td>• Media releases</td>
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<td>Manager Communications and Marketing</td>
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<td>• Identify spokesperson</td>
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<td>Activate and organise cool areas if applicable and publicise</td>
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<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td>All managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor BOM thresholds for Wodonga for daily weather updates</td>
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<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1 to March 31</td>
<td>Stage three</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The council advises all key internal and external stakeholders to implement stage three of their heatwave plan</td>
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<td>Ensure all persons on the VPR are aware of the activation of stage three</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prioritising tasks and clients</td>
<td>All managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assessing risk for clients and staff</td>
<td>All managers</td>
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<td>Rescheduling staff work times and hours</td>
<td>All managers</td>
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<td>Providing additional fluids for clients and staff</td>
<td>All managers</td>
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<td>Modifying client programs</td>
<td>All managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Keeping in regular contact with vulnerable clients</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection, Victoria Police</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Altering children's outdoor activities and play times, and advise sporting clubs</td>
<td>Manager Early Years and Family Services, Manager Sport and Recreation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cancel any council outdoor events</td>
<td>Manager Cultural Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recover</td>
<td>Post event</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td>Revise</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Replenish, restock heat health information in relevant places</td>
<td>Manager Environment and Community Protection</td>
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