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**Murrindindi Shire**

**Municipal Emergency**

**Management Plan 2024-2027**

**Version 5.1, 2024**

**Acknowledgement of County**

Murrindindi Shire Council acknowledges that Murrindindi Shire exists on Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

We hereby express our respect for the Taungurung people and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land that encompasses Murrindindi Shire.

We pay our respects to their leaders and Elders past and present for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of all Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. We extend that respect to all First Nations people, including other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in our Shire.

Traditional Owners and Custodians have a unique and deeply spiritual connection to Country, and this remains strong.

We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs incurred through the colonisation of the land, and our hope that we can walk forward together in harmony and the spirit of reconciliation and work together as custodians of the land.

Contents

[1 Introduction 8](#_Toc152748628)

[1.1 Context 8](#_Toc152748629)

[1.2 Aim 9](#_Toc152748630)

[1.3 Objectives 9](#_Toc152748631)

[1.4 Authority 9](#_Toc152748632)

[1.5 Victorian Emergency Management Framework 9](#_Toc152748633)

[1.6 Plan Assurance and Approval 10](#_Toc152748634)

[1.7 Plan Review and Maintenance 10](#_Toc152748635)

[1.8 Emergencies and Privacy 11](#_Toc152748636)

[2 Background 12](#_Toc152748637)

[2.1 Context 12](#_Toc152748638)

[2.1.1 Murrindindi Shire 12](#_Toc152748639)

[2.1.2 Lake Mountain Alpine Resort 12](#_Toc152748640)

[2.2 Area Characteristics 13](#_Toc152748641)

[2.2.1 Topography 13](#_Toc152748642)

[2.2.2 Demography 13](#_Toc152748643)

[2.2.3 History 14](#_Toc152748644)

[2.3 Vulnerable Persons 14](#_Toc152748645)

[2.3.1 Planning for Vulnerable Persons 15](#_Toc152748646)

[2.3.2 Vulnerable Persons in Emergencies (VPE) Policy 15](#_Toc152748647)

[2.3.3 Vulnerable Persons’ Register (VPR) 16](#_Toc152748648)

[2.3.4 Vulnerable Facilities List (VFL) 16](#_Toc152748649)

[2.3.5 Other Vulnerable Persons and Indicators of Vulnerability 17](#_Toc152748650)

[2.4 Critical Infrastructure 17](#_Toc152748651)

[2.4.1 Major Infrastructure and Assets in the Murrindindi Shire 18](#_Toc152748652)

[2.4.2 Major Events in Murrindindi Shire 20](#_Toc152748653)

[2.5 History of significant emergencies 23](#_Toc152748654)

[3 Planning Arrangements 25](#_Toc152748655)

[3.1 Planning structures and responsibilities - Overview 25](#_Toc152748656)

[3.2 Municipal Emergency Management Functions 26](#_Toc152748657)

[3.2.1 Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) 26](#_Toc152748658)

[3.2.2 MEMPC Membership 27](#_Toc152748659)

[3.2.3 MEMPC Terms of Reference 28](#_Toc152748660)

[3.2.4 MEMPC Subcommittees 28](#_Toc152748661)

[3.3 Emergency management roles and responsibilities 29](#_Toc152748662)

[3.4 Partnerships, strategies and plans 29](#_Toc152748663)

[3.5 Sub plans 30](#_Toc152748664)

[3.6 Complementary Plans 30](#_Toc152748665)

[3.7 MEMP Assurance and Review 31](#_Toc152748666)

[3.7.1 Plan Review 31](#_Toc152748667)

[3.7.2 MEMPC Testing and Exercises 31](#_Toc152748668)

[3.7.3 Assurance Process 32](#_Toc152748669)

[3.7.4 Reviewing Risk and Risk Assessments 32](#_Toc152748670)

[4 Prevention Arrangements 33](#_Toc152748671)

[4.1 Background/Introduction 33](#_Toc152748672)

[4.2 Risk assessment process and results 34](#_Toc152748673)

[4.2.1 Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) Process 34](#_Toc152748674)

[4.2.2 Risk Identification and analysis 34](#_Toc152748675)

[4.2.3 Risk Mitigation 35](#_Toc152748676)

[4.2.4 CERA Results 35](#_Toc152748677)

[4.3 Procedures and Policies 39](#_Toc152748678)

[4.3.1 Other Agency Plans 39](#_Toc152748679)

[4.4 Victorian Fire Risk Register (VFRR) 39](#_Toc152748680)

[4.5 4.3 Community planning 39](#_Toc152748681)

[4.6 Community Awareness and Education 39](#_Toc152748682)

[5 Response Arrangements – Including Relief 42](#_Toc152748683)

[5.1 Background 42](#_Toc152748684)

[5.2 Control, command and coordination 42](#_Toc152748685)

[5.3 State emergency management priorities 43](#_Toc152748686)

[5.4 Local response arrangements and responsible agencies 43](#_Toc152748687)

[5.4.1 Control and Support Agencies 44](#_Toc152748688)

[5.5 Emergency Management Teams (incident and regional) 44](#_Toc152748689)

[5.6 Legislated roles – Municipal Councils 44](#_Toc152748690)

[5.7 Activation for response 45](#_Toc152748691)

[5.8 Incident and operations control centres 45](#_Toc152748692)

[5.9 Evacuation 46](#_Toc152748693)

[5.10 Provision of relief 46](#_Toc152748694)

[5.10.1 Capacity and Capability 47](#_Toc152748695)

[5.11 Activation of Relief 47](#_Toc152748696)

[5.11.1 Requests for Emergency Relief 47](#_Toc152748697)

[5.11.2 Relief Escalation – Municipal Level to Regional Level 47](#_Toc152748698)

[5.11.3 Who is responsible for paying for relief? 48](#_Toc152748699)

[5.11.4 The MEOC 48](#_Toc152748700)

[5.12 Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs) 48](#_Toc152748701)

[5.12.1 Services 48](#_Toc152748702)

[5.12.2 ERC Handbook 49](#_Toc152748703)

[5.12.3 ERC Kits 49](#_Toc152748704)

[5.12.4 Catering 49](#_Toc152748705)

[5.12.5 Animal Welfare 49](#_Toc152748706)

[5.12.6 Psychosocial Support 50](#_Toc152748707)

[5.12.7 Legal Aid 50](#_Toc152748708)

[5.12.8 Registration of Evacuees 51](#_Toc152748709)

[5.12.9 Other ERC Services 51](#_Toc152748710)

[5.13 Other Relief Functions 51](#_Toc152748711)

[5.13.1 Replacement of Essential Drinking Water for Households 51](#_Toc152748712)

[5.13.2 Replacement of Essential Water Used During Bushfire Fighting Operations 51](#_Toc152748713)

[5.13.3 Spontaneous Volunteers 52](#_Toc152748714)

[5.13.4 Offers of Assistance 52](#_Toc152748715)

[5.13.5 Material Needs 53](#_Toc152748716)

[5.13.6 Accommodation 53](#_Toc152748717)

[5.14 Relief services providers 54](#_Toc152748718)

[5.15 Communications 56](#_Toc152748719)

[5.15.1 Telephone Communications 56](#_Toc152748720)

[5.15.2 Communications Resources 57](#_Toc152748721)

[5.15.3 Crisisworks 57](#_Toc152748722)

[5.15.4 Public Information and Warnings 57](#_Toc152748723)

[5.16 Local response arrangements and responsible agencies 58](#_Toc152748724)

[5.16.1 Murrindindi Shire Council Resource Requests - MEMO 58](#_Toc152748725)

[5.16.2 Murrindindi Shire Council Plant and Equipment - Requests 59](#_Toc152748726)

[5.16.3 Resources Not Under the Control of Council 59](#_Toc152748727)

[5.16.4 Clearance of Drains/Roads, Road Closures and Alternative Routes 59](#_Toc152748728)

[5.16.5 Transport and Engineering 59](#_Toc152748729)

[5.16.6 Request Procedures for Support from MEMO 60](#_Toc152748730)

[5.17 Financial considerations 60](#_Toc152748731)

[5.17.1 Request Hierarchy 60](#_Toc152748732)

[5.17.2 Payment for Requested Resources through MEMO 60](#_Toc152748733)

[5.17.3 Mitigation - Costs 61](#_Toc152748734)

[5.17.4 Financial Arrangements for Response and Recovery 61](#_Toc152748735)

[5.17.5 Emergency Payment Responsibilities 61](#_Toc152748736)

[5.17.6 Voluntary Agencies - Costs 61](#_Toc152748737)

[5.17.7 State Agencies and Costs 61](#_Toc152748738)

[5.17.8 Private Organisations and Costs 62](#_Toc152748739)

[5.18 Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort) and Fire Refuges 62](#_Toc152748740)

[5.19 Fire refuges 62](#_Toc152748741)

[5.20 Staging Areas 63](#_Toc152748742)

[5.21 Planning for cross boundary events 63](#_Toc152748743)

[5.22 Resource sharing protocols 63](#_Toc152748744)

[5.22.1 Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing 63](#_Toc152748745)

[5.23 Debriefing arrangements 64](#_Toc152748746)

[5.24 Non-major emergencies 64](#_Toc152748747)

[5.25 Impact Assessment 64](#_Toc152748748)

[5.25.1 Data Capture during Impact Assessments 65](#_Toc152748749)

[5.26 Response/Recovery transition 66](#_Toc152748750)

[5.26.1 Termination of Response Activities and Handover of Goods/Facilities 67](#_Toc152748751)

[6 Recovery Arrangements 68](#_Toc152748752)

[6.1 Introduction 68](#_Toc152748753)

[6.1.1 Recovery Defined 68](#_Toc152748754)

[6.1.2 Principles 69](#_Toc152748755)

[6.1.3 Accessibility for all 69](#_Toc152748756)

[6.2 Recovery Preparation and Planning 69](#_Toc152748757)

[6.2.1 Guiding Principles 69](#_Toc152748758)

[6.2.2 Community led process 70](#_Toc152748759)

[6.2.3 Individuals and communities are resilient 70](#_Toc152748760)

[6.2.4 Levels of recovery operations 70](#_Toc152748761)

[6.2.5 Roles of organisations and agencies 70](#_Toc152748762)

[6.2.6 Preparation for Recovery 70](#_Toc152748763)

[6.2.7 A Disaster Resilient Community 71](#_Toc152748764)

[6.3 Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) 71](#_Toc152748765)

[6.4 Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) 72](#_Toc152748766)

[6.5 Recovery responsibilities of the MEMPC 72](#_Toc152748767)

[6.6 Crisisworks Recovery Module 72](#_Toc152748768)

[6.7 Recovery committees 72](#_Toc152748769)

[6.8 Recovery communications 73](#_Toc152748770)

[6.9 Engagement of community in recovery 73](#_Toc152748771)

[6.10 Recovery plans and community continuity 74](#_Toc152748772)

[6.11 Recovery environments 74](#_Toc152748773)

[6.11.1 Social environment 74](#_Toc152748774)

[6.11.2 Built environment 75](#_Toc152748775)

[6.11.3 Natural environment 75](#_Toc152748776)

[6.11.4 Economic environment (including agriculture) 76](#_Toc152748777)

[6.11.5 Aboriginal culture and healing 76](#_Toc152748778)

[6.12 Recovery services and providers 77](#_Toc152748779)

[6.13 Recovery Services 78](#_Toc152748780)

[6.14 Recovery centres 82](#_Toc152748781)

[6.15 Government recovery support 82](#_Toc152748782)

[6.16 Withdrawal of recovery services and debrief 82](#_Toc152748783)

[7 Appendices 84](#_Toc152748784)

[7.1 Abbreviations and Acronyms 85](#_Toc152748785)

[7.2 Impact Assessment 87](#_Toc152748786)

[7.2.1 Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) 87](#_Toc152748787)

[7.2.2 Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) 87](#_Toc152748788)

[7.2.3 Post Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA) 89](#_Toc152748789)

[7.4 Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort Maps 91](#_Toc152748790)

[7.5 Restricted Appendices 93](#_Toc152748791)

**Table of Figures**

[Figure 1: Emergency Plan Hierarchy, Victoria 10](#_Toc135062618)

[Figure 2: Murrindindi Shire Location Map 12](#_Toc135062619)

[Figure 3: Demographics and Engagement Approaches - Vulnerability 15](#_Toc135062620)

[Figure 4: Vulnerability Types and Context 17](#_Toc135062621)

[Figure 5: Municipal Map 22](#_Toc135062622)

[Figure 6: Major Emergencies in the Murrindindi Shire Area Since 2000 23](#_Toc135062623)

[Figure 7: MEMPC and Sub-Committee Structure 28](#_Toc135062624)

[Figure 8: CERA Results 36](#_Toc135062625)

[Figure 9: Risk assessment – heat map 38](#_Toc135062626)

[Figure 10: Community Awareness and Education Programs 40](#_Toc135062627)

[Figure 11: Location of Incident Control Centres 45](#_Toc135062628)

[Figure 12: Relief Service Provision – Lead Agency Summary 54](#_Toc135062629)

[Figure 13: NSP Locations – Murrindindi Shire 62](#_Toc135062630)

[Figure 14: Impact Assessment procedure summary 66](#_Toc135062631)

[Figure 15: Recovery Service Provision 79](#_Toc135062632)

**Version Control Table - MEMP**

| Version No. | Date of Issue | Section | Page | Amendment Date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2.0 | November 2017 | All | All | October 2017 |
| 2.1 | August 2018 | All – Removal of LMAR | All | August 2018 |
| 2.2 | October 2019 | Removal of Volunteering Victoria (MSEV Project) | 82 | October 2019 |
| 2.3 | October 2019 | General edits to grammar and arrangements | All | October 2019 |
| 3.0 | August 2020 | 3 Year Review – Audit Date 28 August 2020 | All | August 2020 |
| 3.1 | November 2021 | Annual Review | All | November 2021 |
| 4.0 | February 2022 | Annual review, Dept name changes, inclusion of SEMP and EM Act 2013 requirements | All | February 2022 |
| 5.0 | 2024 | 3 Year Review | All | October 2023 |
| 5.1. | 2024 | Minor edits, REMPC sign off confirmed | All | May 2024 |

# Introduction

## Context

This Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) is for the information of emergency managers and incident controllers and anyone who has an interest in emergency management in Murrindindi Shire. The following characteristics makes Murrindindi Shire distinctive:

* It is a rural local government area with a small population of 15,197 (2021 Census).
* Within the shire boundaries there are around 20 small communities and rural living localities.
* 30% of the rate base is non-resident property owners.
* Approximately 48% of the Shire is forested.
* The majority of the population are English-speaking Caucasian
* The area relies heavily on a successful tourism industry
* Major employers are agriculture, forestry and fishing.
* There are a number of large trout and other fish hatcheries in Murrindindi Shire.

This Plan is intended to reduce the risk to, and consequence of, emergencies to the Murrindindi Shire. That includes the Shire’s communities, visitors, businesses and environment, especially the more vulnerable and as such it holds a lot of local detail and information. The Plan also satisfies the legislative requirements of the *Emergency Management Ac 2013t.*

The nationally agreed **principles for emergency management planning** underpin this MEMP.

**Emergency Planning**:

* **Is Risk informed**- Planning is based on a risk management study
* **Reduces unknowns** - Planning increases understanding of risks, vulnerabilities, and treatment options across the social, built, economic, and natural environments.
* **Is collaborative and inclusive** – Planning involves consultation and engagement with those affected by the plan.
* **Is strategic** - Planning develops strategic objectives, relationships, and networks.
* **Is solutions oriented** – Planning develops agreed approaches to managing risks and consequences.
* **Is iterative** - Learning from each step informs next steps.
* **Enables adaptive capacity** - Planning develops frameworks that provide a base on which to build flexible and adaptive solutions.
* **Is a shared responsibility** - Planning documents actions to be undertaken by a wide range of people/entities.

## Aim

The aim of this plan is to detail the agreed arrangements for the prevention of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur in the Murrindindi Shire as identified in Part 4 of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*.

## Objectives

The objectives of the MEMP are to:

* Implement measures to prevent or reduce the cause and effects of emergencies.
* Manage arrangements for the utilisation and implementation of municipal resources in response to emergencies.
* Manage support that may be provided to or from adjoining municipalities.
* Assist the affected community to prepare for and recover from an emergency.
* Complement other local, regional and state planning arrangements.

## Authority

In 2020, the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* amended the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (EM Act 2013) to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the State, regional and municipal levels and it creates an obligation for a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria.

Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to the task of emergency management planning for the municipal district.

Each MEMPC is charged with developing and maintaining a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). This MEMP has been prepared in accordance with, and complies with the requirements of the EM Act 2013, including having regard to the guidelines issued under section 77, [Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/emergency-management-planning-resource-library-0/resources-for-all-levels-state-regional-and-municipal/guidelines-for-preparing-state-regional-and)

This Plan addresses the prevention and mitigation of, response to and recovery from emergencies within the Murrindindi Shire.

## Victorian Emergency Management Framework

This plan supports holistic and coordinated emergency management arrangements within the region. It is consistent with and contextualises the State Emergency Management Plan [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp) and Regional Emergency Management Plan ([REMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/remps/hume-remp)) for the Hume region. The REMP is a subordinate plan to the SEMP and the MEMP is a subordinate plan to the REMP.

To the extent possible, this Plan does not conflict with or duplicate other in-force emergency management plans that exist – the SEMP and REMP were referred to during the preparation of this plan. This Plan should be read in conjunction with the SEMP and the Hume REMP (refer Figure 1).

Figure 1: Emergency Plan Hierarchy, Victoria

## Plan Assurance and Approval

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

A Statement of Assurance (including a checklist and certificate) has been prepared and submitted to the REMPC pursuant to EM Act 2013 (s60AG).

This Plan has been approved by the Hume Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee on 15/01/2023.

## Plan Review and Maintenance

A rolling review of the MEMP will be scheduled by the MEMPC so that all sections are reviewed during scheduled meetings over a 3-yearly cycle. Review of the Plan will specifically focus on the hazards in the Municipality, roles and responsibilities, sector reform and changes and reviews of incidents.

Organisations delegated with responsibilities in this Plan are required to notify the Executive Officer (EMO) of any changes of detail (e.g. contact information), as they occur.

Urgent update of this Plan is permitted if there is significant risk that life or property will be endangered if the plan is not updated (EM Act 2013 s60AM). Urgent updates come into effect when published on the municipal council website and remain in force for a maximum period of three months.

Amendments to this plan are recorded in the Version Control Table (page 7).

Access to the most recent version of the MEMP, all appendices, sub plans and complementary plans is through EMCOP or on the Council’s website.

## Emergencies and Privacy

The [*Privacy Act 1988*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03712) is not a barrier to necessary information sharing in a declared emergency or disaster but does ensure that entities that collect, use or disclose personal information about individuals affected by the emergency comply with Part VIA of the Act.

Part VIA of the Privacy Act regulates how entities may collect, use and disclose personal information in a declared emergency or disaster.

Visit the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-guidance-for-organisations-and-government-agencies/more-guidance/emergencies-and-disasters) webpage for detailed information about privacy during an emergency.

# Background

## Context

### Murrindindi Shire

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Figure 2: Murrindindi Shire Location Map

The Murrindindi Shire, located one and a half hours to the north-east of the city of Melbourne has an area of 3,889 square kilometres. It includes the towns of [Alexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandra,_Victoria), [Buxton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buxton,_Victoria), [Castella](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castella,_Victoria), [Eildon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eildon,_Victoria), [Flowerdale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flowerdale,_Victoria), [Kinglake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinglake,_Victoria), [Marysville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marysville,_Victoria), [Molesworth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molesworth,_Victoria), [Strath Creek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strath_Creek,_Victoria), [Taggerty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taggerty,_Victoria), [Toolangi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toolangi,_Victoria), [Yarck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarck,_Victoria) and [Yea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yea,_Victoria). The Shire is a popular tourist area with a number of National Parks, State Parks, the Goulburn River and Lake Eildon.

The Murrindindi Shire Council’s main Council office is in Alexandra. Murrindindi Shire is named after the locality of Murrindindi which lies near its geographical centre.

Murrindindi Shire has a long history of fire as its major emergency type. The Shire was heavily impacted by the February 2009 bushfires where over 40% of the Shire was affected.

### Lake Mountain Alpine Resort

Murrindindi Shire surrounds the Alpine Resort of Lake Mountain. The Southern Alpine Resort Management Board is the authority with control over the resort. The board is a member of the Murrindindi Shire Council MEMPC.

Lake Mountain Alpine Resort which is located 21 kilometres east of Marysville and 120 kilometres from Melbourne lies in the south east of the Murrindindi shire. After experiencing extensive damage in the 2009 fires, the resort visitor centre was rebuilt in 2011.

The Resort has historically been a winter resort with over 30 kilometres of cross-country skiing trails, a ski hire service, administration offices, a conference room and other visitor facilities. More recently, the resort has been diversifying and focusing on summer activities such as bushwalking and mountain bike riding with visitor facilities open through the summer period. The resort attracts on average around 200,000 persons annually.

## Area Characteristics

### Topography

Murrindindi Shire is in Central Victoria and is located on the north fall of the eastern section of the Victorian Highlands. The topography of the shire ranges from flat grazing land in the west and north of the shire, to the mountainous southern and eastern ranges, including the alpine areas around Lake Mountain Alpine Resort. The central part of the municipality generally follows the Goulburn River valley. The area has a number of national parks, state parks and reserves, which attract large numbers of visitors.

46% of the total land area of Murrindindi Shire is forested public land (1,788 square kilometres) consisting of State Forest, Parks, Reserves and other public land. A large proportion of this land is mountainous and heavily forested.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Parks Victoria manage the majority of this public land.

The Lake Mountain plateau, 120 kilometres east-northeast of Melbourne, is one of the southernmost sub-alpine areas on the Australian continent. The Lake Mountain massif is an undulating plateau rising from 1,330 metres through to 1,500 metres, which trends north-northwest from the Great Dividing Range. Further maps of Murrindindi Shire are in the Appendices.

### Demography

Murrindindi Shire has 15,197[[1]](#footnote-1) residents and like many areas in the Hume region of Victoria, Murrindindi Shire has an ageing population. In 2011, 18.5% of the population was over 65, which rose to 23.7% in 2016 and 26.1% in 2022. This is significantly higher than the national average of 15.8% in this age bracket. Those over 65 are disproportionately distributed across the municipality. Eildon and Marysville have the highest median age in the Shire, at 51 years old. The townships of Kinglake and Kinglake West, including Pheasant Creek have the youngest median age, both at 37 years old. Despite being a peri-urban area in close proximity to Melbourne, Marysville has an older population than other comparable areas.

Murrindindi Shire experienced a decline in population due to the devastating bushfires of February 2009 in which nearly 1,400 homes were destroyed. In that period, the population fell by 1,000 people or 7.1%.

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED) ranks areas according to their relative socio-economic disadvantage. SEIFA scores range from 143 (most disadvantaged) to 1207 (least disadvantaged). The average score for areas across Australia is 1,000 and areas with a score below 1,000 are more disadvantaged than the national average. Those areas with a score above 1,000 are less disadvantaged. Murrindindi Shire has a score of 1005, an increase from 996 in the 2016 census and suggests it has an average level of disadvantage[[2]](#footnote-2).

Murrindindi Shire has a similar proportion of overseas-born residents and those that speak a language other than English at home compared to other parts of rural Victoria. Around 11.5% of the population was born overseas, and around 90% of respondents only speak English at home. In general, the level of cultural diversity in the Shire reflects other areas of rural Victoria.

5.5% of people require assistance across the Shire. This includes persons with a disability or elderly persons requiring services. Other rural areas across Victoria record a similar average. The average percentage of people requiring assistance in the greater Hume Region is 5.7%.

Despite efforts to attract employment and investment in regional areas of Victoria over the last 15 years, it is estimated that Murrindindi Shire’s growth forecast will remain low. Murrindindi Shire has high levels of youth unemployment (at around 12%), which is consistent with levels across rural Victoria.

Murrindindi Shire shows elevated unemployment levels amongst the 20 to 34 year old age group when compared to other areas in rural Victoria. The rate of unemployment amongst Murrindindi residents generally declines with age and has been persistently lower than the rural Victoria average. The unemployment rate in Murrindindi has been consistently lower than the rural Victorian average for the past 10 years. Currently the regional unemployment rate is 2.8% whilst the rate in Murrindindi Shire is 3.1% [[3]](#footnote-3).

The shire is not in a regional transport corridor and has large numbers of ‘lifestyle’ blocks and holiday homes. Approximately 30% of the Shire’s rate payers are non-residents.

Internet usage is increasing in Murrindindi Shire but is still lower than the national average – approximately 77.4% of Murrindindi Shire households have internet access compared to the national average of 86.8%.

There is no permanent population at Lake Mountain Alpine Resort.

### History

The majority of Murrindindi Shire lies in the traditional territory of the Daung wurrung or Taungarung language group, which spread across much of the central region of Victoria. The southern boundary of the Shire, including areas of the Kinglake National Park, is located in the Traditional lands of the Wurundjeri or Woi Wurrung people.

European settlement followed Hume and Hovell’s overland exploration in December 1824. Many local towns were established during the 1850s and 1860s after the discovery of gold.

The Murrindindi Shire Council was declared on 18 November 1994 by the amalgamation of the former municipalities of Alexandra and Yea, and the addition of parts of the former municipalities of Healesville, Broadford, Eltham, Whittlesea and Euroa.

## Vulnerable Persons

Understanding vulnerability in an emergency management planning context can help to shape the emergency management planning process. People not normally considered vulnerable can easily become vulnerable in an emergency by being isolated geographically, their socioeconomic situation, interruption to or loss of normal services and/or their mental and physical health. This adds another dimension of complexity to the development and implementation of prevention and preparedness activities.

A range of community groups and individuals can be considered vulnerable; this includes but is not limited to:

* frail aged people living alone;
* people from Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
* people with physical and/or mental impairment through age, illness or disability;
* visitors and tourists to the municipality; or
* residents living in areas prone to natural and/or other hazards.

In Murrindindi Shire, reaching and engaging with the more vulnerable groups requires more targeted communication methods, always remembering that “Diversity is a Fact, Inclusion is a Choice.” This MEMP seeks to be inclusive and address the needs of the whole community.

Figure 3: Demographics and Engagement Approaches - Vulnerability

| **Demographic** | **Engagement approach** |
| --- | --- |
| Elderly and frail | Home and Community Care service providers  Aged care accommodation/facilities  Pharmacies and medical clinics |
| Infants and young children | Maternal and Child Health  Child Care Centres and kindergartens  Schools  Medical clinics |
| People who are sick or have a drug and/or alcohol dependency | Medical clinics and Hospitals (Euroa and Nagambie)  District Nurses  Service providers |
| People with mental and physical disabilities | Mental health service providers  Services eg NDIS |
| Homeless people | DFFH  Service providers (food, clothing, shelter) |
| Non-English-speaking people | Links to interpreter sites on website |
| Visitors and tourists | Accommodation providers  Tourism/business operators |
| Socially and physically isolated people | Service providers  Community groups |
| People living in high-risk locations | Council media/communications  Support for direct Community engagement projects |

### Planning for Vulnerable Persons

In its planning, communications and community engagement, the MEMPC recognises the diverse needs of affected individuals and communities. As highlighted in the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience[[4]](#footnote-4)*, emergencies do not affect everyone in the same way – vulnerable community members are often the hardest hit.

The MEMPC has endeavoured to plan for all groups and community types within the municipality of Murrindindi, with a particular focus on those that are vulnerable or exposed to excessive risk.

### Vulnerable Persons in Emergencies (VPE) Policy

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) is responsible for the [Vulnerable People in Emergencies (VPE) Policy](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/vulnerable-people-emergencies-policy). The policy was developed to improve the safety of vulnerable people in emergencies, through supporting emergency planning with and for vulnerable people.

The purpose of the policy is to improve the safety of vulnerable people in emergencies, through supporting:

* Emergency planning with and for vulnerable people;
* Developing local lists of facilities where vulnerable people may be located
* Developing local lists of vulnerable people (Vulnerable Persons Registers) who may need consideration (tailored advice of a recommendation to evacuate) in an emergency, and make these lists available to those with responsibility for helping vulnerable residents evacuate

The VPE defines a ‘vulnerable person’ as someone living in the community who is:

* frail, and/or physically or cognitively impaired; and
* unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or respond in an emergency situation. (Note: the VPE is under review due to the introduction of the NDIS)

Guidelines have been developed through the VPE including the Vulnerable People Register (VPR) which identifies the most vulnerable in each community.

The VPR is administered by Council’s MRM and is verified twice a year (April & October) to ensure currency although people can be added to the register at any time. In practice the MRM checks the VPR on a monthly basis.

The VPR is accessible to the legislated Evacuation agency – VicPol.

The VPE and guidelines are filed in the Crisisworks library

### Vulnerable Persons’ Register (VPR)

The Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR) is a requirement of the VPE. It has been developed to store local information about consenting, identified vulnerable people. VPR information is entered by relevant agencies into a cloud-based system, which is locally managed by municipal councils.

Victoria Police has direct access to the VPR system to aid emergency planning and response, including potential evacuation.

The information in the VPR can be filtered, mapped, and where necessary exported to reports for authorised purposes, according to the role and access rights of each organisation.

Council contact VPR clients if there are predicted weather extremes to ensure they are aware of potential dangers.

### Vulnerable Facilities List (VFL)

The VPE requires that a list of local facilities where vulnerable people are likely to be situated is coordinated and maintained by Council. This list, known as the Vulnerable Facilities List (VFL) includes hospitals, schools, Aged Care Facilities and child care centres.

An updated copy of this document is maintained and available to Victoria Police and other agencies on [Crisisworks](https://murrindindi.crisisworks.com/).

### Other Vulnerable Persons and Indicators of Vulnerability

Council is aware that not all people with vulnerabilities are captured by the VPE. Many vulnerable persons in the community are not either in a vulnerable facility or registered on the VPR and are therefore outside the bounds of the policy. For example, asthmatics, pregnant women and frail elderly persons are generally not covered by the policy.

Vulnerabilities are highest with the very young, the aged and persons with a disability in our community. The following table highlights the various forms of vulnerability in the community.

Figure 4: Vulnerability Types and Context

| Data | Vulnerability Context |
| --- | --- |
| Population | Population size in each township. |
| Housing Tenure | Residents who are more likely to stay and defend their homes.  Awareness by residents of the risks in the environment in which they live. Many residents are not aware, for example, that they live in fire prone environments. |
| Age Groups | Number of young and elderly people living in the township. An indication of elderly people living alone in the township. |
| Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander | Cultural context, how to approach residents and languages spoken. |
| Dwellings with Internet Access | Proficiency with and access to communication mediums. |
| Persons with a Disability | Vulnerable community members that maintain independent living but who may be more vulnerable than others during not just fires and floods but also high heat periods and the loss of utilities such as power and water |
| Average Cars per Household | An indication of the mobility of residents. |
| Home and Community Care  (HACC) Services | Vulnerable community members that maintain independent living with the support of service providers but who may be more vulnerable than others during not just fires and floods but also high heat periods and the loss of utilities such as power and water |
| Recreation Site Risks | Localities within the municipality subject to increased visitation who may be more vulnerable in an emergency due to having less awareness of the risks within the environment they are in, less access to modern messaging mediums and risks associated with access and exit routes into and from the localities. |

## Critical Infrastructure

Under Part 7A, *Emergency Management Act 2013* (Vic), Critical infrastructure refers to any infrastructure that is deemed to be critically essential to the operations of the state, and disruption of such infrastructure would interrupt the delivery of essential services to the state. Such a classification is given to infrastructure by the relevant Minister or Governor in Council. According to Section 74C of the Act, essential services include:

* Transport
* Fuel
* Gas
* Electricity
* Water
* Sewerage
* Major roads
* Any additional service specified by the Governor in Council as being essential

Murrindindi Shire is also home to some specific critical infrastructure including (but not limited to)

* Lake Eildon
* Eildon Pondage Power Station
* Rubicon Hydroelectric Power Station
* Various mobile phone and radio towers
* Ausnet Services Infrastructure (defined as critical by the minister in March 2023)

These and other critical assets are documented in the CFA’s Victorian Fire Risk Register (VFRR) for the Hume region.

### Major Infrastructure and Assets in the Murrindindi Shire

Transport networks include:

* Goulburn Valley Highway
* Maroondah Highway
* Melba Highway

Major employers include:

* Trout and freshwater fish industry
* Outdoor education facilities/camps
* DEECA/Forest Fire Management (FFM)
* Agriculture
* Tourism industry
* Softwood production
* Education
* Health

Key infrastructure authorities/providers include:

* AusNet Services
* Goulburn Valley Water
* Goulburn Murray Water
* AGL Hydro

Goulburn Valley Water is generally responsible for the provision of water and sewerage services throughout most of the Shire. The townships of Alexandra, Yea, Eildon, and Marysville are serviced by reticulated water and sewerage systems, with Buxton, Molesworth and Thornton being supplied with reticulated water only. Parts of Glenburn are serviced by sewer only. Most of the Kinglake settlements, Narbethong, Buxton, Taggerty, Thornton, Flowerdale, Yarck and Molesworth and are not connected to a sewer system. A small area of Kinglake West is serviced by Yarra Valley Water sewer systems.

Healthcare Facilities:

* Yea and District Memorial Hospital
* Alexandra District Health (Alexandra Hospital)
* Kellock Lodge Alexandra Inc (Aged Care Facility)
* Darlingford Upper-Goulburn Nursing Home
* Dame Pattie Menzies Centre
* Yea Rosebank Hostel (Aged Care Facility)

Retail and shopping areas include the centres of Yea, Eildon, Alexandra, Marysville and the Kinglake Ranges.

Education facilities and school camps include:

* Alexandra Primary School
* St Mary’s Primary School, Alexandra
* Alexandra Secondary College
* Continuing Education and Arts Centre of Alexandra (CEACA)
* Eildon Primary School
* Flowerdale Primary School
* Kinglake Primary School
* Kinglake West Primary School
* Middle Kinglake Primary School
* Sacred Heart Primary School Yea
* Yea High School
* Buxton Primary School
* Toolangi Primary School
* Marysville Primary School
* Outdoor Education Group (Eildon)
* Holmesglen (Eildon)
* Penleigh and Essendon Grammar Camp (Lake Eildon)
* Rubicon School Camp
* Crystal Creek Camp
* Camp Marysville
* Camp Narbethong

Childcare facilities:

* ABC Childcare
* Alexandra Kindergarten
* Eildon Child Care
* Flowerdale Childrens Centre
* Kinglake Ranges Child Care Centre
* Yea Kindergarten
* Various family day-care facilities (see Vulnerable Facilities List on Crisisworks for further information)

Caravan Parks

* Eildon Parks
  + Eildon Pondage Holiday Park
  + Boulevard Caravan Park
  + Blue Gums Riverside Holiday Park
  + Eildon Holiday Resort
  + Jerusalem Creek Marina and Camping Ground
* Eildon Waters Caravan Park (Thornton)
* Thornton Caravan Park
* Alexandra Tourist Park
* Alexandra Showgrounds Caravan Park
* Marysville Caravan Holiday Park
* Molesworth Recreation Reserve Caravan Park
* Yea Riverside Caravan Park
* Big 4 Taggerty Caravan Park
* Breakaway Twin Rivers Caravan Park (Acheron)
* Black Spur Motel and Caravan Park (Narbethong)

Community or Neighbourhood Houses:

* Kinglake Neighbourhood House
* Flowerdale Community House
* Toolangi-Castella Community House
* Yea Community House
* Alexandra Community Hub
* Community Hub at Taggerty (CH@T)

Natural assets include:

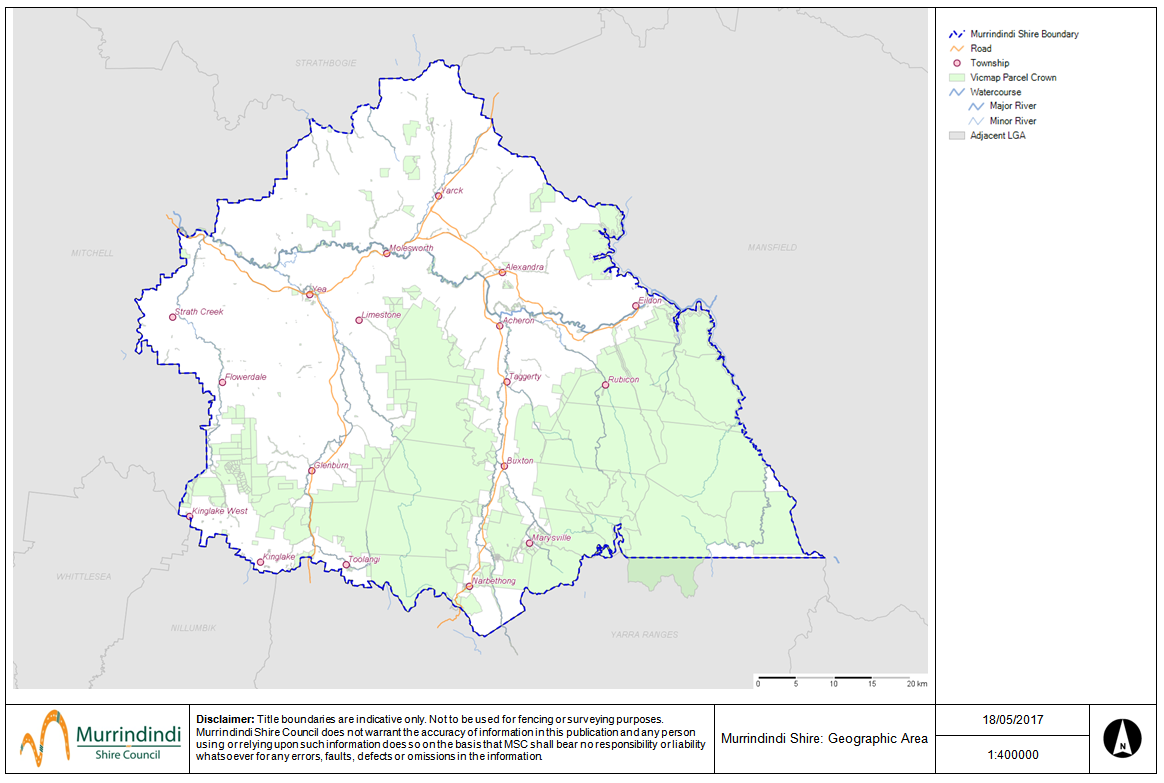
* Goulburn River and tributaries (Acheron, Yea and Rubicon Rivers and King Parrot Creek)
* Lake Eildon National Park
* Kinglake National Park
* Yarra Ranges National Park
* Cathedral Ranges State Park
* Toolangi State Forest
* Rubicon State Forest
* Mt Disappointment State Forest
* Black Range State Forest
* Marysville State Forest
* Mt Robertson State Forest
* Murrindindi Scenic Reserve
* Steavenson River and Steavenson Falls, Marysville
* Snobs Creek Falls

### Major Events in Murrindindi Shire

The following events generally occur annually in Murrindindi Shire and have more than 500 people attend:

* Wakeboard Victoria State Titles (February)
* St Pat’s Race Day Yea (February)
* Alexandra Easter Fair (April)
* Eildon Lions Easter Market (April)
* Truck Ute & Rod Show (June)
* Goulburn Fishing Festival (September)
* Marysville Jazz and Blues Festival (October)
* Foggy Mountain Bluegrass Festival (October)
* Molesworth Easter Bazaar (April)
* Eildon Big Fish Challenge (October)
* Eildon Boat Show (October)
* Spring Fair (Yea, November)
* Alexandra and Yea Agricultural Shows (November)

Further information on events in Murrindindi Shire is available on [Council’s website](https://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Events).

Figure 5: Municipal Map

## History of significant emergencies

Murrindindi Shire has a long history of bush fire as its predominant emergency type. There have been five major fires in the municipality since 2000. These include the Castella (Toolangi State Forest) fires of February 2004, Mount Torbreck (State Forest) fires of April 2004, Kanumbra (“Brilliant” fire) New Year’s Eve 2005, Kinglake/Glenburn-Yea/Highlands fires of late January/February 2006 and the 7 February 2009 fires[[5]](#footnote-5).

The bushfires of February 2009 had a profound effect on the Murrindindi Shire. 95 people were killed and 1539 square kilometres, or 40% of the Shire, were burnt. The bushfires had catastrophic impacts on the communities of Murrindindi Shire and its businesses, tourism and natural environment were severely impacted as a result. 1,397 houses were destroyed as well as 3,533 kilometres of fencing. Flora and fauna were also severely impacted; five threatened species of fauna listed under Victoria’s the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* occur in the burnt areas, as well as three species listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In addition to the devastation caused by the fires in February 2009, Lake Mountain was also impacted by a structural fire in 2009. This fire destroyed the only building to survive the February fires in June of the same year with costs estimated at $1,000,000.00.

Other than fire, the history of major emergencies in the Murrindindi Shire has been flood[[6]](#footnote-6) and to a lesser extent, vehicular accidents. Within the last few years, the region has been subject to a number of both floods and fires.

Figure 6: Major Emergencies in the Murrindindi Shire Area Since 2000

| Year | Murrindindi Shire | Impacts |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2004 | Bushfire – Castella and Toolangi fires | Mostly crown land impacts to forest |
| 2005 | Storm – August | Widespread impacts across municipality |
| 2006 | Bushfire - January | Large areas to north of Yea, near Glenburn and near Kinglake burned |
| 2007 | Storm – December | Widespread tree impacts |
| 2009 | Bushfire - February | Impacts to 40% of the municipality. 95 fatalities in the Shire of 173 total, major impacts to residences, infrastructure and employment. |
| 2010 | Storm - January | Tree damage |
| 2011 | Flood – January | Flooding of a number of roads and assets |
| 2019 | Storms – January  Kinglake, Glenburn, Castella | Large number of damaged trees |
| 2019 | Storms – February  Yea, Highlands, Alexandra, Eildon Taggerty | Large number of damaged trees |
| 2020 | Pandemic – March onwards |  |
| 2020 | Storms – December | Tree impacts to Kinglake Ranges and Marysville area |
| 2021 | Storms – January | Impacts to Eildon-Jamieson road and fire impacted trees around Marysville and Kinglake |
| 2021 | Storms – June | 300 persons without power for nearly 2 weeks, large impact to communications and electricity infrastructure, houses impacted, Council assets impacted |
| 2021 | Storms – October | Trees damaged Eildon Jamieson Road and Kinglake Ranges |
| 2022 | Flood/Storms – October | > 300km of roads impacted, 2 bridges severely impacted, >$25 Million impact to infrastructure, 74 properties flooded (24 primary residences), 6,500ha of farmland impacted (19% of Shire), >1,000 stock losses, major economic impact on municipality |
| 2023 | Fires in Maintongoon and Flowerdale | 14 Properties impacted by 1,000ha fire in Flowerdale. 500ha fire in Maintongoon impacted 9 properties. Largest impacts to fencing and grass production. |
| 2023 | Flood/Storms – October | 44 properties with cropping, fencing and pasture impacts  Moderate impact on municipality. No overfloor flooding recorded but all properties were impacted by 2022 floods. Cumulative impact severe at local level. |

# Planning Arrangements

## Planning structures and responsibilities - Overview

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 in Victoria at the State, regional and municipal levels. The act also created an obligation for new Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria, including the alpine resorts which, for the purposes of the Act, are taken to be a municipal district. Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry, or personal expertise to the task of emergency management planning for the municipal district.

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* supersedes the *1986 Act* under which this MEMP was approved. At its next formal review in 2024, the plan will need to comply with all of the requirements of the 2013 Act. During annual updates before the formal review, the MEMP will begin to be adapted to meet the new requirements.

The *Emergency Management Act 2013,* and the *Local Government Act 2020* identifies councils as playing a critical role in Victoria’s emergency management arrangements and systems. Councils have access to specialised local knowledge about the environmental and demographic features of their municipalities. People will naturally seek help from their local council and emergency management agencies during emergencies and the recovery process.

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* established Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) as the overarching body for emergency management in Victoria. The Act also established the following positions and functions:

* The State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC)
  + an emergency management advisory body responsible for providing advice to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on emergency management policy and strategy
* The Emergency Management Commissioner
  + the Commissioner is responsible for coordinating the response to major emergencies (including ensuring appropriate control arrangements are in place) and operating effectively during Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies
* The Chief Executive of Emergency Management Victoria
  + this position is responsible for the day to day management of Emergency Management Victoria
* The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM)
  + this position is responsible for developing and maintaining a monitoring and assurance framework and evaluating the performance of the sector.

Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) is the State coordinator of relief and recovery. Coordination of relief at the regional level is delegated to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Services (DFFH) whilst regional coordination of recovery stay’s with ERV. At the local level, Council’s are the coordinators of relief and recovery.

## Municipal Emergency Management Functions

### Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

The *EMLA Act 2018* amended the *EM Act 2013* and various other acts to establish a new integrated and co-ordinated framework for emergency management planning at state, regional and municipal levels.

At the municipal level, the EM Act 2013 as amended creates an obligation for a reformed Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to be established in each of Victoria’s municipal districts, including Alpine Resort Management Boards which, for the purposes of the Act, are considered as municipal districts.

Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to the task of developing a comprehensive emergency management plan for the municipality.

The MEMPC operates strategically to ensure comprehensive, collaborative and integrated planning occurs at all levels.

With a focus on preparedness and resilience, municipal planning applies risk-based analysis to mitigate or reduce the consequences of emergencies on the built, economic, social and natural environments and improve community outcomes. Planning considerations include the full spectrum of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery and apply to all hazards and all communities.

The MEMPC maintains an awareness of existing municipal capability and capacity to support the effective conduct of mitigation, response and recovery activities. Where appropriate the committee can facilitate or assist with activities that support capability and capacity uplift. This can include, but is not limited to, community engagement activities or multi-agency exercises and training that provide for continuous learning and improvement.

Under section 59F of the EM Act, the Murrindindi Shire Council establishes a MEMPC which transfers responsibility for municipal emergency management planning from the council to the multi-agency MEMPC. This shift of responsibility highlights the intent of the reform which supports emergency management planning as an integrated, multi-agency and collaborative effort. This means that all participating agencies are required to contribute their expertise and resource to municipal emergency management planning.

The MEMPC is the peak planning body for emergency management within the municipal district. It is the forum for government and non-government agencies to develop policies, procedures, strategies and frameworks to support co-ordinated emergency management planning for the municipality. In line with section 59D of the EM Act 2013 the functions of the MEMPC are to:

1. Be responsible for the preparation and review of its MEMP;
2. Ensure that its MEMP is consistent with the state emergency management plan and the relevant REMP;
3. Provide reports of recommendation to its REMPC in relation to any matter that affects, or may affect, emergency management planning in the municipality;
4. Share information with the REMPC and other MEMPCs to assist effective emergency management planning;
5. Collaborate (having regard to the Guidelines) with any other MEMPC that the MEMPC considerers appropriate in relation to emergency management planning, including preparing MEMPs;
6. Determine the need for and participate in functional sub-committees and working groups to plan for specific emergencies, address issues and develop and implement sub plans & projects; and
7. Perform any other function conferred on the MEMPC by the EM Act 2013, or any other act.

The EM Act 2013 stipulates in section 59A(1) that the MEMPC must consist of:

* A Chairperson - An officer of council nominated by the CEO
* Victoria Police,
* Country Fire Authority (CFA) and/or Fire Rescue Victoria,
* Ambulance Service Victoria,
* Victorian State Emergency Service (SES),
* Australian Red Cross,
* Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

The EMLA Act also requires the MEMPC to invite at least one additional member for each of the following three categories:

* Community representative
* Recovery representative
* Other representatives

### MEMPC Membership

The Murrindindi Shire MEMPC consists of the following core members:

* Chairperson – Murrindindi CEO
* Victoria Police
* CFA
* Ambulance Victoria
* Vic SES
* Australian Red Cross
* DFFH

And the following additional members:

* Community representatives (x3 which include a Councillor, Community and Neighbourhood House Representative and community representative)
* Recovery representatives – Agriculture Victoria, Emergency Recovery Victoria
* Other representatives
  + Additional Council Representatives (MEMO, MRM, EMC)
  + AGL Energy
  + DEECA/FFM
  + Parks Victoria
  + Goulburn Murray Water
  + Goulburn Valley Water
  + Alexandra District Health
  + Yea and District Memorial Hospital
  + UGFM

Figure 7: MEMPC and Sub-Committee Structure

Sub-committees Created as Required

### MEMPC Terms of Reference

The MEMPC has developed a terms of reference to guide the committee. It includes an up-to-date list of members, meeting agenda and process, frequency of meetings, record keep and quorums etc.

### MEMPC Subcommittees

MEMPC subcommittees report directly to the MEMPC.

#### Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee

The role of the Murrindindi Shire Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) is to provide a municipal level forum to build and sustain organisational partnerships, generate a common understanding and share purpose with regard to fire management and ensure that the plans of individual agencies are linked and complement each other.

The MFMPC also has two key requirements:

* Produce the Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP) for consideration by the MEMPC
* Monitor, review and report to Council and community through the MEMPC

#### Municipal Flood Recovery Committee

A Municipal Flood Recovery Committee (FRC) was set up in response to the impacts of the October 2022 floods. It is chaired by the Flood Recovery Manager and has its own terms of reference. The FRC reports to the MEMPC as required.

#### Pandemic Committee

A Municipal Pandemic committee was set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to discuss the impact of the pandemic on the municipality and has been operating since 2020. It consists of a number of MEMPC agencies and community partners such as neighbourhood and community houses. It operates on an as needs basis.

At the time of writing the Pandemic Committee had been put into hiatus and will be reconvened as required.

#### Other MEMPC Subcommittees

The MEMPC will establish any subcommittees as required.

## Emergency management roles and responsibilities

Murrindindi Shire MEMPC carry out roles and responsibilities as defined in the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp/roles-and-responsibilities) including the [agency role statements](https://files.emv.vic.gov.au/2022-11/SEMP%20Roles%20and%20responsibilities%20-%20Agency%20Role%20Statements%20-%20November%202022.pdf).

The SEMP Roles and Responsibilities table also maps agency roles for core capabilities and critical tasks in alignment with the [Victorian Preparedness Framework](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/emergency-management-capability-in-victoria/victorian-preparedness-framework-0) (VPF) for the management of major emergencies. The VPF identifies 21 core capabilities, and subsequent critical tasks for each, that Victoria requires to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies.

## Partnerships, strategies and plans

Government authorities and agencies along with Council, the community, individuals and emergency services have a key role in implementing strategies and plans which reduce the risk associated with emergency events.

Local Government’s role in preparing individuals and communities for risks is key - partnerships, strategies and plans are developed and implemented based on detailed knowledge of the local community, its characteristics, strengths, vulnerabilities and a detailed appreciation of the risks faced by the community.

Regional plans, policies and networks that the MEMPC has a stake in include:

* Hume Region Emergency Management Plan
* Hume Region Emergency Management Planning Committee

Other Hume regional plans include:

* [2020 Hume Regional Bushfire Strategy](https://www.safertogether.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/493520/DELWP0152pt4_BushfireManagementStrategies_2020_Hume_v5_web.pdf)
* [North East (Hume) Flood Sub Plan](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ses.vic.gov.au%2Fdocuments%2F112015%2F1519107%2FNorth%2BEast%2B%2528Hume%2529%2BRegion%2B-%2BFlood%2BEmergency%2BResponse%2BPlan.pdf%2Fcf2d3c2b-9693-3d0a-bebf-4b0c00fb42a7%3Fversion%3D1.0%26t%3D1541133941000&data=04%7C01%7CSue.Hare%40mansfield.vic.gov.au%7C6355cf2fb97b4376255508d90ad8b87b%7C44ecefc54cdd4bf381fab4a5e14d6da5%7C1%7C0%7C637552748447576819%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=JKeR5yD3CSnPY9VpegGZvD0URIi4gd42P0JsVFqhSaw%3D&reserved=0)
* [North East (Hume) Earthquake Sub Plan](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ses.vic.gov.au%2Fdocuments%2F112015%2F128034%2FNorth%2BEast%2B%2528Hume%2529%2BRegion%2B-%2BEarthquake%2BEmergency%2BResponse%2BPlan.pdf%2F723b1ca9-64b8-5b47-3793-62c9ec0f89c5%3Fversion%3D1.0%26t%3D1540530275000&data=04%7C01%7CSue.Hare%40mansfield.vic.gov.au%7C6355cf2fb97b4376255508d90ad8b87b%7C44ecefc54cdd4bf381fab4a5e14d6da5%7C1%7C0%7C637552748447586807%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=OSwlSEUlBWv1XyOt3XXLIkCYTBZeZjukd0mLJiYxoYA%3D&reserved=0)
* [North East (Hume) Storm Sub Plan](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ses.vic.gov.au%2Fdocuments%2F112015%2F128034%2FNorth%2BEast%2B%2528Hume%2529%2BRegion%2B-%2BStorm%2BEmergency%2BResponse%2BPlan.pdf%2F625635ad-6356-e2e9-1f5f-04df1b63e0fd%3Fversion%3D1.0%26t%3D1540530379000&data=04%7C01%7CSue.Hare%40mansfield.vic.gov.au%7C6355cf2fb97b4376255508d90ad8b87b%7C44ecefc54cdd4bf381fab4a5e14d6da5%7C1%7C0%7C637552748447586807%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=LhQUbN4eWvg4Zq%2BESXynhBW4cpzPIdO7CIqDU%2FBUhio%3D&reserved=0)
* [North East (Hume) Landslide Sub Plan](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ses.vic.gov.au%2Fdocuments%2F112015%2F1519107%2FNorth%2BEast%2BRegion%2B-%2BLandslide%2BEmergency%2BResponse%2BPlan%2B-%2BFINAL%2BSEP%2B2019%2B-%2Bupdate.pdf%2F0ccac3a1-125e-44ac-6b55-2eb8a089c212%3Fversion%3D1.0%26t%3D1582158189000&data=04%7C01%7CSue.Hare%40mansfield.vic.gov.au%7C6355cf2fb97b4376255508d90ad8b87b%7C44ecefc54cdd4bf381fab4a5e14d6da5%7C1%7C0%7C637552748447596808%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=5pq2y9EQVzcbkg3E%2Fdc0lgQ10AeybrAvruCkf0JghWU%3D&reserved=0)

The MEMP links with:

* [State Relief and Recovery Plan](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/policies/emmv/)
* [Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/emergencies/response/victorian-emergency-animal-welfare-plan)
* [State Extreme Heat Sub Plan](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/state-emergency-plans/state-extreme-heat-sub-plan)
* [Heat Health Plan for Victoria](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwja4eGXlbvbAhVDVrwKHUibBtEQFgg7MAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww2.health.vic.gov.au%2FApi%2Fdownloadmedia%2F%257B5151AA4E-D2FD-4DD8-AA58-3F74A63F2066%257D&usg=AOvVaw0laagR9Q_4Mn61iSooyF7F)
* [State Flood Sub Plan](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/state-emergency-plans/state-flood-sub-plan)
* [State Storm Sub Plan](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/state-emergency-plans/state-storm-sub-plan)

Local plans, policies and strategies

* Murrindindi Shire Council Plan
* Murrindindi Shire Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
* Rural Roadside Management Plan
* Zoning/Land Use Management
* Building Codes
* Building Use Regulations
* Public Information/Education

## Sub plans

The MEMPC will determine if a sub-plan is required to detail more specific or complex arrangements that either enhance or contextualise this Plan. All sub-plans are multi-agency plans and may be hazard specific where the consequences are likely to be significant, for example a municipal flood response sub-plan.

All sub-plans are subject to the same preparation, consultation, assurance, approval, and publication requirements as this Plan, as outlined in Part 6A of the EM Act 2013. Agencies with roles or responsibilities in a sub-plan must act in accordance with the plan (EM Act 2013 s60AK).

The MEMPC has endorsed the following as sub plans to the MEMP:

* [Murrindindi Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan](https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/images/Emergency_Management/Fire-Emergency-Management-Plan-2020.pdf)
* [Murrindindi Shire Flood Emergency Plan](https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/images/Emergency_Management/Flood-Emergency-Management-Plan-2020.pdf)

## Complementary Plans

Complementary plans are prepared by industry/sectors or agencies 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 MEMP and are not subject to approval, consultation, and other requirements under the EM Act 2013.

The following complimentary plans may have significance to the comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated emergency management arrangements in Murrindindi Shire:

* Murrindindi Shire Heatwave Plan
* [Murrindindi Shire Pandemic Plan](https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/images/Emergency_Management/Strathbogie_Shire_Council_Pandemic_Pla_April_2020.pdf)
* Murrindindi Shire Emergency Animal Welfare Plan

Murrindindi Shire Heatwave Plan - covers preparing for and responding to extreme heat. It is a Council document and largely covers communications and protecting vulnerable people.

Murrindindi Shire Pandemic Plan - is a Council document that was prepared with input from DFFH. It is an operational plan for Council that covers roles and responsibilities, community information, control strategies, community support and recovery and Council business continuity.

Murrindindi Shire Emergency Animal Welfare Plan - is a guide for Council Local Laws officers and others involved in emergency management. The plan draws on the State Animal Emergency Welfare Plan and covers roles and responsibilities, communications, and welfare services.

Other plans that complement this MEMP include Council’s Business Continuity Plan and the various emergency management plans prepared by utility providers (eg power, water and sewerage treatment).

A range or readiness arrangements for the Hume region can be found in [EM-COP](https://cop.em.vic.gov.au/sadisplay/nicsUI.seam?ws=1&v=58597720#links) (login required).

To complement the emergency management process, Council enforces and reviews existing policies in land use, building codes and regulations, urban planning, community safety and health.

## MEMP Assurance and Review

### Plan Review

Content of this plan is to be reviewed annually, if additional risks are identified, or after an emergency which has been managed under part of this plan. Organisations delegated with responsibilities in this plan are required to notify the MEMPC Executive Officer of any changes of detail (e.g. contact information) as they occur. The MEMO is responsible for the MEMP review.

Amendments are to be produced by the MEMO and distributed by the MEMPC Executive Officer as required in electronic format to MEMPC members and emergency agencies via the Crisisworks documents page or by other electronic form when required. Paper copies of plans will no longer be provided by Murrindindi Shire Council.

Any amendments to this plan must be approved by the REMPC.

### MEMPC Testing and Exercises

This plan will be tested on an annual basis unless there has been activation during the period (which will count as a test). The MEMO will coordinate and have responsibility for the exercise which will involve all MEMPC member agencies where possible. Any procedural anomalies or short falls encountered during these exercises or ensuing operations must be addressed and rectified at the earliest opportunity.

It is recognised that the best form of testing is the actual operation during an emergency and the subsequent debrief. A number of options exist to enable testing of this plan, these range from debriefs, training and a variety of exercises.

A MEMPC exercise may test individual or a combination of elements including preparedness, response, relief or recovery. Efforts will be made by the MEMPC to ensure that exercises are undertaken across this spectrum.

Generally, unless other agencies volunteer, the MEMO will coordinate, develop, run and prepare exercises including developing a document outlining the exercise outcomes. All MEMPC members will be invited to a given exercise as well as other agency representatives as required.

Active emergencies in 2021, 2022, and 2023 (see histories of emergencies section) has negated the need for an Emergency Exercise. However, in 2023, a combined emergency exercise with EMV was undertaken. The exercise was in two phases with phase one in March 2023 centring around the activation of the State, Regional and Municipal extreme heat sub plans. The second phase of the exercise in June 2023 focused on the Emergency Relief Centre (ERC) arrangement within Murrindindi Shire and involved community participation. The joint evaluation report on the exercise is available on EMCOP.

### Assurance Process

Under the EMLA Act 2018, the audit requirements for MEMPs have significantly changed. VicSES are no longer the auditing body; rather, the plans are required to pass a self-assurance process and be approved by the Hume Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee.

Under Part 6A of the EM Act 2013, the MEMPC must develop a statement of assurance that confirms the MEMP complies with the requirements of the act including the date when the MEMP was last reviewed.

Once prepared, the MEMPC submit the MEMP and assurance statement to the Hume Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) for approval. Where necessary, the REMPC may deem that adjustments to the MEMP or further information may be required. The REMPC will then assess the plan and assurance statement to ensure that it meets the appropriate requirements before it is approved.

### Reviewing Risk and Risk Assessments

Risk assessments completed as part of the MEMP planning process will be reviewed by the MEMPC prior to assurance and approval (i.e. at least once every three years).

# Prevention Arrangements

## Background/Introduction

Murrindindi Shire MEMPC recognise they have a key role in prevention and mitigation activities to reduce the risk, or minimise the effects, of emergencies that may occur in our municipality.

The MEMPC plays a key role in prevention via the identification of potential hazards and their associated risks and consequences. These identified risks and consequences are then considered and specifically planned for during the development and implementation of plans, policies and procedures.

Murrindindi Shire Council aims to reduce the impact and likelihood of emergencies through its implementation, enforcement and continued review of existing policies in land use, building codes and regulations, and urban planning.

The ability of a community to respond to an emergency situation and in turn recover from the effects of an emergency will depend on the attitude and the resilience of affected communities. Assisting, and where required, helping to create more resilient communities through coordinating community education and awareness programs are a key role of the MEMPC. Resilient communities are informed communities.

The Municipality and the MEMPC will support and promote appropriate prevention and awareness programs within the municipality including media releases, advertisements, newsletters, Councils website, emergency services expo’s and through service networks.

**Prevention** is defined as the development and implementation of strategies and associated measures to reduce the occurrence of and mitigate the consequences of identified emergency risks on the community and environment.

**Preparedness** focuses on ensuring the risks and management strategies identified in prevention planning are utilised to assist and facilitate the local community to be aware of their risks and the potential consequences of a resulting emergency event, to inform and equip them with tools to implement resilience strategies for their own homes and families.

Through the Community Emergency Risk Assessment process (CERA), the MEMPC has identified several strategies that exist or could be undertaken to eliminate or reduce the likelihood or consequences of an emergency.

## Risk assessment process and results

### Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) Process

The Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process was utilised in the preparation of this MEMP by the MEMPC. It provides a framework for considering and improving the safety and resilience of their community from hazards and emergencies that aligns with the ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Standard and the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG)

The CERA approach aims to understand the likely impacts of a range of emergency scenarios upon community assets, values and functions. As such, CERA provides an opportunity for multiple community impacts and consequences to be considered enabling collaborative risk treatment plans and emergency preparedness measures to be described.

To use the CERA process, the CERA tool, developed by the State Emergency Service (SES). It provides a robust framework for a ‘community of interest’ to identify and prioritise those emergency risks that are likely to create most disruption to them. The assessment tool assisted in identifying and describing hazards and assesses impacts and consequences based upon the vulnerability or exposure of the community or its functions.

CERA provides the MEMPC with a framework for considering and improving the safety and resilience of the community from hazards and emergencies.

The outputs of the assessment process are used to inform the MEMP, introduce risk action plans and ensure that communities are aware of and better informed about hazards and the associated emergency risks that may affect them.

The outputs of the assessment process were used to inform the MEMP, introduce risk action plans and ensure that communities are aware of and better informed about hazards and the associated emergency risks that may affect them.

### Risk Identification and analysis

The risk identification and analysis regime carried out (CERA) aligns with the ISO31000 standard. ISO31000:2018 describes risk analysis as:

*Risk Analysis = Consequence x Likelihood*

The ISO31000 Standard emphasises the need to establish and manage the risk to the objectives that you have set during the plan development process.

During the preparation of this Plan, a risk analysis was carried out to identify potential natural and manufactured hazards within the municipality. The history of occurrence and the nature of each hazard, especially community vulnerability, have been considered during the analysis process. Due to ongoing changes of seasonal conditions, community development and public attitudes, the rating of the identified threats may vary over a period of time.

Listed below is a summary of the identified risks and their risk rating. The risk mitigation measures column includes plans that specifically manage identified risks.

### Risk Mitigation

Mitigation of identified risks is a core component of the CERA process. Action plans detailing the treatment of risks is dealt with in each of the individual MEMP sub-plans. Examples of mitigation actions are included in the tables below.

Part of the CERA process is also examining how effective mitigation controls are at combating a specific risk. After the introduction of these mitigations, risk level may be reduced – this is known as the ‘residual risk’. Residual risk is the risk remaining after all possible treatments and mitigation measures are performed.

### CERA Results

The following table summarises the results of the CERA process with the Murrindindi Shire MEMPC.

Murrindindi Shire has a number of risks with a “High” residual risk rating. They are:

* Large regional bushfire
* Large regional storm
* Extreme temperatures and heatwave
* Landslip (roads)
* Pandemic/Epidemic
* Mass gathering

Plans have been prepared for the identified risks of bushfire, pandemic, flood and heatwave. The Council’s existing events management system is comprehensive and the development of another plan in this event space was considered unnecessary by the MEMPC.

Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) are the risk manager for landslip as they manage the major road network and corresponding cuttings. There is not yet been a Transport Incident Plan developed and this risk is currently managed by RRV through a database and risk management process.

Figure 8: CERA Results

| Risk | Consequence | Likelihood | Overall Rating | Control Agency | Risk Mitigation Plans/Controls | Risk Mitigation Actions (examples) | Risk Treatment Strategies | Date of last risk review |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Large Regional Bushfire | Major | Medium | **High** | CFA or DEECA | Murrindindi Shire Council Municipal Fire Management Plan, DEECA Fire Operations Plan, CFA Regional Fire Plans | Detection by fire towers, Air spotter, lightning tracker, increased preparedness levels, patrolling, plans, fuel management, permits and inspections, codes for works, fire danger period etc. | Reducing likelihood of occurrence through mitigation measures | 6/12/22 |
| Large Regional Storm | Moderate | High | **High** | SES | SES North Eastern Regional Storm Plan (draft) | Warnings and community education, regulations, insurance, climate change plans, insurance, building regulations, drainage strategies, maintenance, | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |
| Extreme Temperatures and Heatwave | Major | High | **High** | Emergency Management Commissioner | Murrindindi Shire Council Heatwave Plan | Plans – State, regional and local, contact of vulnerable clients, communicate heat health messages etc. | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |
| Major Flood | Moderate | Medium | **Medium** | SES | Murrindindi Shire Flood Emergency Plan | Warnings and community education, regulations, insurance, climate change plans, insurance, building regulations, drainage strategies, maintenance, tree pruning programs | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |
| Landslip (Roads) | Moderate | High | **High** | SES | Vic Roads Geotechnical Database | Plans, regular monitoring and review of roads and road infrastructure | Reducing likelihood of occurrence through mitigation measures | 6/12/22 |
| Pandemic/ Epidemic | Major | Medium | **High** | DH | Murrindindi Shire Council Pandemic Plan | Plans, promotion of immunisation, hygiene (messaging), infection control measures, exclusion of sick staff, active case finding, antiviral treatments etc. | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |
| Structural Failure – Dam | Major | Low | **Medium** | DEECA | Lake Eildon Land On-Water Management Plan, Goulburn Murray Water | Dam surveillance and monitoring, check lists for identified threats, inspections after earthquakes, maintenance | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |
| Transport Incident – Aircraft | Minor | Moderate | **Medium** | Victoria Police | Australian Government Aviation Disaster Response Plan (AUSAVPLAN) | Weather detection, forecasting, CASA requirements, warnings/intelligence, maintenance, training | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |
| Mass Gathering | Moderate | Major | **High** | Victoria Police | Event Management Plans | Permits and event management plans, | Reduce the consequence via plans and actions | 6/12/22 |

The following diagram is a “heat map” of the key risks as determined by the MEMPC. The size of a bubble in the heat map denotes the level of residual likelihood once mitigation measures are taken into account. Large bushfires and structural dam failure (Lake Eildon) have been determined by the MEMPC to have the highest potential impacts. The heat map also shows that the majority of identified risks have effective controls in place with only a few areas requiring improvement - the majority of events have controls in the “monitor” space rather than requiring improvement. This suggests that for the most part, emergency agencies are mitigating risks effectively.

Figure 9: Risk assessment – heat map

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Description automatically generated

## Procedures and Policies

Murrindindi Shire Council has a number of policies and procedures that may be utilised in an emergency. These include:

* Emergency Management Policy
* Fire Danger Policy
* Service Provision in the Fire Danger Period Policy
* Ultraviolet Radiation and Working In Seasonal Heat Policy
* Risk and Safety Policy
* Procurement Policy
* Communications and Engagement Policy

State Government policies that also apply during emergencies include:

* Social Services Sector Emergency Management Policy 2022

### Other Agency Plans

Several risks identified in the CERA process are not mitigated directly by the MEMPC sub plans. For example, the Forest Fire Management (FFM) Murrindindi Joint Fuel Management Program (JFMP) mitigates risk in a fire sense more directly than the Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP).

The MFMP, a strategic document, is informed by the production of the more operational JFMP. That is the case for many of the risks identified – the MEMPC or its sub-plans are not the only risk mitigation for a given risk in the municipality.

## Victorian Fire Risk Register (VFRR)

The VFRR-B is reviewed annually by the Municipal Fire Management Planning Sub-Committee, supported by the CFA representatives. Risk identification is ongoing as the municipality changes.

The VFRR-B is a systematic process that helps to identify assets at risk from bushfire, assesses the level of risk to these assets and highlights the treatments currently in place along with the responsible agencies for implementing these strategies. Outputs from the VFRR-B inform and support this plan and the Fire Management Sub Plan. The assets of the VFRR-B are divided into four classes; human settlement, economic, environmental, and cultural heritage.

Further risk assessment information for bushfires is included in the Municipal Fire Management Plan.

## 4.3 Community planning

[CFA](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice) offers online information and advice to assist community preparedness.

The Red Cross also offer guidance on preparing for emergencies through their [Rediplan](https://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/resources/) initiative

## Community Awareness and Education

The ability of a community to respond to an emergency and in turn recover from the effects of an emergency is known as community resilience. The [EMV Community Resilience Framework](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/resilience/community-resilience-framework-for-emergency-management) states that at the heart of the Framework are seven resilient community characteristics:

* 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 agencies on the MEMPC partner in delivering prevention and awareness programs to the community across a range of risks including fire, house fire, flood, storm and heatwave.

A variety of initiatives are used to reach the community including:

* Targeted community meetings eg bushfire planning workshops
* Attending social gatherings and public events eg bush markets and casserole nights
* Written communications in newspapers and social media posts
* Distribution of educational materials eg Preparing for the fire season advice flyer
* Community radio interviews and regular community announcements
* Innovative, local initiatives

Current awareness and engagement programs include:

Figure 10: Community Awareness and Education Programs

| **PROGRAM** | **RISK** | **AGENCY** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Brigade Community Engagement Coordinators and Community Liaison officers | Fire | CFA |
| [Fire safety essentials](https://engage.cfa.vic.gov.au/monitoring-fire-safety-essentials1?tool=survey_tool&tool_id=participant-feedback-survey11) | Bush and grass fire | CFA |
| Bushfire planning workshops <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/practical-bushfire-planning-workshops> | Bush and grass fire | CFA |
| Community Fireguard <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/community-fireguard> | Bush and grass fire | CFA |
| [EPAS Emergency Planning Advice Service](https://engage.cfa.vic.gov.au/preparing-vulnerable-people?tool=guest_book) (vulnerable people support) | Fire | CFA  Red Cross |
| Home Fire Safety program <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fires-in-the-home> | House fire | CFA |
| Tourism business bushfire safety <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/preparing-your-tourism-business> | Bush and grassfire | Tourism Vic CFA |
| Emergency management plans for business <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about/guides>  <https://business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management> | Various | CFA  SES |
| Fire safe kids  <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/kids-schools/fire-safe-kids> | Fire  House fire | CFA |
| Smoke alarm checking and battery replacement  <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/smoke-alarms> | House fire | CFA |
| Local radio (UGFM) interviews | Fire | CFA  DEECA  Council |
| Safer Together – Community Based Bushfire Management  <https://www.safertogether.vic.gov.au/home> | Fire and other risks | CFA  DEECA |
| StoryMap – interactive map <https://www.safertogether.vic.gov.au/strategic-bushfire-management-planning> | Bushfire | DEECA |
| Community Education Facilitator | Flood  Storm | SES |
| 15 to Float  <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/media/campaigns/15-to-float> | Flood | SES |
| Get Ready  <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/get-ready> | Flood, Storm, Landslide | SES |
| Get Ready – school program  <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/get-ready/at-school> | Flood, Storm, Landslide | SES |
| Annual Preparation for the fire season advice (Targeted courtesy letter issued prior to fire season following initial inspections under the fire prevention program) | Fire | Council |
| [Survive the heat](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/survive-the-heat?utm_source=HomePage&utm_medium=News&utm_campaign=survive-the-heat) | Extreme heat | DH |
| Planned burning awareness  <https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/bushfire-fuel-and-risk-management/planned-burning-in-victoria> | Bushfire | DEECA |
| [RediPlan](https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/b896b60f-5b6c-49b2-a114-57be2073a1c2/red-cross-rediplan-disaster-preparedness-guide.pdf.aspx) | Various | Red Cross |
| Prepare and Get Ready – app and web  <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare/> | Various | EMV |
| Red Cross  <https://www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources-for-communities> | Various | Red Cross |

# Response Arrangements – Including Relief

## Background

The objective of emergency response and relief activities in Victoria is to reduce the impact and consequences of emergencies on people, communities, essential infrastructure, industry, the economy, and the environment. The response phase requires:

* agency control, command and coordination arrangements that are in place and tested even before an event (known as readiness),
* the conduct of the response operation, and
* the provision of immediate relief to support communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

Where possible, response activities should be managed at the lowest possible level. Most incidents are of local concern and can be coordinated from local municipality-based resources. Whilst this is the case, regional support may be requested in accordance with arrangements outlined in the [Hume REMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/remps/hume-remp).

The [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp) details the 3 operational tiers – incident, region and state as well as detail about the 3 Classes of emergency.

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

* Protection and preservation of life and relief of suffering is paramount. This includes:
* Safety of emergency services 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.

## Control, command and coordination

Control refers to the overall direction of response activities in an emergency. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency response plan.

The Control agency has overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies. Controllers are responsible for leading all agencies responding to the emergency and applies to response related activity only.

Command is the direction of personnel and resources of an agency in the performance of that organisation’s role and tasks. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement within an agency. MEMPs are multi-agency plans and are not required to define command arrangements.

Coordination is the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies. The Coordination agency has primary responsibility for bringing together resources to support the mitigation of, response to, and recovery from emergencies. In addition to coordination agencies, regional and municipal emergency response coordinators (RERCs and MERCs) are appointed to undertake a coordination function at regional and municipal level (EM Act s40A).

## State emergency management priorities

The State has endorsed a set of emergency management priorities to underpin and guide all decisions made during emergencies in Victoria. The priorities focus on the primacy of life and the issuing of community warnings and information, in order to assist people to make informed decisions about their safety.

The priorities are

* Protection and preservation of life 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.

The State emergency management priorities provide a framework for emergency managers to identify the priority roles and actions of agencies in an emergency response, especially where there are concurrent risks or competing priorities.

## Local response arrangements and responsible agencies

Refer to the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2020/09/78/c1b7be551/Victorian%20State%20Emergency%20Management%20Plan%20%28SEMP%29.pdf) for more details on the following roles :

***Incident Emergency Response Coordinator (IERC)***

The most senior VicPol member at the scene of the emergency or where control is being exercised at the incident level is typically nominated as the VicPol **Incident Emergency**

**Response Coordinator** (IERC). Members of greater or lesser seniority may be the IERC as the emergency escalates or deescalates. The primary function of the IERC is supervise the initial incident level co-ordination.

***Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)***

The VicPol Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) for the Murrindindi Shire is responsible for emergency response coordination at the municipal level. The MERC’s primary function is to bring together agencies and resources within a municipal district to support the response to emergencies.

***Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC)***

The VicPol Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) for the Hume region is responsible for emergency response coordination at the regional level. The RERC’s primary function is to bring together agencies and resources within a region to support the response to emergencies.

### Control and Support Agencies

A **Control Agency** is the primary agency responsible for responding to a specified type of emergency. It is the responsibility of the Control Agency to formulate action plans for a given emergency in consultation with Support Agencies.

There are complex emergencies where a shared accountability across a number of agencies can occur. In these cases, there is a need for a single agency to be responsible for the collaborative response of all the agencies. For the purposes of consistency, the term Control Agency will be used to describe this lead agency role.

Where an emergency type is not listed or where there is uncertainty in identifying a Control Agency, the Emergency Management Commissioner or relevant emergency response coordinator (RERC, MERC, or IERC) will determine the Control Agency. The Control Agency will generally be the agency with a role or responsibility that is most closely aligned to the emergency.

The Control Agency may change as the emergency progresses or is clarified. The Control Agency is based on the major effect of the incident/event rather than the cause and control can be transferred when the major effect of the incident/event reduces and another effect becomes more important.

**Response support agencies** provide services, personnel, or material to support or assist a control and/or a coordination agency and/or members of the public.

*A full list of Control and Support Agencies can be found in the* [*SEMP*](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp/roles-and-responsibilities/response)*.*

## Emergency Management Teams (incident and regional)

The function of the Emergency Management Team (EMT) at both incident and regional level is to support the Incident Controller in determining and implementing appropriate Incident Management strategies for the emergency.

If an emergency requires a response by more than one agency, the Incident Controller is responsible for forming the EMT.

The EMT consists of:

* Incident Controller
* Support and recovery functional agency commanders (or their representatives)
* Emergency Response Coordinator (or representative)
* Other relevant persons as required

## Legislated roles – Municipal Councils

At the municipal level the *Emergency Management Act* details 3 roles that must be appointed or delegated:

**Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)** Part 5 s56 – appointed by the Chief Commissioner of Police and has a role in the allocation of resources

**Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)** s59G - has a role in liaising with agencies and assisting in the coordination of emergency management activities

**Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)** s59H – coordination of resources for recovery and assisting the MEMO to plan and prepare for recovery.

## Activation for response

Activation of the MEMP will normally occur as the response to an emergency develops. Usually, Victoria Police or the control agency will contact the MEMO to request activation and resources.

However, the MEMO or MRM can also activate the relief and/or recovery components of the MEMP, if it is deemed these services are immediately required in response to an emergency event, before Victoria Police or another responsible authority has had time to assess the situation.

The MEMO is responsible for notifying the MRM of the potential need for relief and recovery services. Together they will assess the relief and recovery needs of the emergency. In some instances, the Regional Recovery Coordinator may inform the MRM of the need for recovery activities.

## Incident and operations control centres

Provision of ICC functions may in the first instance be conducted at the incident or from an appropriate agency office, Police station or similar facility.

The Emergency Response Coordinator may request activation of an identified ICC. The responsibility for activation of an ICC for a fire incident rests with the Regional Controller (CFA).

Level 3 Incident Control Centres for fire are located at Shepparton (Primary ICC for the cluster of Shepparton and Seymour), Seymour, Mansfield DEECA and Alexandra DEECA offices.

The ICC will likely be in Benalla for flood, storm, or landslide.

The Hume Regional Control Centre (RCC) which covers the Murrindindi Shire is based at the Benalla DEECA offices.

Figure 11: Location of Incident Control Centres

| **LOCATION** | **AGENCY** | **ADDRESS** | **PHONE** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Regional Control Centre (RCC) | Benalla DEECA | 89 Sydney Road Benalla | 5761 1611 |
| Mansfield | DEECA | 128 Highett Street Mansfield | 5733 1200 |
| Alexandra | DEECA | 5 Binns McCraes Road Alexandra | 5722 0200 |
| Benalla | SES | 64 Sydney Road Benalla | 9256 9650 |
| Seymour | CFA | 39 McIntyre Street Seymour | 5735 3100 |
| Shepparton | CFA | 195 Numurkah Road Shepparton | 5833 2400 |
| Wangaratta | CFA | 1 Ely Street Wangaratta | 5720 2300 |

In addition to an Incident Control Centre (ICC), Council may decide to stand up an internal **municipal emergency operation centre** from which relevant personnel coordinate and manage the emergency provision of Council and community resources within the Shire.

In an emergency, Council’s functions are to support the response and emergency communications and manage local relief and recovery. The coordination of the emergency response will be delivered from an Incident Control Centre (ICC) with a Council Emergency Management Liaison Officer (EMLO) to attend the ICC as required. The EMLO will communicate directly with other members of the municipal emergency management group (MEMO, MRM etc) and key staff.

## Evacuation

The EMV Joint Operating Procedure [JSOPJ03.12](https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/JSOP/SOP-J03.12.pdf) is a detailed guideline for evacuations in major emergencies.

The decision to evacuate a locality rest with the Incident Controller in consultation with the Victoria Police. Victoria Police are responsible for the coordination of evacuations in consultation with the Control Agency.

Consideration must be given to the area which is to be evacuated/involved persons relocating, inherent dangers associated with an evacuation, the route to be followed, the means of transport and the location to which evacuees will be asked to attend. VicPol maintains a series of evacuation maps and plans to support decision-making and facilitation of evacuation.

Once the decision to relocate has been made, the MEMO or MRM should be contacted to assist in the implementation of the evacuation/relocation. The MRM will provide advice regarding the most suitable Emergency Relief Centre location and other resources that may be required (e.g. public health, emergency relief considerations or requirements and special needs groups).

The Incident Controller/Control Agency develops and delivers the warning or recommendation to those affected of impending evacuation, including warnings when it is too late to leave – the process of further disseminating this to the community will be assisted by Council.

The MEMO is available to assist with:

* Victoria Police management of traffic flow including provision of information regarding road availability, capacity and safety
* Advice to RRV for road closure lists (public information)
* transport assistance
* potential staging areas or assembly points and other resources that may be required.

Refer to the Appendices for a brief listing of Emergency Relief Centre locations. Details of their features, access and contact arrangements including a site photo are available on EMCOP.

Access to the [Vulnerable Persons Register](https://vpr.crisisworks.com) (VPR) is through the link located in Crisisworks: VicPol and the MRM have access to the VPR for emergency purposes.

## Provision of relief

Emergency relief is a component of response and is the provision of essential and urgent assistance to individuals, families, and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of all emergencies. Council’s level of involvement is dependent on the size of the incident and whether it remains as local coordination or escalates to a regional level. The need for emergency relief is also dependent on an individual’s level of resilience.

Emergency relief can be provided in a variety of locations including at or near the site of an emergency, to communities that become isolated or cut off by an emergency or in an established relief setting, such as an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC).

Emergency relief consists of a number of activities that should be planned for and includes:

* community information
* emergency shelter
* food and water to individuals
* drinking water for households
* food supply continuity
* psychosocial support
* disbursement of material aid (non-food items)
* reconnecting families and friends - ‘Register.Find.Reunite’
* health and first aid
* emergency financial assistance
* animal welfare
* other relief assistance

The delivery of these functions is detailed in Council’s Emergency Relief Centre Operating Guidelines (available to agencies and Council staff on request).

Regarding the coordination of relief and recovery

* Murrindindi Shire Council is responsible for the coordination of relief and recovery within the boundaries of Murrindindi Shire.
* DFFH are responsible for coordination of relief at the regional level
* ERV is responsible for the coordination of recovery at the regional level.
* ERV are responsible for relief and recovery coordination at the State level.

### Capacity and Capability

In the Restricted Appendices, Council attempts to gauge the capacity and capability of Council and the community regarding their ability to deliver relief and recovery services locally.

Capacity and capability have been listed as accurately as possible so that external agencies and other municipalities may be able to gauge when and if Murrindindi Shire Council may call on them for assistance.

## Activation of Relief

It is the Incident Controller’s responsibility to activate emergency relief services with advice from the Emergency Management Team.

The provision of emergency relief services can be activated locally by the MERC, MEMO or MRM at the direction of the Incident Controller.

### Requests for Emergency Relief

Any requests for emergency relief need to be authorised by the MERC. Generally, the MRM will coordinate the delivery of the requests and report back to the MERC, EMV and DFFH as required.

### Relief Escalation – Municipal Level to Regional Level

If the demand for relief exceeds the capacity of council, the RERC should be consulted with a view to request the DFFH to coordinate relief at regional level. To ensure a smooth transition of responsibility, Council should notify DFFH as soon as it becomes apparent an event will exceed its capacity. This does not replace the requirement for the RERC/MERC to monitor the emergency relief situation.

### Who is responsible for paying for relief?

The responsibility for payment of relief is detailed below. Agencies requesting relief should be familiar with these arrangements.

* Murrindindi Shire Council is responsible for relief centre measures provided to emergency-affected persons
* If relief is requested by an agency for its own personnel, that agency will be responsible for costs incurred
* When a control agency requests relief (e.g. catering) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the control agency will be responsible for costs incurred.

### The MEOC

Relief and recovery operations will occur from the Municipal Emergency Operations Centre (MEOC) in the meeting room at the Alexandra Council offices (Perkins St) or at a secondary MEOC if required or directed by the MRM. Alternatively a virtual MEOC may be established as required.

## Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs)

An emergency relief centre (ERC) is a building or place established to provide life support and essential needs to persons affected by any emergency (including evacuees). Emergency relief centres are established on a temporary basis to cope with the immediate needs of those affected during the initial response to the emergency. They do not imply any longer-term use of facilities as a location for recovery services*.*

An ERC will only be opened at the request of the Incident Controller.

The following roles may be involved in setting up and operating the centre:

* Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator (MERC)
* Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)
* Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)
* Emergency Relief Centre Manager (ERCM)
* Relief Centre Staff; and
* Other Municipal Council Staff.

For detailed information on setting up an ERC, including role statements for the ERCM and Relief Centre staff, see the ‘ERC Operations Handbook’ (15/21939).

Locations of ERCs are in the Restricted Appendices.

### Services

Both relief and recovery services may be provided at a relief centre. Thus, the provision by relevant agencies of any of the relief or recovery services such as catering, material needs, emergency shelter, grants, the provision of information, temporary accommodation and counselling may occur concurrently.

Irrespective of the relief or recovery services offered or the level of coordination being provided, the overall management responsibility for the centres remains with Murrindindi Shire Council

### ERC Handbook

Murrindindi Shire Council has developed an ERC Operations Handbook for relief centres (15/21939). This describes personnel, facilities and equipment to standardise methodology and procedures. A copy of these procedures is available on Crisisworks.

In support of Councils responsibilities with the management of ERCs, Council has appointed three MRMs, ERC Managers, and recruited and trained Council Officers to perform roles in an ERC when required.

In the event of the requirement for any or all of the functional services of relief the request must be directed through the MERC/MEMO processes who will request the MRM to activate the required functional services. All functional services will operate and report back to the MEMO/MRM.

### ERC Kits

Murrindindi Shire Council has Emergency Relief Centre (ERC) Kits containing equipment immediately required to activate an ERC. The MRM or their delegate is responsible for establishing and maintaining the ERC Kits.

There are three kits – one set of four tubs at each Council Office (Yea, Alexandra and Kinglake).

### Catering

In Murrindindi Shire, Emergency Relief Centre catering will be supplied by the Rapid Relief Team who may also be supported by:

* Salvation Army
* Country Women’s Association
* Country Fire Authority Auxiliary
* Various church groups
* Lions and Rotary clubs
* State Emergency Service Teams
* Other agencies as co-opted.

### Animal Welfare

Council is responsible for coordinating the care of companion animals at ERCs. Other animals such as livestock and wildlife impacted by emergencies may also need containment, food, water, veterinary treatment or humane destruction and disposal. DJPR is responsible for assisting with urgent animal welfare needs.

Murrindindi Shire Council will work alongside DEECA/Department of Agriculture in any required response effort. To that end, Murrindindi Shire Council has developed an Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP). The EAWP is designed to capture Council’s capacity and capability to respond to crises that affect stock and companion animals.

Native animals that are impacted by an emergency are planned for and managed by DEECA.

The EAWP includes standard operating procedures for post emergency stock disposal and identifies triggers for activation of the plan.

The EAWP’s aims are:

* Contribute to enhanced public safety and community resilience through effective planning and management of animals in emergencies, and
* Ensure animals are better considered and protected from suffering during and immediately following emergencies.

### Psychosocial Support

*Psychosocial support: a framework for emergencies (2017)* guides the delivery of psychosocial support in Victoria[[7]](#footnote-7)*.*

Psychosocial support may range from personal support, community information and individual and group counselling, to specialised mental health services.

In an emergency, depending on the scale of the event, the MRM may choose to deploy VCC Emergency Ministries (VCC EM) outreach services. The MRM may also request to DFFH that Nexus Primary Health – Community Health Services be activated to provide support. DFFH has an MOU with Nexus and is therefore responsible for activation.

The VCC Emergency Ministries service includes doorknocking affected residents and producing a report for the MRM on the mental health of affected residents. All VCC EM volunteers and Chaplains have completed psychological first aid training and are equipped to support people affected by trauma as a result of an emergency or disaster.

If people are identified as potentially requiring ongoing support by the VCC EM outreach program, they will notify the MRM. The MRM may request assistance from Nexus through DFFH for ongoing support.

Different groups will have different relief needs, and this is nowhere more evident than in psychosocial support post emergency.

### Legal Aid

[Victoria Legal Aid](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/) is responsible for coordinating support from the legal community to individuals and communities affected by emergencies through [Disaster Legal Help Victoria](http://www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au/) (DLHV). DLHV provides free information through a telephone help line, a website, fact sheets and information kits.

Depending on the nature of the emergency DLHV also provides a legal presence at ERCs and facilitates pro bono legal referrals. The emphasis of services is on resolving disputes between insurance companies and clients.

### Registration of Evacuees

The [Register.Find.Reunite](https://register.redcross.org.au/) Service registers, finds and reunites Families, friends and loved ones after an emergency.

Once activated by Victoria Police, registrations and enquiries can be made at the relief centre with the support of Red Cross personnel or via the Register.Find.Reunite portal with the link available on the Red Cross website from any computer or mobile device with internet access. People can call the Victorian Emergency Enquiry Centre register or enquire over the phone.

The service matches registrations from people affected by the emergency to enquiries from Families or friends searching for news of their loved ones. Once a match has been made, an operator will contact the person who submitted the enquiry.

Victoria Police are responsible for the activation of the Register.Find.Reunite. service and Red Cross are responsible for the operation of the Register.Find.Reunite. service.

### Other ERC Services

Other services may be required at an ERC and are at the discretion of the MRM. These include things like a need for a first aid provider on site, the setup of a Child-Friendly space at the ERC and others as required or directed by DFFH.

## Other Relief Functions

### Replacement of Essential Drinking Water for Households

Locally, Murrindindi Shire Council will coordinate the replacement of fire-contaminated drinking water held in rainwater tanks for communities impacted by fire. If community members believe their tank water has been contaminated during an emergency, they can phone Murrindindi Shire Council on 5772 0333. If required, Council will then have the water tested for contaminants and flush and replace drinking water where necessary.

The Victorian Government Essential Water Replacement Scheme “Guidance Document” (November 2011) states that water authorities will not charge for drinking water used to replace essential water (of which drinking water is a part) contaminated by bushfire response efforts or fire related contaminants. The Guidance Document also states that DEECA will pay for any cartage costs required.

### Replacement of Essential Water Used During Bushfire Fighting Operations

The *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (s30 and s32) provides powers to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to take water from any waterway or any other water supply on public and private land for firefighting purposes.

The Essential Water Replacement Scheme was introduced following the 2006-07 Great Divide Bushfires and was subsequently enacted in following years due to drought conditions across the state. The scheme was put in place for the replacement of essential water used during bushfire operations by Victoria’s fire agencies.

In October 2010, the Victorian Government’s Emergency Management Council endorsed the Essential Water Replacement Scheme as ongoing and is in place regardless of drought conditions. The scheme is implemented as part of the state emergency relief and recovery arrangements outlined in the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria.

Essential water is defined as water required to sustain:

* the health of affected residents and pets;
* the health and productivity of their stock; and
* agricultural and horticultural crops, permanent plantings and intensive industries.

In the event of fire regardless of where it starts, if Essential Water is taken from domestic tanks and stock or irrigation dams for firefighting purposes, water needed for essential use will be replaced (quantity taken) when requested by the Landholder.

Applications for replacement of essential water need to be submitted to DEECA within 3 months of the water being taken.

### Spontaneous Volunteers

Spontaneous volunteers are people that turn up during or after an event willing to help but are not affiliated with any group or club. Traditionally, spontaneous volunteers have been difficult to coordinate for municipalities as they may require training, accommodation, food and close management or supervision.

The MRM will coordinate the management of spontaneous volunteers and may choose to dedicate an officer for this purpose.

### Offers of Assistance

Murrindindi Shire Council will coordinate offers of assistance internally with delegation via the MRM. Crisisworks will be utilised to record and monitor offers of assistance.

In this document, “offers of assistance” is understood to include the following:

* Corporate offers of assistance directed to local government (this includes financial, goods, services and offers of staff time).
* Public offers of assistance directed to government (this includes financial, goods and services) – Note that goods will be managed as per 3.13 above.
* Members of the public offering to volunteer their time to assist affected communities, government or non-government organisations involved in the response and recovery effort
* Community groups or organisations offering to assist affected communities, government or non-government organisations with the response and recovery effort

The role of Council in managing offers of assistance is to:

* Facilitate activities that assist in the coordination of offers of services
* Direct offers of volunteering through appropriate channels
* Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the registration, referral, training and health and safety of volunteers and community groups (see 3.15 below)
* Provide consistent and accurate messages to the public.

The following standards apply to the coordination of offers of assistance:

* Offers of assistance are channelled through the customer service centres.
* There is an integrated system for coordinating offers of assistance via Crisisworks.
* There are clear and consistent messages and all dealings with affected people and local communities are undertaken in a courteous, helpful and ethical manner.

All offers of assistance are handled in a timely and effective manner.

### Material Needs

The agency responsible for the coordination of material needs in Murrindindi Shire Council is the combined Rotary Clubs of Murrindindi Shire. They may be assisted by:

* Murrindindi Shire Council
* Salvation Army
* St Vincent de Paul Society
* Service Clubs
* CWA
* Church groups
* SES
* Others as required.

Murrindindi Shire Council requests, as per the *National guidelines for managing donated goods[[8]](#footnote-8)*, for monetary donations over donated goods. Material donations are discouraged as financial donations can provide a greater level of choice can more accurately target any identified needs and help circulate money in affected communities. When communicating during an emergency, Murrindindi Shire Council will endeavour to promote the donation of money over material aid.

Murrindindi Shire Council has limited capacity to be able to coordinate donated goods and services. As a result, Council has developed an agreement for the local Rotary Clubs of Murrindindi Shire to coordinate donated goods and services in the Shire.

### Accommodation

Individuals are encouraged to make their own accommodation arrangements if they cannot return to their homes. Friends, families, community, business, or government could provide emergency shelter if needed.

Post emergency accommodation comes in two forms: ‘Emergency Accommodation’ and ‘Longer Term Accommodation’.

Municipal councils can offer emergency accommodation at relief centres or alternative locations. The DFFH can arrange emergency shelter and accommodation when requested by municipal councils as part of the escalation process.

It is advised however for people to stay with relatives and friends if their residence is impacted or if they are isolated from their residence because of an emergency. By surrounding themselves with friends and families, impacted persons have a better chance of recovering more fully from an impact.

## Relief services providers

The following table details the providers of relief services to Murrindindi Shire and briefly details their functions and capacity to deliver ongoing services.

Figure 12: Relief Service Provision – Lead Agency Summary

| **ITEM** | **LEAD AGENCY** | **FUNCTION** | **CAPACITY** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Emergency relief centre coordination | Council | Open and administer an ERC to provide basic needs  Community information  Support services required logged into Crisisworks  Refer ERC list in the MEMP appendices for details of facilities | Operating within 2 hours  Staffing – 24 hours then require external support  Refer ERC Operating Procedures |
| Community information | IC  Council | Refer Council’s Emergency Communications Plan | Mainly during business hours  Can be sourced through EMV 24/7 |
| Emergency shelter | Council  DFFH | Ideally support people to stay with friends or family or in commercial accommodation.  Temporary bedding sourced through Salvation Army at ERC | Salvation Army can provide bedding at ERCs. Approx 2.5 hour response time (from Benalla) Ben Anderson. Can draw on other regional resources |
| Food and water in an ERC and to individuals | Council  Rapid Relief Team | At regional and state levels, Red Cross coordinates food and water and provides support at the local level when requested.  However, in Murrindindi Shire, food at an ERC will be provided by Rapid Relief Team with back-up provided by Australian Red Cross | Red Cross - Major event >1,000 meals/emergency food parcels within 12 hours. Likely done in partnership with Foodbank.  Most ERCs have commercial kitchens and suitably qualified local volunteers that can be mobilised for catering purposes. MOUs are currently being prepared on this matter.  Many local businesses will also assist with catering for an ERC and surveys have been prepared to confirm capacity.  Rapid Relief Team (Lilydale Region) have confirmed their availability to provide food relief either via mobile trailers or utilising available kitchens in the designated ERCs. |
| Drinking water to households | Goulburn Valley Water | Provision of drinking water for the community | Various townships with reticulated water supplies have varying periods of supply ranging from 16hrs to over 24 hrs supply. (refer section 2.11)  Provision of temporary drinking water through distribution points (location to be determined) organised by GVW  For rural communities reliant on tank water, the Dept of Health have issued guidelines on pre- and post-fire actions including disconnection of downpipes, roof cleaning, disinfection and reconnection of downpipes. |
| Disbursement of material aid | Combined Rotary Clubs of Murrindindi Shire,  Salvation Army | Provide essential material aid (non-food items) to emergency affected persons including clothing, bedding and other personal requisites. | Limited local aid possible although State aid available.  Also support from Salvation Army and donated goods (managed by Council)  Volunteers will be required to manage donations of material goods although establishment of a relief fund for cash donations is preferred. |
| Reconnecting family and friends | Victoria Police/  Red Cross | Operate  Register.Find.Reunite program  Undertaken in ERCs or online, to reconnect people with family, friends and their communities | Red Cross - full team/contingent at an ERC within 3 hours of a request being received from Council, although this cannot be guaranteed as the impacts of the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic continue to be felt.  Council staff/volunteers are available to completion of Personal Identification Forms in absence of Red Cross |
| Emergency financial assistance | DFFH | Information and access to financial information and assistance.  Administer relief payments through the Personal Hardship Assistance Program, to help individuals meet their basic needs | DFFH teams available at an ERC during business hours, extended hours if necessary.  PHAP hotline or online portal may be established  Local welfare groups will also offer support |
| Public appeals | Council | Public appeals and monetary donations are managed and distributed | Council to liaise with appeals coordinator eg Bendigo Bank |
| Child welfare | Council | MRM to coordinate delivery of local services to support children and families immediately post an event in conjunction with DFFH. | Refer ERC Operating Guidelines  DFFH provides regional/state support |
| Animal welfare | DEECA/ AgVic Council | Refer Emergency Animal Welfare Plan and Regional Emergency Animal Welfare Plan | In a large emergency it is likely that Council will need to source additional resource (eg MAV Resource Sharing MOU) to meet demands. |
| Health and medical assistance | Ambulance Victoria | Health Commander to alert hospital and clinics if presentations increase | All ERC staff to be trained in first aid  Emergencies dial 000 |
| Psychosocial Support | VCC  Red Cross | Council to activate and ensure the appropriate, vital psychosocial support services are available in ERCs and on an ongoing basis to individuals and families in the community. | Small local group of VCC volunteers that can be supported through escalation.  Red Cross has the capacity to provide Psychological First Aid at relief centres, recovery centres, and outreach.  Escalate to DFFH if capacity exceeded |
| Volunteers | Council | Coordinate volunteers to assist with relief and recovery services  Manage spontaneous volunteers | Council volunteer coordinator limited to business hours  MRM to liaise with the Council’s Volunteer Coordinator as to the opportunities for volunteers – eg household clean-ups, connecting to other recovery organisations (eg Blazeaid)  Refer to Volunteering Victoria website |
| Food continuity | DJPR | Ensure supplies of food available | Alexandra Supermarket has backup generator. Limited food premises have access to backup power.  Main threat would be if transport re-supply routes were cut off.  It is likely that only part of the Shire will become isolated – access to food planned per situation. |

Also refer the [SEMP Roles and Responsibilities Table 11](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp/roles-and-responsibilities/relief-services-and-co-ordination) and [Victorian Preparedness Framework](https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/VictorianPreparednessFrameworkMay2018.pdf)

## Communications

The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for public, stakeholder and government communications for Class 1 emergencies supported by the “line of control”. The line of control refers to the line of supervision for those appointed to perform the control function and this relates to the specific class of emergency. Controllers escalate or provide direction on control issues through the line of control.

In class two emergencies, there are a number of agencies responsible for communication.

All agencies that have a role in these arrangements are responsible for the provision of their own communications systems during emergencies. Any agency requiring communications will put their request to the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator.

### Telephone Communications

The land line network will be the initial and primary means of communication in the event of an emergency and should be utilised to capacity where possible. However, it is important to note that with the role out of NBN infrastructure now mostly complete, landlines and internet will cease working (excluding satellite services) across the municipality when there is a power outage. There are some options for battery back-up phones, or if your house or business has a generator but once power is out to a node or the telephone exchange, the traditional copper or fibre-based landlines will not work even if you have a generator.

Mobile telephone towers in Murrindindi Shire all have battery backups. These will generally last for around 12 hours if the power goes out. Once this time has passed the towers will cease working unless a generator can be transported to the site and plugged in. If the emergency prevents a generator being brought to a site, mobile phone service will not be able to be restored. Therefore, mobile phones cannot be relied upon to work if the power is out for more than 12 hours.

During recent storms in June and October 2021, power was cut to communities for significant amounts of time. During June this was over two weeks for some communities and during October, up to a week. Neither the mobile or landline networks worked in impacted areas, resulting in a near total lack of communication in and out of impacted communities.

One form of communication infrastructure that was still operative during the storms was the AM/FM radio network. The radio network relies on towers across the municipality – however, these all have either long term batteries or generators installed on site and allow uninterrupted transmissions.

With the reliability of the AM/FM radio network it is essential that everyone in the municipality have a back-up, battery powered radio in their emergency kit. In the instance that power does go out, turning on the radio to their emergency broadcaster (ABC or UGFM) will still allow people to maintain a form of situational awareness. A car radio may also be used.

### Communications Resources

The following organisations have communications facilities and resources which may be available in an emergency:

* VicSES
* CFA
* UGFM – Radio Murrindindi
* WICEN
* Murrindindi Shire Council

### Crisisworks

Crisisworks is the emergency management software program that Murrindindi Shire Council and majority of other Victorian municipalities’ use during an emergency response, relief and recovery activities, in recording decisions made and information distributed.

Only authorised persons may access Crisisworks. To access Crisisworks, MEMPC members and emergency agency representatives need to register their interest with the MEMPC Executive Officer ([mempc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au](mailto:mempc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au)) .

The MEMO will record all requests in Crisisworks and note if they are approved by the MERC. Crisisworks will also be used to track the relief and recovery space by the MRM (eg: status of relief centres, information distributed etc)

### Public Information and Warnings

Public Information Officers (control agency) will manage the provision of public information and warnings on behalf of the incident controller and all responding agencies.

The EMV Joint Operating Procedure [JSOPJ04.01](https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/JSOP/SOP-J04.01.pdf) is a detailed guideline for developing and distributing public information and warnings.

Emergency warnings and information assist the community to make informed decisions about their safety. Warnings for actual or potential major emergencies will be issued using several mediums, which could include but are not limited to:

* [VicEmergency](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) website
* VicEmergency or relevant agency social media feeds
* VicEmergency app
* Incident control agency website and social media feeds
* Voice and SMS phone messaging through the use of the Emergency Alert tool
* Relevant emergency information phone lines
* Emergency broadcasters, using the standard emergency warning signal (SEWS) where relevant
* Community alert sirens

The VicEmergency website carries extensive, incident specific information as well as being a conduit for emergency warnings. Council and all agencies should support the dissemination of warnings and public information issued by the Incident Controller and should be forwarded through local established communications channels which include:

* Websites
* Social media pages and channels
* Networks and email groups
* Community radio
* Local newspaper and newsletters
* Community meetings
* Flyers on noticeboards
* Community groups and community leaders

As lead agency for local relief and recovery, Council has a role in developing and disseminating relief and recovery information.

Murrindindi Shire Council understands the importance of timely, accurate and consistent public information before, during and after an emergency incident. As such the Murrindindi Shire Council’s Communications Team will work with the EMT, Control Agencies and community to relay information to help minimise the impact to life and the community where possible.

## Local response arrangements and responsible agencies

Emergency management roles and functions in this plan are in accordance the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp).

**All resource requests must be lodged via the MERC.**

### Murrindindi Shire Council Resource Requests - MEMO

Municipal resources should be used in the first instance, prior to engaging private contractors. Responsibility for the management of resources rests with the MEMO.

Requests for any resources, including those external to Council, need to be made through the MERC in the first instance. The MEMO will not authorise any requests that have come through alternate means – every request has to go through the MERC.

### Murrindindi Shire Council Plant and Equipment - Requests

A list of plant and equipment held by the Council and preferred contractors utilised by the Council in an emergency are available on [Crisisworks](https://murrindindi.crisisworks.com/) for MEMPC members or emergency agency representatives.

These lists are maintained by the MEMO.

### Resources Not Under the Control of Council

Through the MERC and then MEMO, an incident controller may request resources that do not directly fall under the control of council. This could include contractors that Council use or any other supplementary resource as deemed necessary by an Incident Controller.

All requests for resources not under the Control of Council will be paid for by the requesting agency.

### Clearance of Drains/Roads, Road Closures and Alternative Routes

On roads managed by Murrindindi Shire Council, Council road crews (or potentially external contractors) are able to clear blocked road drains or remove fallen trees from roads as required. In an emergency, the MEMO directs all road crew activities.

Generally, the MEMO must be consulted before municipal roads are closed in an emergency. If this is not possible due to a threatening situation where lives are potentially at risk, the Incident controller must notify the MEMO as soon as practicable that a Council road has been closed.

As a road manager, Council must make certain roads it manages are safe before being reopened after an emergency. Consultation with the MEMO is required before re-opening any Council managed roads.

The MEMO is also responsible for determining alternative routes on Council roads when and if required in an emergency. The MEMO will work with the responsible unit and under the direction of the Incident Controller in the determination of these routes.

### Transport and Engineering

The MEMO is responsible for all transport and engineering matters where the Council is concerned. The purpose of the plant, equipment and contractor list (available on Crisisworks) is to detail available transport and engineering resources within the municipality. This includes specialist and technical advice and deployment of those resources which are to be included in the lists and preferred contractors list. All requests for transport and engineering resources are to be directed to the MERC who will request them through the MEMO.

### Request Procedures for Support from MEMO

An agency should exhaust all resources owned or directly within their control prior to requesting assistance from elsewhere. Once exhausted, supplementary resources will be allocated as per the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp).

An agency responding to an emergency, and requiring supplementary resources, can request resources via the MERC at the municipal level. Requests for resources should be provided in a format as decided by the MERC and include the name and position of the person requesting the resources and comprehensive details of the task to be undertaken. Private providers of resources are considered as possible sources of supply at the municipal level. The MERC will active and request the approved resources through the MEMO as described in the SEMP.

As per the SEMP, when a control agency requests services and supplies (for example, catering) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the control agency will be responsible for costs incurred.

## Financial considerations

### Request Hierarchy

Expenditure for municipal resources utilised in emergencies must be authorised by either the MEMO or the MRM and approved by the MERC. If not approved by the MERC, the Council will not be eligible for cost recovery from EMV through the Disaster Funding Recovery Arrangements (DRFA).

### Payment for Requested Resources through MEMO

Where requests are made by the relevant response agency which has exhausted their own resources, Council will be able to supply equipment and supplies through its MEMO at the direction of the MERC. All requests are required to be submitted through the appropriate channels as identified in the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp).

Associated costs of Council owned equipment being utilised by response agencies in the management of an emergency will be absorbed by Council during normal business hours (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). Resource requests for the use Council owned assets, staff and equipment outside of these times will be charged to the requesting agency. This includes response agency requested standby on weekday evenings and any given public holiday or weekend.

Costs associated with sourcing external or privately-owned supplementary emergency response resources for the relevant response agencies will be recovered from the requesting agencies. This includes costs for all equipment, hire, catering and any associated on-costs of that request.

Response agencies should be aware of their financial responsibilities before requesting anything from the Council.

All resource requests will come to the municipality through the appropriate channel; the MERC as stipulated in the SEMP. Any requests made outside of these guidelines will be redirected to the MERC. Requests from response agencies are not to come from an incident control centre directly to the MEMO or any other Council officer. If Council officers or the MEMO receive requests from response agencies, they are to advise the agency to contact the MERC in the first instance.

### Mitigation - Costs

The [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp) summarises the major funding programs which can be accessed for prevention and mitigation purposes. Most are offered on a cost-sharing basis, typically one-third local agency, one-third State and one-third Commonwealth. Some projects may be funded on a 50:50 basis shared by the State and Federal governments.

Please note that all programs are subject to the eligibility criteria specific to that program and there is generally an assessment panel at both the State and Commonwealth levels that will make either recommendations or final decisions on projects

### Financial Arrangements for Response and Recovery

The following summarises financial responsibilities for expenditure on response and recovery activities. As a general rule, whichever agency originates the request for the resources will be responsible for all costs.

### Emergency Payment Responsibilities

The following emergency payment responsibilities apply in Murrindindi Shire:

* Where an agency’s expenditure is in order to fulfil its own responsibilities, that agency is responsible for the cost
* Where one agency requests services and supplies in order to fulfil its own responsibilities as articulated in plans, that agency is responsible for costs incurred
* When a control agency requests services and supplies (for example, catering) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the control agency will be responsible for costs incurred
* Municipal councils are responsible for the cost of emergency relief measures provided to emergency-affected people

### Voluntary Agencies - Costs

Agencies are called upon to provide resources within the limit of their means. Where a volunteer agency expends extraordinary funds providing resources for emergency response and recovery to the extent that it seeks financial reimbursement, it should notify the control agency, or the agency to which it is providing services, at the earliest possible opportunity, preferably before deployment commences.

### State Agencies and Costs

State agencies involved in emergency response and recovery activities as part of their normal activities will initially fund them from their own budgets, including supplies (e.g. catering) purchased from contractors or volunteer agencies. For major emergencies some funding supplementation may be required. This would be the subject of a Government decision at the time, in the context of the agency’s budget position.

### Private Organisations and Costs

Private organisations meet their own expenses incurred in emergency activities.

## Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort) and Fire Refuges

Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) are a place of last resort and do not guarantee safety.  They should only be used if a resident’s Bushfire Plan fails and residents have no other place for shelter.  Welfare facilities will not be made available and the place may not provide shelter from smoke and embers.

Figure 13: NSP Locations – Murrindindi Shire

| **Township** | **Location** | **Address** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Alexandra** | Leckie Park Cricket Oval | Station Street (opposite Lamont Street) Alexandra 3714. |
| **Eildon** | Eildon Basketball Courts Open space | Corner Centre Avenue and Main Street Eildon 3713. |
| **Flowerdale** | Flowerdale Hall | Whittlesea-Yea Road opposite Broadford-Flowerdale Road Flowerdale 3717. |
| **Kinglake West** | Kinglake West Recreation Reserve | Corner of Whittlesea-Kinglake Road and Recreation Road Kinglake West 3757. Entry off Recreation Road |
| **Marysville** | Marysville Community Centre  Located in Gallipoli Park | Falls Road Marysville 3779. |
| **Thornton** | Thornton Recreation Reserve  Oval | Taggerty-Thornton Road (near corner Goulburn Valley Highway) Thornton 3712. |
| **Yarck** | Yarck Recreation Reserve | Corner Yarck Road and Goodear Lane Yarck 3719. Entry off Goodear Lane |
| **Yea** | Yea Skate Park | Station Street (Melba Highway) opposite Mary Street Yea 3717. |

The above list of NSPs was correct at the time of printing and is regularly updated. Location of NSPs can also be found on the [Murrindindi Shire Council](http://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Emergency-Management/Neighbourhood-Safer-Places) or [CFA](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places) Website. NSP locations outside Murrindindi Shire are listed on the CFA website.

## Fire refuges

There are no designated community fire refuges located within the Municipality.

Visit the [CFA](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/community-fire-refuges) fire refuge webpage for more information about the difference between fire refuges and Bushfire Places of Last Resort (formerly known as Neighbourhood Safer Places).

In Victoria there are design, siting and construction regulations for private bushfire shelters, including:

* They must comply with Victorian Building Regulations 2006 and National Construction Code performance requirements
* A building permit must be obtained prior to construction
* A planning permit may be required.

The [CFA](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/private-bushfire-shelters-or-bunkers) webpage on private shelters and bunkers also has further information.

## Staging Areas

Staging areas in Murrindindi Shire are:

1. Yea Saleyards - Flat Lead Road
2. Yea Recreation Reserve – Snodgrass Street
3. Alexandra Showgrounds – Williams Street
4. Kinglake West Recreation Reserve – Recreation Road

## Planning for cross boundary events

Emergency events may cross municipal boundaries, requiring response and recovery activities from two or more local governments.

Victoria Police is the coordinating agency for response and will request the MEMO to contact neighbouring MEMOs when resources are required from outside the municipality.

ERV is the coordinating agency for emergency recovery at the regional level and will work in collaboration with the Councils who have local responsibility.

At a municipal level communication of identified risks across municipally boundaries take place through provision of MEMP plans to municipalities that border the Murrindindi Shire.

Every opportunity is taken to include neighbouring shires in MEMP exercises and to contact those municipalities if new risks are identified that may impact them. Murrindindi Shire Council is a member of the Hume Region Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG) and has representatives regularly attending regional committees for response and recovery.

## Resource sharing protocols

### Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing

Murrindindi Shire Council is a signatory to the Municipal Association of Victoria’s [*Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing*](https://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/emergency-management/protocol-for-inter-council-resource-sharing). The protocol was developed as an agreed position between councils regarding the provision of resources to assist other municipalities with response and recovery tasks during and after emergencies.

The protocol, developed by the MAV, is intended to clarify operations, insurance and reimbursement issues that may arise through municipal resource-sharing arrangements. The protocol is consistent with the concepts and policy guidelines articulated in the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and the Emergency Management Manual Victoria.

Adoption of the protocol by member Councils is voluntary and Councils that commit are asked to recommit every three years.

## Debriefing arrangements

A debrief should take place as soon as practicable after an emergency. The MERC (as per the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/state-emergency-management-plan-semp/roles-and-responsibilities/role-statements/role-statement-victoria-police)) will convene the meeting and all agencies who participated should be represented with a view to assessing the adequacy of the Plan and to recommend any changes. Such meetings should be chaired by the chairperson of the MEMPC.

It may also be appropriate to conduct a separate recovery debrief to address recovery issues. This should be convened and chaired by the MRM.

## Non-major emergencies

Non-major emergencies or single incidents usually affect only one or two residences or businesses and are usually the result of house fire, flood or storm. There may be one or more agencies involved in the response and recovery.

After the response the MRM will be the contact for assistance with such things as emergency accommodation, psychological and material support, pet welfare and access to information.

A [‘Single Incident Brochure’](https://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Emergency-Management/Single-Incident-Relief-Assistance) has been developed which may be handed to affected people by either response or recovery agencies and contains useful information – contact the emergency management staff at Council for copies .

## Impact Assessment

Under the *Emergency Management Act* 2013 (The Act), the Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for ensuring the coordination, collection, collation and reporting of information on the impact of the emergency.

Impact assessment is conducted in the aftermath of a class 1 emergency event to assess the impact to the community and inform government of immediate and longer-term recovery needs.

 Impact assessment must be community focused to ensure the data/information will assist decision making on how to best support impacted communities.

 Victoria uses a three stage process to gather and analyse information following an emergency event. The term impact assessment encompasses all three stages.

* Initial impact assessment (IIA)
* Secondary impact assessment (SIA)
* Post emergency needs assessment (PENA)

Despite three stages being described, impact assessment is not linear and some of the stages may be completed concurrently depending on the size and nature of the emergency event. The stages described must be an evolving continuum or a single process made up of stages which transition as seamlessly as possible.

Figure 14: Impact Assessment procedure summary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TASK** | **WHO** | **NOTES** |
| **INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)** | | |
| Within first 48 hours  Broad, preliminary assessment  May not be accurate – gives indications of extent of damage | Control agency | The starting point for prioritisation of recovery  Risk assessments |
| **SECONDARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA)** | | |
| **Built environment (also environmental health)**  Public and private assessment  Includes roads, roadsides, bridges, drainage, community infrastructure, utilities, structural integrity of commercial/residential properties | MEMO  EHO  MBS  Council teams | Teams to undertake site inspections. Utilise data gathered at ERC  Data entered into Crisisworks via iPads or to Confirm  Utilities will also conduct their own impact assessments and report to IC  DEECA and Parks Vic have responsibility on forest roads  RRV also have responsibility on declared roads – Information to be shared  Building surveyors will be activated to survey damaged houses and report back to Council |
| **Social environment**  Includes psychosocial support, accommodation, health, basic needs | MRM  DFFH | ERC data collection  Home visits (SIA teams to include a counsellor where possible)  Phone calls  Data entered into Crisisworks (Recovery) |
| **Natural environment**  Includes dangerous trees, native animals, restoration and erosion prevention | MEMO  Agencies | Site inspections  Data entered into Confirm (Council roads) |
| **Agriculture**  Includes livestock care and burial, fencing, fodder, water replacement  Impact assessments led by Agriculture Victoria with Council as support agency | Agriculture Victoria  MEMO  MAWC | Site visits  Phone calls  Data entered into Crisisworks Impact Assessment and Recovery modules |
| **POST EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PENA)** | | |
| **Economic**  Assessment of businesses affected and needs | CCIMT  MRM  Eco Dev  DJPR | Face to face and on-line  Meetings  Phone calls |
| Community health and well being | MRM  DFFH | Meetings, social gatherings  Social media  Face to face with community leaders |
| Reporting on cost of restoration and recovery  Early estimations move to detailed costings | MAP  Finance MRM | Crisisworks and internal CONFIRM reports prepared for NDRRA |
| Inform recovery planning | MRM | Recovery committee |

**Also refer Appendix 7**

### Data Capture during Impact Assessments

Council use the impact assessment module of Crisisworks to record data from any impact assessments. This allows field staff to directly input data via phones or tablet computers as required.

The module does not require internet access but an application (through the google play or iTunes stores) is required to be downloaded to a device before it is used in the field.

## Response/Recovery transition

When the response effort begins to transition to a solely recovery phase, a Transition from Response to Recovery Agreement (Transition Agreement) document will be required. The purpose of the document is to assist emergency management agencies involved in coordination of response, relief and recovery arrangements achieve a seamless transition from response to recovery phase following an emergency event.

The scope of the transition agreement includes:

* A description of the event
* Authorisation arrangements
* Coordination and management arrangements
* Transition activities and tasks to ensure continuity of essential community support
* Information and communication arrangements

The decisions relating to the timing of the transition of response to recovery coordination, and whether recovery coordination will be transitioned to local and/or state government), will be impacted by a number of key considerations. These include:

* The nature of the hazard/threat and whether there is a risk of a recurring threat
* The extent of impact on communities, as this may determine if a prolonged transition period needs to be implemented.
* The extent of and known level of loss and damage associated with the incident
* The considerations for the extent of emergency relief required by affected communities
* The considerations for the resources required to coordinate effective recovery arrangements

Generally, the transition should be delayed if:

* significant emergency risks remain
* the powers which are only available to Control Agencies and RSAs personnel during the response phase are still needed
* the effects and consequences of the emergency are not yet adequately known
* affected communities continue to need relief services
* recovery resources are not yet assembled and ready to undertake their roles: recovery coordinators at the relevant tiers must be ready to assume responsibility and have the necessary resources assembled before the transition, so service provision to the community is not interrupted during the transition

The Incident Controller, the Emergency Response Coordinator and Emergency Recovery Coordinator (State and/or Regional/Local Government – MEMO/MRM) will determine the transition structure and handover requirement to fully establish the Recovery Coordination arrangements. In a prolonged campaign incident, a transition period must be determined to allow sufficient time for briefing, resource planning and implementation of immediate recovery services.

The ‘Transition Agreement’ involves specific activities of a short-term nature as recovery coordination requirements evolve and establish.

The key tasks under this agreement include:

* Continuity of emergency relief requirements, if required.
* Coordination of Initial Impact Assessments[[9]](#footnote-9) in the affected communities.
* Identifying resources required to support immediate community recovery requirements including public health and safety.
* Coordination of essential clean-up operations.

Conclusion of Response implies the cessation of the responsibilities of Victoria Police as response co-ordinators. However, during the initial phase of recovery coordination, and on request of the Recovery Coordinator, the Victoria Police and other response agencies will continue to support recovery activities to affected communities.

Response and recovery agencies will work cooperatively during the period of transition and provide each other with appropriate support.

### Termination of Response Activities and Handover of Goods/Facilities

When response activities are nearing completion the MERC in conjunction with the control agency will call together relevant relief and recovery agencies including the MEMO and the MRM, to consult and agree on the timing and process of the response stand down.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for certain facilities and goods obtained under SEMP arrangements during response to be utilised in recovery activities. In these situations, there would be an actual hand over to the Recovery Manager of such facilities and goods. This hand over will occur only after agreement has been reached between response and recovery managers.

Payment for goods and services used in the recovery process is the responsibility of the MRM through the MEMP arrangements.

# Recovery Arrangements

## Introduction

Recovery tier coordination responsibilities are:

* State Recovery Coordination – ERV
* Regional Recovery Coordination – ERV
* Municipal Recovery Coordination – Municipal Councils

This Recovery section:

* Sets out the scope of recovering from disasters in Murrindindi Shire
* Aligns with the principles and objectives articulated in the SEMP and the REMP
* Outlines the agreed roles and responsibilities of participating agencies in both relief and recovery
* Describes the broad services to be provided during recovery by participating agencies
* Gives an overview of the operational aspects of recovery
* Is ‘all hazards’ based.

This section details the management arrangements endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to coordinate community recovery services in the event of an emergency within the Municipality.

All stakeholder agencies and responsible officers should be familiar with these recovery arrangements and related plans identified in this plan.

This section should also be read in conjunction with the detailed [Disaster Recovery Toolkit](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-toolkit-for-local-government) developed by EMV.

Whilst both the relief and recovery arrangements in this MEMP deal with this Municipality, a seamless approach will be implemented where recovery activities need to cross municipal boundaries.

### Recovery Defined

Recovery is defined in the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp) as ‘the assisting of persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve an effective level of functioning’.

According to the SEMP, Municipal Councils are the local lead agency for the coordination of relief and recovery. Councils also have a key role in the maintenance of Public Health as outline in the SEMP.

Part 6 of the Murrindindi Shire Council MEMP has been written with the understanding that recovery must be community focussed, consequence driven and be considered across the four recovery environments:

* social environment – the emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical wellbeing of affected individuals and communities
* built environment – the restoration of essential and community infrastructure
* economic environment – the revitalisation of the affected economy and includes agriculture
* natural environment – the rehabilitation of the affected environment

While the SEMP identifies the four recovery environments listed above, the ERV Recovery Framework has established a fifth recovery environment - Aboriginal Culture and Healing.  This seeks to better address the identified needs of Aboriginal communities affected by emergencies and is consistent with the Victorian Government’s commitments to Aboriginal people.  The Hume REMPC acknowledges that bushfires and other emergencies cause challenges for Aboriginal people and communities and their unique relief and recovery needs.  ERV will work with Aboriginal communities, municipalities and State agencies to maximise opportunities to ensure Aboriginal individuals, families, communities, businesses, and Traditional Owner groups are supported to self-determine appropriate recovery responses.

Murrindindi Shire Council has a restricted appendix to the MEMP that is not a public document. It contains detailed relief and recovery information for the use of Emergency Agencies. Copies of the restricted appendices can be requested from the MEMPC Executive Officer at [mempc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au](mailto:mempc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au)

### Principles

The approach to recovery in Murrindindi Shire is based on the National Principles for Disaster Recovery:

* Understand the context
* Recognise complexity
* Use community-led approaches
* Coordinate all activities
* Communicate effectively
* Recognise and build capacity

### Accessibility for all

The recovery process needs to be tailored to meet the impacted community’s needs:

* Recognise inherent dignity
* Non-discrimination
* Participation and inclusion
* Respect for difference
* Equality of opportunity
* Safety

Barriers to access and inclusion in relief and recovery processes can include:

* Living in rural or remote areas
* Social disadvantage
* Age, functional or physical ability
* Cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD)

**DIVERSITY IS A FACT & INCLUSION IS A CHOICE and Council is committed to being inclusive in the recovery process.**

## Recovery Preparation and Planning

Municipalities have a responsibility to plan for and provide resources from within the municipal area in the event of an emergency, both in response and recovery, in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 2013.*

### Guiding Principles

The following are the guiding principles that underpin all recovery activities and they need to be considered when planning for those elements of an emergency. Agencies working within Murrindindi Shire aim to approach the delivery of their services during an emergency within this framework.

Murrindindi Shire Council, as the coordinating agency, will endeavour to establish structures and work with communities to ensure these principles are met.

The following principles have been considered as part of the development of this plan:

### Community led process

* The active involvement of the community, either directly or indirectly affected, is essential.
* We will recognise differing community needs and work in partnership with the community. We will develop sound processes that are flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of the community.
* We will recognise that different people will be at different stages of their recovery and that decision making involves grief and will take time.
* A diversity of opportunities and choices must be available for people at different states of the grief and recovery process.

### Individuals and communities are resilient

* Individuals, when provided with information about the situation and available services, are able to make informed choices about their recovery. Communities, when supported with information and resources, are able to support and manage their own recovery.

### Levels of recovery operations

* Whilst recovery agencies are committed to the Victorian Emergency Management arrangements, operational and strategic decisions relating to the recovery process will be made through already existing governance procedures.
* Recovery operates at multiple levels of government. All agencies and organisations involved in management, coordination or service delivery will endeavour to undertake activities in a collaborative manner, within the agreed framework.
* Coordination and communication between the community, key agencies and Federal, State and Local Governments will assist in ensuring the success of recovery activities for the affected community.

### Roles of organisations and agencies

* Recovery is not the exclusive domain of any single agency. All agencies and organisations willing to participate have an important role to play.
* Recovery is a whole-of-government and a whole-of-community process.
* The recovery process will build on existing structures and relationships.
* Effective recovery requires the establishment of planning and management arrangements that are understood and accepted by recovery agencies, control agencies and the community.
* Planning and management arrangements are more effective if training programs and exercises have prepared recovery agencies and personnel for their roles.

### Preparation for Recovery

Effective recovery work is based on partnerships and community-led decision-making. It is the preparation before an event that builds these two key aspects. Key recovery partners have been identified and engaged as part of the preparation of this plan (listed in **Section 6.12 and 6.13**). During an emergency event everyone involved should be able to complete their roles successfully and slot directly into their required roles under the guidance of the MRM.

There is an onus of responsibility on communities to identify their key leaders – these are the people who may lead a recovery committee should an event occur that requires one. They are also the people that may be involved in between events working with Council and other agencies and communities to build networks, nurture resilience and develop community all hazards management plans.

Council has a responsibility to support this community resilience, to make strong connections with local communities and to include communities in emergency management and recovery decision-making.

Key to Council’s preparation is a comprehensive training strategy and support for skilled emergency management staff to be better able complete jobs expected of them. This plan is also integrated directly with Council’s Business Continuity Plan to make the transition from emergency to business continuity more effective and efficient.

### A Disaster Resilient Community

It is impractical to plan for recovery without acknowledging the existing resilience of the Murrindindi Shire community and the types of programs already in place that build community strength.

Community resilience can be defined in many ways. Characteristics of disaster resilient communities, individuals and organisations are:

* Functioning well while under stress
* Successful adaptation
* Self-reliance, education and awareness and
* Social capacity

Resilient communities also share the importance of social support systems, such as neighbourhoods and Families networks, social cohesion, mutual interest groups, and mutual self-help groups.

## Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

The MRM will act as the emergency recovery coordinator responsible for emergency relief and recovery services in the Municipality. Council has embedded the position requirements and responsibilities within a permanent role in the organisational structure. Deputy MRMs have been appointed to support the MRM or undertake all roles and responsibilities of the MRM in the event that the MRM is not available or is not on duty.

Responsibilities of the MRM:

* Recovery representative on the MEMPC
* Chair or participant in Recovery Committees, if formed
* In time of an emergency, determine the needs of affected communities in consultation with the Incident Controller, communities and participating agencies
* Coordinate municipal resources in delivering relief services (in partnership with the MEMO, key organisations, agencies and community)
* Manage and coordinate the community recovery functions
* Determine the public information and advice requirements and ensure the Communications Plan is activated
* Coordinate SIA/PENA.

## Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)

The MEMO will support the MRM in the delivery of relief services and recovery planning. Recovery responsibilities of the MEMO:

* Provision of resources for relief and recovery
* Ensure the MRM and any stakeholders are kept informed and up to date
* Ensure the MRM has the most recent impact assessment data on hand
* Coordinate the infrastructure component of SIA

Agencies including ERV, DHHF, Red Cross, Victorian Council of Churches, Agriculture Victoria also have roles and responsibilities for recovery as per the [SEMP](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/semp/roles-and-responsibilities/recovery-co-ordination) and local arrangements.

## Recovery responsibilities of the MEMPC

The role and responsibilities of the MEMPC as a whole may include:

* Develop, exercise, evaluate and review the Recovery Section of the MEMP
* Understand the roles and responsibilities across government and non-government participating agencies and ensure capacity of these agencies to deliver their services
* Raise community awareness in the value of being prepared for emergencies and the importance of preventative action wherever possible during the recovery process
* Assist with relief and recovery communications as required

## Crisisworks Recovery Module

Using the Recovery module within [Crisisworks](https://murrindindi.crisisworks.com/public) enables the tracking of affected people and property, management of agency referrals, caseworker assignment and detailed reporting of both persons and cases. Crisisworks also enables data capture at emergency relief centres.

Accessing Crisisworks requires a log-in – contact Council’s Emergency Management Officer for access.

## Recovery committees

Recovery committees may be established as determined by the MRM in discussions with agency partners including ERV. Membership of a Community Recovery Committee typically consists of:

* Mayor (Chair)
* CEO or nominated Director(s)
* Community and business representatives
* Representatives of participating agencies (government and non-government) who have the ability to provide specific services required in the recovery process including Emergency Recovery Victoria
* MRM
* Other Council officers involved in the delivery of recovery functions
* Councillor(s)
* Cultural representatives
* Representatives for vulnerable sectors including youth, aged, disability

A Community Recovery Committee:

* Develops and regularly reviews and updates a Community Recovery Plan including actions
* May make recommendations as to the establishment of recovery hubs (one stop shops)
* Provides leadership for the community in recovery
* Provides a forum for diverse community opinions and concerns from affected area
* Reviews all impact assessment data in the formulation of Recovery actions
* Receives relevant information and data from the community and other stakeholders – including community values and priorities
* Identifies the issues arising from the impact of the emergency on individuals, families and communities and prioritises them for action
* Promotes government/non-government agency/community collaboration
* Monitors the overall progress of the recovery in the affected community and liaise, consult and negotiate on behalf of affected communities, with recovery agencies and the State Government as required
* Ensures communication strategies are appropriate to the situation and community
* Creates a feedback loop using committee members, social, informal and formal networks to connect community, government and non-government agencies

Other organisations may play a vital role in the community recovery process and whilst they may not be members of a Recovery committee, their contribution to the work of the committee will be important. This may include local service clubs, businesses, small local community agencies and regional community services and volunteer organisations.

## Recovery communications

In the early stages of recovery, announcements from response, relief and recovery agencies must be coordinated and consistent with each other.

Red Cross publishes comprehensive [recovery support resources](https://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/resources/resources-for-agencies/#recover) which is should be used to guide community engagement and communications in recovery including the management of any temporary memorial sites.

Council has its own Community Engagement Policy, Media Policy and Protocols which guide Council’s communication activities.

## Engagement of community in recovery

A vital component in empowering a community in its recovery process is the engagement and involvement of the affected community in planning and participating in the process of recovery. This may be undertaken in a variety of ways depending on the scale of the event and community interest and ability.

The form of any community recovery frameworks will vary greatly. Each community is different, as is every emergency, and the structure will start to emerge during the early recovery phase. It is crucial that there is strong community representation on any committees formed, and the community must be listened to and supported to develop and drive their own recovery plans with agencies poised to support them during this process.

At all times it will be important to ensure that all members of the affected community are provided the opportunity to give feedback and express their opinions in relation to the recovery process. This will enable Council and agencies to ensure that processes allow for a broad and diverse community input.

Social and creative initiatives that emerge can play a significant role in community recovery and these should be supported both physically and financially and over the medium to long term as required.

If the emergency event does not require the formation of a recovery committee, the MRM will liaise directly with the affected community member(s) and relevant agencies and inform/update both the CCIMT and the MEMPC.

## Recovery plans and community continuity

Recovery plans identify strategies and interventions specific to the affected communities which should build upon recovery planning that is undertaken prior to an event occurring. The plans establish priorities and communicate the immediate, medium and long-term goals for recovery accompanied by action plans. These goals are reviewed regularly throughout the recovery process.

The Red Cross has a range of [recovery support resources](https://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/resources/resources-for-agencies/#recover) available on their website.

## Recovery environments

The recovery process should be undertaken within the five recovery environments that meet the needs of an impacted community:

* Social environment
* Built environment
* Natural environment
* Economic environment
* Aboriginal culture and heritage

Each recovery environment does not stand in isolation, will overlap with other areas, and will require specialist skill requirements to address issues arising after impact.

The following briefly details the elements relevant to each functional area of recovery:

### Social environment

The social recovery environment addresses the impact an emergency could have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities. A list of activities that may contribute to social recovery together with agency responsibilities for the activities are listed below.

* Support for individuals (including service coordination and case support)
* Accessing information
* Financial assistance
* Health, wellbeing and safety
* Interim and temporary accommodation
* Psychosocial support (including counselling and advocacy)
* Targeted recovery programs for the bereaved; men and women; children and youth; vulnerable groups; and displaced and dispersed people
* Community programs
* Creative recovery programs
* Community engagement (including sponsorship and advocacy)
* Community recovery committees
* Recovery centres (location(s) and staffing)
* Community service hubs (location(s) and staffing)

### Built environment

Infrastructure assists individuals and communities in the management of their daily lives and underpins the ability of private and public community services to function. If essential infrastructure and services are affected by an emergency its restoration is considered a priority to ensure that response, relief and recovery activities are not compromised, and agencies and organisations are able to effectively deliver services for affected individuals and communities.

Local infrastructure may also form an important part of community identity and connectedness. For example, some public buildings have an important symbolic role, and their loss can have a severe negative impact on community morale.

Initial assessments of impacts on essential infrastructure and services should be coordinated at the local level by the relevant agency (eg RRV) or municipal council.

Community recovery is underpinned by the restoration of critical infrastructure and services (electricity, gas, water and sewerage), as well as communication and transport links. These in turn enable essential business services, such as banking, education, health and retail trade to be returned.

The delivery of the following activities/functions may have to be addressed:

* Impact assessments including damaged buildings
* Clean up and demolition of damaged structures (including removal, transport and disposal
* Building advice and information
* Essential utilities and services (including banking, education, and health)
* Critical infrastructure (including water, electricity, gas and telecommunications)
* Communications (including telephone, mobile, radio, internet and cable)
* Roads and transport (including public transport, arterial routes, supply chains and bridges)
* Water and wastewater (including drinking water and sewerage)
* Waste and pollution (including garbage)
* Community and public buildings and assets (including schools, childcare, places of spiritual worship, recreation facilities and entertainment venues)

Restoration of critical infrastructure must be undertaken with an awareness of the needs of vulnerable individuals and communities. In restoring infrastructure, responsible agencies should:

* Understand the community’s priorities
* Keep the community informed of recovery progress
* Wherever possible, restore to a better standard.

### Natural environment

Recovery of the natural environment aims to improve air quality, water quality (including catchment management), land degradation and contamination and flora and fauna through:

* Protecting water quality and supply
* Controlling and preventing erosion
* Protecting threatened habitats (including controlling the spread of invasive species)
* Surveying and protecting threatened species (including bird, marsupial, aquatic and plant species
* Surveying and protecting aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
* Regenerating forests (including for ecological purposes and future timber use)
* Restoring public land (such as walking tracks, fencing, and recreational and visitor facilities)
* Surveying and protecting sites of cultural heritage significance

### Economic environment (including agriculture)

Economic recovery re-establishes economic wellbeing and relieves financial hardships in the affected community including primary producers, local businesses, and the tourism industry.

This may involve initiatives that will provide:

* Local economic sustainability
* Support for individuals and households
* Support for businesses (including information and advice)
* Business continuity planning
* Promotion of local employment opportunities
* Supporting local tourism
* Monitoring broader economic impacts and coordinating responses

The agricultural industry is often impacted by natural disasters and may require specific attention. Assistance may include:

* Animal welfare (including livestock and companion animals)
* Loss and damage assessment (for Farming, Rural Activity, Rural Conservation and Green Wedges Zones)
* Needs referral and case management
* Emergency fodder
* Restoring damaged fencing (including private, bordering parks and as a result of emergency response)
* Wellbeing and economic recovery of rural communities
* Rehabilitation of productive land

### Aboriginal culture and healing

In practice, this newly identified 5th environment means a community-led approach working with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Community Organisations to prioritise culture, address trauma, support healing, promote cultural safety and transfer power and resources to communities and addresses:

1. Social Recovery in cultural context, includes a deep connection to country
2. Access to country to perform healing ceremonies
3. Culturally safe temporary accommodation, preferably near country with community
4. Cultural Heritage Sites considered during recovery of natural environment
5. Inclusion in community recovery activities where Traditional Custodians or their country is impacted to ensure culturally sensitive activities can occur.

The fifth environment is threaded through Environments 1 – 4 detailed above to ensure Aboriginal Culture and Healing are considered across all aspects of recovery.

## Recovery services and providers

Legend for table 15:

Ag Vic Agriculture Victoria (DJPR)

DEECA Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

DET Department of Education and Training

DFFH Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

DJPR Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions

DPC Department of Premier and Cabinet

DTF Department of Treasury and Finance

EPA Environment Protection Agency

ERV Emergency Recovery Victoria

GBCMA Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

MSC Murrindindi Shire Council

PV Parks Victoria

TLaWC Taungurung Lands and Waters Council

VBA Victorian Building Authority

VCC Victorian Council of Churches

## Recovery Services

Figure 15: Recovery Service Provision

| **RECOVERY SERVICE** | **AGENCY** | **ARRANGEMENT** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT | | |
| Accommodation (temporary) | MSC  DFFH | Short term commercial beds arranged by the individual or with support though an ERC  Support securing interim accommodation |
| Aged & Disability Support (vulnerable groups) | MSC  DFFH | Local aged and disability support services to collaborate on support delivery and advocate for needs.  Residents on VPR to receive priority attention. |
| Children’s Services | MSC | Local childcare providers, Maternal & Child Health Service, and Family Day Care to collaborate on and advocate for care/support/relief required for young children |
| Communication/information | MSC | Council to ensure timely communications (Relevant, Clear and Targeted) |
| Community engagement | MSC  ERV  DFFH | Council to work with impacted communities to form Community Recovery Committee(s) and seek to empower and support this committee(s) to lead the recovery of their communities  Community development team to work with individual communities to plan for recovery projects |
| Material goods donations coordination  *Note: The donation of goods is discouraged due the difficulty in matching needs to the goods received and distribution logistics. Alternative fund raising efforts for cash donations is preferred*. | MSC  St V de Paul  Uniting Church | Council to coordinate. (cash donations preferred)  Storage and distribution centres - location to be determined by amount of donations received  Volunteer assistance required |
| Emergency Financial Relief Assistance | DFFH | Individual and household assistance (PHAP)  Emergency re-establishment assistance  Commonwealth government financial assistance  <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/financial-crisis-support> |
| Insurance advice | DTF | Advice and information through a Recovery Centre, over the phone or online |
| Survey and determine suitability for occupancy of damaged buildings | VBA  MSC | Impact assessments  Council Building Surveyors undertake assessments using Crisisworks Recovery module for private dwellings as part of the secondary impact assessment process. Inspections may be requested by impacted residents to Council. |
| Material assistance | Charities | Salvation Army can be called on for further support |
| Psycho-social support | DFFH  Red Cross  VCC | Emotional and spiritual care  Support for bereaved  In the short term, VCC to coordinate personal support and counselling.  DFFH responsible for on-going support |
| Family violence services and information | DFFH  MSC | Referrals to family violence support services |
| Pets - accommodation | MSC | Council Local Laws officers and staff to work with pet owners to find temporary accommodation. Lost pets will be managed by Local Laws through the pound. Likely that community will make arrangements independently through social media |
| Public health & communicable diseases | MSC  DH | EHO to work collaboratively with DH and local medical services to respond to public health issues on an as needs basis. Potential issues include sanitation, disease control and food and water safety. Information available through Recovery Centres, Council, medical centres and online. |
| Schools / Education | DET | Local schools will be supported by Department of Education and Training |
| Translation & interpreting | MSC  DFFH | On an as needs basis.  Note the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District is an additional resource |
| Volunteer management | MSC | The coordination of Spontaneous volunteers is to be considered by the MRM in the context of the post disaster needs (information from IIA or SIA and requests received and logged into Crisisworks) in conjunction with other Council EM partners. For example, offers of accommodation for displaced families, agistment of animals/stock, clean-up volunteers, donated fodder (AgVic), restoration of fencing (BlazeAid). |
| Targeted recovery programs | MSC  DFFH  ERV | Through Recovery Committee  Community development programs and Recovery Officers  Community events, possible State funded community rebuilding programs |
| Appeals and cash donations | DPC  MSC | Media campaign to promote cash donations to a specifically created emergency recovery fund for the community impacted by the disaster event. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | | |
| Impact assessments | Control Agency  MSC | Initial impact assessments (IIA) undertaken by the Control Agency and others to be forwarded to Council to assist with its secondary assessments (SIA) and post emergency needs analysis (PENA). |
| Clean up  Note: Useful to consider in context of private property, public infrastructure, and utility services. | MSC  Utility companies  Community | Urgent. (Emergency works) – provision of safe access following assessment  Assistance for community private property clean-up (eg tip passes, coordination of volunteers in clean-up)  Demolition orders issued by Council’s Building Surveyors (must consider presence of asbestos)  Record all requests for assistance in Crisisworks  Clean-up and Restoration of utility services (water, gas, sewers, communications etc)  Assistance with facilitating community insurance claims  Caution: Restoration of Council’s public assets is subject to strict guidelines under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements signed by the State and Federal Governments and no restoration works can commence without documented evidence and agreement from DTF. |
| Fencing | MSC | Support available through BlazeAid and other volunteer organisations. |
| Utility/infrastructure restoration | Utility companies | Clean-up and Restoration of utility services (water, gas, sewers, communications etc) |
| Roads and transport | MSC  RRV  ARTC | Impact assessment to inform needs.  RRV responsible for declared roads  Council responsible for other public roads within the Murrindindi Shire(refer [Register of Public Roads](https://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/documents/roads-streets-bridges/register-of-public-roads-december-2021.pdf))  ARTC is responsible for the restoration of any damage to railway lines |
| Building advice and information | MSC | Limited advice available through Council.  Engage private building surveyor providers. |
| Critical infrastructure | MSC  Utility providers | Impact assessment to inform needs.  Council to collaborate and support critical infrastructure owners to recover urgently |
| Waste and pollution | MSC  ERV  EPA  DH | Any clean-up following a major disaster must consider the likelihood of the presence of asbestos which may require the appointment of a specialist contractor and requiring a properly licensed landfill site for disposal.  Any decision would be taken between Council (Recovery Committee, if formed) and ERV (State Government).  Flooding events are likely to heighten public health concerns due to the presence of contaminated water from sewerage system overflows. Clear community messaging will be very important to alert the community of the potential health risks. |
| Community and public buildings  Note: Many of these buildings will be owned by Council and/or insured by the Council | MSC | Impact assessment to inform needs and to assist with prioritising works to re-establish.  Recovery committee to have input into the priority for restoration.  Grant applications for upgrading of these buildings may be prepared should funding become available (eg State Government)  Caution: Restoration of Council’s public assets is subject to strict guidelines under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements signed by the State and Federal Governments and no restoration works can commence without documented evidence and agreement from DTF. Any NDRRA funding will be reduced by the amount of insurance funds paid to the Council for the loss of the insured assets. |
| NATURAL ENVIRONMENT | | |
| Environmental water quality | DEECA  GBCMA | Catchment authority and DEECA responsible for environmental water quality. |
| Erosion control – public and private | DJPR  MSC | DJPR overall responsibility for agricultural land recovery. MSC to promote recovery in collaboration with public land managers, DJPR and local landowners. |
| Weed and vermin control | MSC  DEECA | DEECA overall responsibility. MSC to contribute through possible extension or changing priorities of the existing weed and pest animal program. |
| Surveying and protecting threatened habitats and species | DEECA | Methods employed in previous events include the trapping and relocation of threatened species until the environment has recovered and it is safe to return the fish to existing streams. |
| Forest regeneration | DEECA | Implementation of re-seeding programs etc |
| Surveying and protecting sites of cultural heritage significance | DEECA | Council to support DEECA, PV, and Taungurung TLaWC to address cultural heritage damage |

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## Recovery centres

A recovery centre(s) may be established and provides a single point of entry for disaster-affected people for an ‘all agency, all stakeholders’ integrated recovery process – a ‘one-stop-shop’.

A recovery centre provides support to affected communities in the restoration of the emotional, social, economic, and physical wellbeing and facilitates the provision of services. A range of services can be collaboratively based in the same facility and may vary according to the impact of the disaster but usually consists of direct access to, or conduits to:

* Psychological wellbeing services (psychological first aid, personal support services and in some cases, mental health services)
* Temporary and medium-term accommodation
* Environmental health (for example, public health)
* Financial assistance
* Legal and insurance advice
* Case coordination/management service
* Primary industry advice
* Rebuilding advice

The MRM has the role to coordinate establishment and management of a recovery centre. Venues appropriate for establishment of a recovery centre can be found in the list of Emergency Relief Centres (see restricted appendices), although depending on the location of the impacted community alternative sites may be considered in discussions with the community.

## Government recovery support

The Australian and Victorian Governments both offer a range of support across the recovery environments. The support offered may include advice, financial, business, and mental health support.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-victoria>

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help>

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/natural-disaster-financial-assistance>

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-toolkit-for-local-government>

<https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/resources/bushfire-recovery-in-victorias-regions/relief-and-recovery-advice>

## Withdrawal of recovery services and debrief

Recovery is a developmental process that could continue for months, if not years and therefore, planning must address short-, medium- and long-term recovery needs and goals. **TO POST ECOVERY**

Withdrawal of recovery services is a critical aspect of recovery management. A planned withdrawal involving the Recovery Committee and the affected community is crucial so that a void will not be left.

Transitioning to post recovery requires careful consideration and planning and is based on reduced levels of demand and need for such services. Community recovery programs should transition into regular mainstream services and activities which shift the focus from emergency recovery to community renewal and support, whilst still providing services for ongoing needs of affected people.

Once emergency relief and recovery operations have ceased, debriefing of the emergency can occur. A debrief is the forum to discuss what occurred in order to identify good practices and areas for improvement. A debrief of the recovery process should take place at the point where the Recovery Committee’s work is well advanced and the closure of the Recovery Hub, if established is imminent. An interim recovery debrief should occur between 12 months and two years post emergency event for larger scale events.

The MRM, in consultation with the Critical Incident Team (CIT) will convene the Recovery debrief with a member of the CIT to chair the meeting. Members of the Murrindindi MEMPC, Community Recovery Committee and other agencies contributing to the community’s recovery will be invited to attend the debrief.

A report on the Recovery debrief will be provided to the MEMPC, REMPC and the community.

# Appendices

The following appendices are publicly available. There is also a restricted appendix with contact information available to MEMPC members via Crisisworks.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AA Airservices Australia

ADF Australian Defence Force

AFAC Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council

AGCDTF Australian Government Counter Disaster Task Force

AGD Attorney-General’s Department

AIIMS Australian Inter-Service Incident Management System

AMSA Australian Maritime Safety Authority

ANZEMC Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee

ARC Australian Red Cross

ARFF Aviation Rescue and Firefighting (part of Airservices Australia)

ARTC Australian Rail Track Corporation

ATSB Australian Transport Safety Bureau

AusSAR Australian Search and Rescue (part of AMSA)

AV Ambulance Victoria

AVCG Australian Volunteer Coast Guard

BOM Bureau of Meteorology

CERA Community Emergency Risk Assessment

CERM Community Emergency Risk Management

CFA Country Fire Authority

CI Critical Infrastructure

CMA Catchment Management Authority

COAG Council of Australian Governments

COMDISPLAN Commonwealth Government Disaster Response Plan

CWA Country Women’s Association

DACC Defence Assistance to the Civil Community

DJPR Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Agriculture)

DET Department of Education and Training

DEECA Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action

DFACA Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authorities

DFSV Dairy Food Safety Victoria

DH Department of Health

DFFH Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

DOJ Department of Justice

DOT Department of Transport

DPC Department of Premier and Cabinet

DTF Department of Treasury and Finance

DVI Disaster Victim Identification

DRFA Disaster Funding Recovery Arrangements

EA Emergency Alert System

EM Emergency Management

EMA Emergency Management Australia

EMC Emergency Management Commissioner

EMLO Emergency Management Liaison Officer

EmRePSS Emergency Resource Providers Support Scheme

EMS Emergency medical service

EMT Emergency Management Team

EMV Emergency Management Victoria

EOC Emergency Operations Centre

EPA Environment Protection Authority

ERC Emergency Relief Centre

ERCC Emergency response coordination centre

ERDO Emergency response development officer

ERV Emergency Recovery Victoria

ESTA Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority

FERC Field Emergency Response Coordinator

FRV Fire Rescue Victoria

GMCMA Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

GIS Geospatial information system

ICA Insurance Council of Australia

ICC Incident Control Centre

IDRO Insurance Disaster Response Organisation

IFMP Integrated Fire Management Planning

IMS Incident Management System

IGEM Inspector General Emergency Management

IMT Incident Management Team

MAV Municipal Association of Victoria

MEMEG Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group

MEMP Municipal Emergency Management Plan

MEMPC Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

MEOC Municipal Emergency Operations Centre

MERC Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator

MEMO Municipal Emergency Management Officer

MFPO Municipal Fire Prevention Officer

MRM Municipal Recovery Manager

NERAG National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines

PV Parks Victoria

Red Cross Australian Red Cross Victoria

RERC Regional Emergency Response Coordinator

RERCC Regional Emergency Response Coordination Centre

RFCV Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria

RSPCA Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

SCC State Control Centre

SCRC State Crisis and Resilience Council

SEMP State Emergency Management Plan

SEMT State Emergency Management Team

SESC State Emergency Support Centre

SEWS Standard Emergency Warning Signal

TAC Transport Accident Commission

TSV Transport Safety Victoria

USAR Urban Search and Rescue

VBA Victorian Building Authority

VCC EM Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministries

VicPol Victoria Police

VICSES Victoria State Emergency Service

WICEN Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network

## Impact Assessment

Note the EMC has issued Interim Impact Assessment Guidelines which are expected to be finalised by 30 June 2022 and amendments may be required to the MEMP to ensure consistency with the Guidelines.

### Initial Impact Assessment (IIA)

IIA are used during the initial 48 hours of an emergency, to determine the nature and scale of the impact on people, critical infrastructure, community infrastructure, economic, natural, built and agricultural environments.

The IIA also acts as a risk and consequence assessment, however the initial assessment is preliminary and may not always be accurate or comprehensive, necessitating a post or secondary impact assessment.

The Control Agency has overall responsibility for the instigation and management of the IIA process and all organisations involved in the emergency may be tasked to collect, confirm and exchange relevant information to ensure the process is undertaken in a timely manner.

### Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA)

SIA is a subsequent and more holistic assessment of the impact of the event on the community. It examines built and natural environments, social and economic impacts, and resulting community needs. Impact assessment for relief and recovery requires an additional layer of analysis beyond the IIA, which includes a comparison with baseline information.

An adaptive and evidence-based relief and recovery program requires timely, accurate and progressively more comprehensive information about the impact of an emergency on communities.

When assessing private properties and individuals it is extremely important that all departments and agencies involved in the collection of SIA should liaise with the nominated recovery manager/coordinator to ensure information is coordinated and shared and that affected people are not contacted repeatedly.

Murrindindi Shire Council will undertake SIA under the guidance of the EMV and MEMEG [secondary impact assessment guidelines.](https://www.mav.asn.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/27744/Part-1-Secondary-Impact-Assessment-Guidelines.pdf)

**Timeframes**

Finalisation of the SIA will usually occur within four weeks of disaster onset. Ideally teams will be deployed as soon as is safe after the disaster onset. Progressive reports will be provided as data is collected on the SIA.

**Expected Outcome**

SIA builds on the observational information gathered through the IIA stage to provide an additional layer of analysis and evaluation. SIA may:

* Inform the immediate needs of the community
* Set priorities for relief and short-term recovery activities
* Assist in treating identified risks and support consequence management
* Review the data reported in the IIA stage
* Inform the activation of municipal, regional and state recovery plans
* Identify any underlying issues within affected communities that are likely to be impacted by the emergency event (eg economic instability, tourism, employment, transportation, supply chain disruption)
* Inform budget estimates for government
* Provide early estimates of the cost of destroyed assets and infrastructure
* Inform potential activation of State and Commonwealth cost sharing via the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements

**Methodology for Data Gathering**

The preferred approach, where practical, is through multi-disciplinary teams deployed to assess and assist community in a “one stop” concept. For example, a team composition could comprise a counsellor, building surveyor, local laws (animal welfare) officer, Environmental Health Officer and a person from the regional recovery agency. Team composition will change based on the impact.

**Local Implementation**

SIA collection is more detailed than IIA, and the information supports understanding the type and level of assistance needed by affected communities. Various information sources and methodologies are used to collect SIA data. This includes (but is not limited to):

* Multi-disciplinary field assessment teams
* Phone calls to affected communities
* Information collected at relief and recovery centres
* Existing databases (contextual information)
* Reports via media/social media

SIA will have personnel engaging with community members and obtaining impact information in greater detail (protocols should be in place to monitor the wellbeing of these personnel.). To facilitate the SIA process Council, shall as soon as possible:

* Coordinate the survey of the extent of damage indicating an evaluation of financial and material aid needed
* Provide a priority listing for restoration of community needs to assist agencies in the performance of their functions – community involvement in the prioritisation is essential
* Monitor the acquisition and application of financial and material aid needed or made available in the restoration period
* Survey the occupancy of damaged buildings, facilitate the making of a determination and coordinate access to alternative accommodation if required

The MEMO and MRM may co-opt persons within Council, other agencies or the community with the appropriate expertise to assist with the above tasks. Should the emergency extend beyond the municipal boundaries of Murrindindi Shire Council the post impact assessment may be merged with that of the other affected municipalities.

Teams conducting SIA should also consider the provision of psychological first aid by either including an appropriately trained person in the team (ie VCC Emergency Ministries or Red Cross) or providing psychological first aid training to those doing the assessment.

**Reporting**

The MRM is responsible for the preparation and dissemination of reports to all agencies and all parties with an interest in the relief and recovery process. An exception is the restoration of Council’s assets where the Manager Operations will take carriage of this matter.

Within the first 5 business days following an emergency, Council (Manager Operations) will advise the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) if:

* Damage has been sustained to essential public assets
* Council anticipates costs will or have been incurred undertaking an emergency activity

Council will provide revised estimates of damage or eligible costs incurred under Victoria's Natural Disaster Financial Assistance (NDFA) scheme on a regular basis thereafter to DTF. The first revised estimate of damage should be provided within the first two months following the emergency event.

Interim and final reports will be made available to government and the nominated recovery manager/coordinator for the SIA and post emergency needs assessment stages. These reports are a single source document with time and date of release clearly marked. This is to ensure there is no confusion as to the most current and accurate information available at the time.

**Timeframe**

Due to the complex nature of information gathered during the SIA stage, the timeframe for completion can vary from seven days to four weeks from the impact. However, for some emergencies this may be longer.

### Post Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA)

PENA estimates the longer-term psychosocial impacts of a community, displacement of people, cost of destroyed assets, and the changes in the ‘flows’ of an affected economy caused by the destruction of assets and interruption of business. Such assessments inform the medium to longer-term recovery process and build the knowledge base of the total cost of emergencies that informs risk assessment and management.

**Coordination**

The responsibility for coordination of post emergency needs assessment will be dependent on the scale of the emergency. Coordination will be undertaken by the:

* MRM at the local tier
* Regional Recovery Coordinator at the regional tier
* State Relief and Recovery Manager at the state tier

Agencies involved in the post emergency needs assessment must ensure they are undertaking their activities in consultation with the nominated recovery manager/coordinator.

**Analysis**

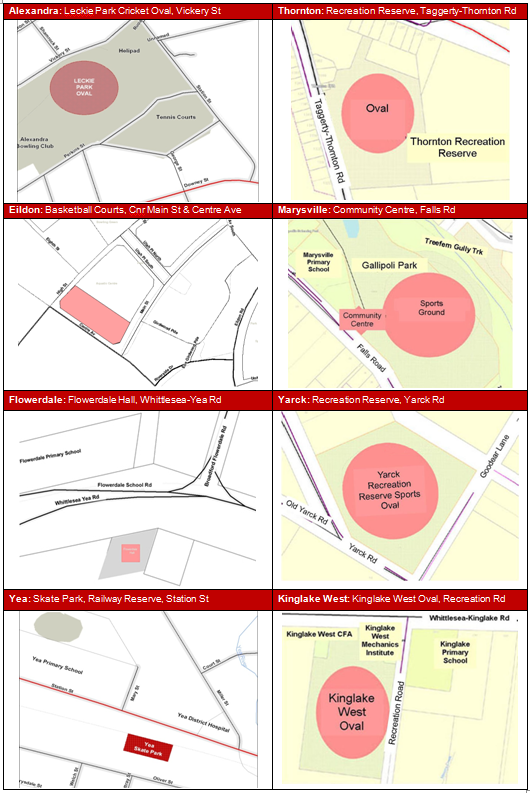
PENA builds on and further estimates costs based on the initial and secondary impact assessment stages. It provides an additional layer of analysis and evaluation.

It is critical those involved in post emergency needs assessment understand what has been completed previously to avoid duplication of tasks and unnecessary burden on the community in seeking information.

The post emergency needs assessment analysis will guide planning that focuses on restoration of public assets, building community resilience and assists in mitigating the impact of future emergencies.

## Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort Maps

Maps on following page



## Restricted Appendices

Restricted appendices contain private information and are not made public. For MEMPC members a copy of the restricted appendices (including contact lists) is available via Crisisworks.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA25620> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ABS SEIFA data 2021 - <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release#key-statistics> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. REMPLAN – economy <https://app.remplan.com.au/murrindindi/economy/trends/unemployment?state=Z820He!dn2ahN1y8HZalmQCvO0e5f4FMSr1RhkSLSGSbI4SzRM> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Council of Australian Governments, 2011, *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, February [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For a complete list of historical fire impacts in Murrindindi Shire, see the *Murrindindi Shire Council Municipal Fire Management Plan* 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For a complete list of historical flood impacts in Murrindindi Shire, see the *Murrindindi Shire Council Flood Emergency Plan 2022*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A copy of the psychosocial support framework can be found at: <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/psychosocial-support-framework-emergencies-pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A copy of the guidelines can be found at: [National guidelines for managing donated goods strengthening the nation's disaster resilience - Catalogue | National Library of Australia (nla.gov.au)](https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/5981335) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. As obtained by reference to Initial Impact Assessment Guidelines December 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)