



Pyrenees Shire Council

HEATWAVE PLAN

2022

Amendment Record.

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Read in conjunction with related to policies and procedures:

Extreme Weather Procedures

Pyrenees Shire Council Emergency Handbook V2

Staff/Contractors Working Outdoor procedures.

Executive Summary

This Pyrenees SC Heatwave Plan is subordinate to the SEMP Extreme Heat Sub plan for Victoria and it should be read in conjunction with Grampian Health Sector Regional plans.

Heat Events are classified as Class 2 emergencies.

Definition: Extreme Heat Events

(Extract from State Emergency Plan 2021)

“Extreme heat events include low-intensity, severe and extreme heatwaves (three or more consecutive days of high temperatures) or one or two days of abnormal high temperatures which would impact the general population and include consequences for essential services, energy and water supply, health and wellbeing and the environment”.

Definition: Excess Heat factor

Heatwaves are calculated by the Excess Heat Factor, using the forecast maximum and minimum temperatures over the next three days. This information is compared to actual temperatures over the previous 30 days, and the long-term climate record for what should be considered hot at the location at that time (Nairn and Fawcett 2013).

This Plan has key objectives:

1. To explain heatwave preparedness/awareness and its links to state and regional plans.
2. Outlines a strategic / mitigation action to minimise the adverse effects of extreme heat related events to members of the community most at risk, according to state and health agencies definitions.
3. The plan outlines communication plans before, during and after an extreme heat event.

Heatwaves have been experienced in the past and are forecast to increase in frequency and intensity in the future. In recent times across Australia, heatwaves in regional towns are amongst the highest ever recorded. The frequency and intensity of hot days and warm nights contributed to Victoria's death rate, predominately from heart attacks, stroke and heat exhaustion.

The impact of changing climatic conditions and the population health risk posed by heatwave conditions has prompted the Victorian Government to initiate heatwave planning measures through a local and regional government platforms that link to the State Plans (Emergency Management Act amendments in 2020).

It is expected that every Council will have a Heatwave Plan in place that supports the objectives of the Health Sectors Regional and State-wide plans.

Adverse health effects of hot weather and heatwaves are largely preventable, and this Heatwave Plan aims to form partnerships with other levels of government and local agencies to increase awareness which builds the resilience of the Pyrenees community. Council and the health agencies ensure that action plans are in place to respond to heatwave predictions based on the BOM calculations.

This plan is written with direct reference to the State Emergency Response Plan Extreme Heat Subplan 2020 and the Heat Health Plan for Victoria Department Health 2021

The Pyrenees SC Heatwave Plan sets out a range of strategies to:

1. Assist to reduce the impact of heat related illness and services to the community by providing information and advice to the community during seasonal times.
2. Alert community members and organisations in relation to heatwave events
Assist the most vulnerable individuals within the community and the Pyrenees SC to maintain wellbeing during heatwave conditions.

The Heatwave Action Plan has three stages of implementation:

Stage 1: Heatwave Alert

Stage 2: Heatwave Response

Stage 3: Recovery and Review

The priority of this heatwave plan is to establish systems for the care of heatwave vulnerable population groups and sectors of the community requiring assistance.

What is a Heatwave?

A heatwave is a period of three or more consecutive days of extreme heat. Heatwaves are likely to increase in frequency and intensity due to climate change. There are 3 types based on intensity, low, severe and extreme.

1.3 Identifying heatwaves

Extreme heat and heatwaves are identified when the average temperature (as forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology) reaches or exceeds the predetermined heat health temperature threshold for a Victorian weather district. The heat health temperature threshold for a weather district is the average daily temperature above which increases in morbidity and mortality have been observed in the past.

The average temperature for any given day is the average of the forecast daily maximum temperature and the forecast overnight temperature (which is the daily minimum for the following day). An example of this calculation is in Figure 1.

Once the average temperature is forecast to reach or exceed the heat health temperature threshold for a specific weather event in Victoria, the Bureau of Meteorology issues a health wave warning through a number of channels. The Chief Health Officer may also issue a *Health alert: Heat health warning* when forecast high maximum and minimum temperatures do not meet the criteria for a Bureau of Meteorology heatwave warning but the Chief Health Officer considers that a heat health risk exists

The Department of Health will also have a health alert system, for all to access, set up for all subscribers to receive the notifications to devices.

At times a notification maybe issued when the Bureau of Meteorology warning has not been activated as the trigger maybe higher temperatures than usual and or other environmental conditions likely to affect human health.

1.4 Impacts of Heatwaves

As temperatures exceed the 'heat health temperature threshold' there will be a range of impacts on Council, staff and the community. Those community members most at risk of extreme heat are:

- of a certain age or life stage
- with particular social or economic circumstances
- experiencing health conditions
- taking medications that may affect how the body reacts to environmental conditions.
- Community members of low socio-economic status

Further information relating to the health impacts of extreme heat is available on the Department Health websites, Council and other local Health Providers site such as Beaufort Skipton and Health services.

A range of potential impacts includes:

- Impact health with potential life threatening for some members of the community.
- Increase in staff absenteeism.
- Substantial population displacement from non-urban areas.
- Decrease in economic activity, especially for street side shops and outdoor markets.
- Disruption to public transport.
- Stress to parks and gardens.
- Short term power blackouts or brown outs.
- Increased demand on medical and community facilities and services.
- Increased probability of fire; and
- An increase in severity of consequences of other emergency events if they transpire.

Although all the potential impacts listed above require the attention of municipal emergency management planners, ***it is the direct impact on the health of council staff and community members who are connected with our services, that is the primary focus of this plan.***

1.5 How it Affects Health

While anyone can be affected by heatwaves, people particularly susceptible include the elderly and very young, people with existing chronic health conditions, low-income households, people who are socially isolated and those who are required to be physically active for employment.

The health impacts of extreme heat and heatwaves can be significant. Extreme heat increases the incidence of illness, most commonly in the form of:

- heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- dehydration
- exacerbation of a pre-existing medical condition
- gastroenteritis, in connection with poor food handling.

Heatstroke is a medical emergency that can result in permanent damage to vital organs, or even death, if not treated immediately.

Extreme heat can also exacerbate pre-existing medical conditions, including heart and kidney disease, asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

Please Note-

Each municipality has their own unique population profile which means the Pyrenees Shire Council will need to understand what that means before identifying all their vulnerable population groups within their municipal boundaries. It also need to understand what its planning responsibilities are.

	Statistic	Pyrenees	Victoria	Australia
At risk populations	Population under 15 years (as % of ERP)	14.6%	18.0%	18.2%
	Population over 65 years (as % of ERP)	27.3%	16.8%	17.2%
	Three or more long-term health conditions (as % of ERP)	5.8%	2.9%	3.0%
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (as % of ERP)	1.9%	1.0%	3.2%
	Non-English speaking household (as % of ERP)	3.2 %	30.2%	24.8%

Section 2: Heatwave Planning Responsibilities

Local Government have the responsibility to their staff and the community to have a plan for heatwaves. This is driven by the following factors;

1. Victorian State legislation requires Councils have plans in place.
2. Councils have a duty of care for those they provide direct support services to, their staff and the broader community.
3. They understand the needs of their communities.
4. Councils manage a local a vulnerable person's list, which is part of the process of activation should an event be forecasted.
5. Community members have a responsibility to understand their risks and to be prepared should an event occur in their area and its council's role to provide them with the information and relevant links to understanding risks and preparedness planning for Heat events.

Section 3: Achieving Heatwave Readiness

Heatwave readiness is achieved through planning and preparation. The BOM, Health agencies and Council broadly provide information across areas of the Grampians when there is a Heat event anticipated.

This section outlines the process the Pyrenees Shire Council has followed to achieve heatwave readiness with the shire's own jurisdiction such as the workplace and its community accessed infrastructure and resources.

3.1 Developing the Heatwave Plan

This plan describes a coordinated response to prevent the adverse effects of extreme heat on their staff and the local community.

In the short term:

- Have arrangements in place to reduce the impact of a heatwave on Council staff and the community accessing council facilities.
- Increase the understanding of heatwave planning and management across Council and community assets.
- Develop partnerships and collaborative arrangements with stakeholders, community service and health providers to better respond to heatwaves; and
- Increase understanding of heatwaves in communities to increase their capacity to respond during a heatwave event.

In the longer term:

- Assist to develop a sustainable behavioural change to minimise the impacts of heatwaves on health and wellbeing of the community through awareness education and communication.
- Promote climate adaption principles in residential and public space planning and development.

To do that, the heatwave planners need to first identify their vulnerable population groups and understand what resources are required to ensure its community knows where and when to act.

3.2 Pyrenees Shire Community Profile

Pyrenees Shire covers a rural area of 3,500 square kilometers, with a population more than 7600 people (Census 2021). The Shire has a number of isolated communities scattered across the shire, with two main towns being Avoca in the north and Beaufort in the south of the shire.

Aging population above the state average percentage

It is predominantly a rural and agricultural community with an aging population, as information from the 2021 Census demonstrates. The major differences in 2021 between the age structure of Pyrenees Shire Council resident population and the Victorian State population were:

Ages	State	Pyrenees Shire
55-59	11.7%	14.7%
60-64	11%	17%
65-69	9.6%	17.5%
70-74	8.8%	15.8%
75-79	6.1%	9.7%
80-84	4.2%	5.2%
85+	4.3%	4.9%

Other at-risk groups within the Pyrenees Shire

- pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies, and young children.
- people who work in hot environments or are physically active outdoors (such as outdoor workers, farmers, and labourers).
- people who live alone or are socially isolated.
- people who have a mental illness, particularly those on medication (antidepressants or antipsychotics).
- people with cognitive impairment who may not be able to identify or communicate their discomfort or need for water.
- people who have trouble moving around (such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs).
- people who are overweight or have medical conditions.
- people of low socioeconomic status; and
- people with low cardiovascular fitness

The Pyrenees SC have shared responsibility for identified vulnerable groups within the community, but there are a range of external agencies which also care for many of these vulnerable groups. This heatwave plan includes a collaborative partnership approach to achieving heatwave readiness.

3.3 Heatwave Stakeholders and Partners

Pyrenees SC departments (internal) and agencies/community organisations (external) that either, have responsibility for people who are vulnerable to heatwave events, or have the capacity to assist with the implementation of the heatwave mitigation strategy and heatwave response include the following:

Internal (Stakeholders)

- Communications.
- Environmental Sustainability.
- Pyrenees Community Care.
- Early Years – Maternal & Child Health, Immunisations, Supported Playgroups.
- Community Safety and Local Laws.
- Public Health.
- Libraries.
- Infrastructure Services.
- Outdoor work staff
- Emergency management staff
- Frontline Services
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Planning and Development Services
- Community Development and Recreation
-

External (Partners)

- Family Day Care.
- Child Care Centres.
- Pre-schools
- Health Services
- Aged Care Providers.
- Community Health Services; and
- Disability Service Providers

Contact information for each stakeholder and partner is kept and maintained by the **'Manager Community Wellbeing', Pyrenees Shire Council**

4.0 Heatwave Mitigation Strategy

The heatwave mitigation strategy aims to minimise the impact of heatwave events upon the vulnerable population groups. This can be achieved by collaboratively undertaking the following actions:

4.1.1 Community Education

The Pyrenees Shire Council will develop and implement a Community Education Plan. This can be done in parallel with existing bushfire preparedness community education activities.

Heatwave information leaflets are to be distributed at community bushfire preparedness forums. This information can also be included in community newsletters and provided to community groups, centres, and partner organisations.

Bureau of Meteorology and Department Health social media messages are supported on councils' communication platforms.

Links to further information about heat and health located on Council's website and social media platforms, encouraging community to download apps and or subscribe to health alerts/warnings.

Support Plans

A range of support plans have been developed for both the Council and its partner organisations. These include:

- Agencies and stakeholders identify heatwave vulnerable clients and develop support plans for coping in heatwave conditions.
- Promote a collaborative approach to developing a plan which supports socially isolated residents who are not connected to formal service networks.

ACTION:

Pyrenees SC have a register of vulnerable residents who will be contacted during a declared Heatwave Event. This register is located with the Pyrenees MRM and authorized staff and Department Health.

Liaison with Skipton /Beaufort Health for services/ information

- Promote the importance of heatwave planning across all council departments so that staff welfare is at the forefront of the heatwave response plan.

ACTION:

Pyrenees SC have developed policies for staff working in heat. The PSC will promote the application of these policies across Council activities during summer months, in management meetings and on the Intranet.

Each outdoor team will have a plan for activities correlating to outdoor temperatures, linked to a risk rating for activities performed.

Risk Management Team have triggers in their processes that will initiate a role out of messaging and directions to all staff.

- Develop organisational capacity to support the heatwave plan implementation.

ACTION:

Managers and relevant staff are trained in the heatwave response plan and allocated positions of responsibility during an event.

Standard OHS practises in place with the implementation of procedures for staff working outdoors in the elements.

Procedure/Policies are to be located on the Councils' Intranet, accessible to all staff and are kept up the date by Risk Management team.

Cooling Centres

A **cooling centre** is an air-conditioned public space set up by local authorities to temporarily deal with the health effects of a heat wave. **Cooling centres** are meant to prevent hyperthermia caused by heat, humidity, and poor air quality.

The Pyrenees SC has identified four community facilities which can function as a cooling centre for residents in need. Information on these facilities can be viewed on Council's website.

Pyrenees SC Contingency Plans

In the event of an emergency, such as a heatwave, it is the role of local government to ensure the continuation of essential services to the community. Ensuring business continuity during heatwaves to protect or support clients, staff and the community is a high priority.

The Pyrenees SC have Business Continuity Plans in place in the event a major or prolonged heatwave event occurs. The impact on Council operations will be significant during a heatwave, especially as Council is likely to be in a high fire danger period when most heatwaves are declared. All departments will be affected by people's willingness and/or ability to go outside and do their job. Council departments that have outdoor staff, provide community services or staff who manage community facilities will be the most at risk.

Power brown outs, where power companies limit power supply to areas of the municipality on a rotating basis to manage exceptionally high demand, are likely and will affect most homes and businesses in an impacted area. An extreme event with prolonged power outages, especially a blackout which is an uncontrolled outage due to infrastructure or system failure, will severely affect everyone.

Staff absenteeism is likely to be one of the primary impacts that are likely to affect the functioning, and hence the business continuity of the Pyrenees SC. This could be due to:

1. Looking after sick or vulnerable relatives or friends.
2. School closure (particularly for staff in bush fire vulnerable areas) requiring parents to look after their children.
3. Heat stress due to heat exposure or lack of sleep during hot nights.
4. Attending to bushfire threats – primarily for staff living in bush fire areas, but may include other responsibilities like CFA volunteers; and
5. Traffic management issues

In an extreme heat event, Business Continuity planning may well be triggered - see documents- Business Continuity Plans. These can be located on the PSC internal network drive:

Town Planning

Pyrenees SC is incorporating heatwave planning into existing plans and encourages community planning groups to assess their local areas and address local heatwave issues. Council will encourage community projects which incorporate elements that reduce the effect of heat on residents and event patrons.

Examples of possible urban environment adaption measures include:

- ☐ Installation of water bottle filling stations and bubble taps.
- ☐ Promotion of thermally protective building codes.
- ☐ Promotion of insulation purchase and installation schemes.
- ☐ Increase of shady areas including shady seating areas and shady parking spaces.
- ☐ Increased tree planting; and
- ☐ Heatwave provisions for staging of major events.

Related Information: the “Big Picture” 2023:

Planning and development of new residences/updating older house systems to encouraging alignment with Government energy efficient products, reduced carbon emissions to reach climate targets, inclusive strategies will include cooling efficiencies. The Government strategies to reduce the effects of heat and bushfire and to reduce energy consumption, requiring building codes to be met, in bushfire prone areas, as identified by the Victorian Builders Authority. By reducing energy consumption, the reduction of carbon emissions links to lessen the climate warming events such as heatwaves.

5.0 Heatwave Communications Strategy

Effective communications are a key component of responding to a heatwave. Raising the level of awareness results in better heat health management, as well as assuring people that the Council is taking effective and informed action. Internal communications are just as important to ensure that staff look after their health and can effectively communicate heat health messages to the community.

This strategy promotes:

- Preparation of materials and communications before heatwaves are likely to occur.
- Heat health messages during summer.
- Heatwave communications during an event.
- Follow up media to encourage people to act over the cooler months.
- Staff information and FAQ's; and
- Internal communication of OH&S procedures and heat policies.

Communicating heat health messages to Council staff and to the community is a critically important part of the communications strategy.

Key messages

Media releases can be written as needs arise but should reinforce the heat health messages promoted by the Department of Health and work in with bushfire messaging. The key messages to promote are:

- **Keep the home cool** (retrofit, close out the heat/open when cooler, utilise the coolest rooms, turn off non-essentials).
 - **Keep out of the heat** (if you must go outside, go early or late in the day, change schedules if needed, move to a cooler place if required e.g., other people's homes, cooler public spaces).
 - **Keep the body cool and hydrated** (light loose clothes, damp cloth or shower, spray water, drink plenty of water).
 - **Help others if you can** (visit or call vulnerable friends and family, volunteer to be the person on a care plan).
 - **Know what to do if you have a health problem** (know danger signs, medication care, what to do in an emergency); and
 - **Know what to do when others feel unwell** (know the danger signs, medication care, what to do in an emergency).
 - **Understand heat events can affect power delivery and transport options.**
- Plan ahead**

The Department of Health also has brochure templates and files containing heat health information for individuals to take care of themselves and look out for family, friends and neighbours who may need help coping with the heat.

Section 6: Pyrenees Heatwave Action Plan

Stage 1: Heatwave Alert

Upon receiving a heat alert notification, the Heatwave Coordinator (MRM) or Deputy MRM will implement the communications plan informing all internal stakeholders and external partners.

Pyrenees Shire Council	External Partners
The Department of Health releases messaging on digital and radio platforms in line with the Heat Health Communication Strategy BOM releases heat wave alerts External agencies will be requested to distribute the information to their staff and network of contacts and place their heat health support plans on standby.	Partner organisations place their heat health support plans on standby.
Team Leaders Pyrenees Community Care, Early Years will ensure that Pyrenees Community Care and Early Years staff and volunteers, who have existing relationships with people vulnerable to heat related illness, place their heat health support plans on standby. <i>Section to be removed end 2023</i>	Partner organisations maintain a regular communication line with the PSC Heatwave Plan
Pyrenees SC staff will be provided with general information to deal with enquiries from the community regarding heatwaves. This will include details of state government websites and contact numbers.	Dept Health and other Health Service Providers such Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, Beaufort/Skipton Health
Pyrenees SC implements 'Heatwave Hotline.' Members of the public will be referred to the Heatwave Coordinator or Environmental Health Officer for more specialised public health information where required.	This is also released by Victoria Govt through the Emergency Vic App for Extreme Heat declared days
Pyrenees SC reviews BOM website reports three times a day via mobile devices using the BOM application.	

Stage 2: Heatwave Response – Threshold Trigger

Pyrenees SC alerts registered organisations of the threshold being ‘triggered’ as per the Communications Plan.

As well as the Heat Health Threshold being exceeded, Pyrenees SC’s Heatwave Plan shall be ‘activated’ in part or in its entirety if any one of the following conditions are met:

- at the request of the lead Agency Health authorities
- at the request of the Police Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)
- at the request of the Council’s Chief Executive Officer through Crisis Management team
- at the request of the MEMO/MRM

In the event of an emergency, such as a heatwave, it is the role of local government to ensure the continuation of essential services to the community. Ensuring business continuity during heatwaves in order to protect or support clients, staff and the community is a high priority.

It is also important council staff operations, and its staff are not unnecessary exposed to heat and health risks while performing their duties.

Upon full activation of this Response Plan, at the earliest opportunity the following will be undertaken:

Pyrenees Shire Council	External Partners
Either the MRM or MEMO will inform Council’s Chief Executive Officer that the Heatwave notification has been received by Dept Health and the plan to be ‘activated.’	Partner organisations implement their heat health support plans.
A meeting of Council’s Emergency Management Group may be convened to plan the steps and decide any actions that may need to be done internally and externally with staff and the community.	MRM, MEMO and or EHO maintain a constant communication line with the Grampians Health agencies. Attending briefings and providing feedback which is then delivered to the PSC Crisis Management Team depending on the scale of the event.
Pyrenees Councils’ community services department will identify vulnerable persons to be contacted and relevant information should be relayed back to MRM.	
Cooling centres activated.	Contractors
Pyrenees SC increases local media campaign and capacity of Council heatwave hotline. Social media and digital platforms updated and links to Agency information for all things Heatwave (providing advice and behavioural guidance and warnings SIGNS).	Victoria Government media releases and links Energy supplier’s media releases and advice
Pyrenees SC implements business continuity plans if required.	Victoria Government releases information broadly about services impacts and challenges

Stage 3: Recovery and Review

Once the heatwave event has abated, the response arrangements are deactivated by the MRM and the recovery and review process is implemented by MRM. The following is undertaken:

Pyrenees Shire Council	External Partners
Pyrenees SC maintains a community response to community members who were most affected, helping restore their emotional and physical wellbeing.	External partners maintain a community response to community members who were most affected, helping restore their emotional and physical wellbeing.
Pyrenees SC l deactivates heatwave response. Messages will be sent to all stakeholders and partners and advised to deactivate heatwave plans.	Instigate education to increase resilience in preparation for future heatwaves.
Local media campaign and council messaging reflects the changes in the risks related to the event	Partners instigate debrief sessions with staff. and a review of the heatwave planning effectiveness. Was the service equipped with sufficient knowledge to fulfill their responsibilities? Identification of gaps or deficits in the service and what worked well is recorded and shared.
Stakeholders debrief/action review session held as required and depending on availability of agency staff	
Instigate education of Pyrenees Community Care staff and clients to increase resilience in preparation for future heatwaves	
Facilitation of an action review sessions within 28 days of the cessation of the heatwave emergency, to review heatwave management outcomes. To be performed by the Risk Management Team	
Actions review outcomes to be updated in the plan as required	
Impact and effectiveness of the plan is reviewed during and after an event or if legislative changes are introduced.	Event outcomes reported to MEMPC relief and Recovery Subcommittee through eh MRM/EMC

Appendix

Community Heatwave Guide

How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat

During extreme heat it is easy to become dehydrated or for your body to overheat. If this happens, you may develop heat cramps, heat exhaustion or even heatstroke. Heatstroke is a medical emergency which can result in permanent damage to your vital organs, or even death, if not treated immediately. Extreme heat can also make existing medical conditions worse.

The best way to survive the heat is to plan for hot days and know what to do when the heat hits. Hot weather can affect anyone, including the young and healthy. However, some people are more at risk than others.

People most at risk:

- are aged over 65 years, especially those living alone
- have a medical condition such as diabetes, kidney disease or mental illness
- are taking medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat such as:
 - allergy medicines (antihistamines)
 - blood pressure and heart medicines (beta-blockers)
 - seizure medicines (anticonvulsants)
 - water pills (diuretics)
 - antidepressants or antipsychotics
- have problematic alcohol or drug use
- have a disability
- have trouble moving around such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs
- pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers
- babies and young children
- are overweight or obese
- work or exercise outdoors
- have recently arrived from cooler climates.

• Coping with the heat

During extreme heat, whether it is one sweltering day or a heatwave, remember:

- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty (if your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather).
- Keep yourself cool by using wet towels, putting your feet in cool water and taking cool (not cold) showers.
- Spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries, cinemas or community centres).
- Block out the sun at home during the day by closing curtains and blinds.
- Open the windows when there is a cool breeze.
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day. If you do have to go outside, wear a hat and sunscreen, and seek shade.

- Cancel or postpone outings. If you absolutely must go out, stay in the shade and take plenty of water with you.
- Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing made from natural fibres like cotton and linen.
- Eat smaller meals more often and cold meals such as salads.
- Make sure food that needs refrigeration is properly stored.
- Avoid heavy activity like sport, renovating and gardening.
- Watch or listen to news reports to find out more information during extreme heat.

• **Practical hot weather resources**

Everyone can be affected by hot weather, and it is important that you take care whenever the temperatures start to rise. A heatwave over a period of days, or even a single day of extreme heat, may cause illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

It is important to stay aware of the weather during summer, especially when there are risks of heatwaves or days of high UV. For more information on weather conditions, see:

- [Victorian seven-day forecast](#) – Bureau of Meteorology
- [UV alert](#) – Cancer Council Victoria

You can also register to get [Heat Health Alerts](#) from the Department of Health & Human Services.

When out enjoying the summer, always remember hot weather can spoil food quickly. Make sure you follow safe food practices to avoid illness.

You can get first aid information and resources from [St John Ambulance](#).

• **Older people and hot weather**

Heat stress may affect older people more than others. People aged 65 years and over may be at increased risk of heat-related illnesses and need particular care in hot weather. Factors that can increase a person's risk include living alone, chronic medical problems and certain medication.

• **Children and hot weather**

Babies and young children should be watched carefully during hot weather. They can quickly lose body fluids through perspiring, which can lead to dehydration. They need to drink regularly, wear light clothing and be kept cool. Never leave babies or young children in cars. The temperature inside parked cars can double within minutes.

• **Active people and hot weather**

Heat and sport or physical activity (exercise) can be a dangerous combination. Heat stress occurs when sweat cannot evaporate fast enough to keep the body sufficiently

cool. You can prevent heat stress during sport by drinking plenty of fluids, taking frequent rest breaks and avoiding exercise during the hottest part of the day.

• **How you can help others**

In extreme heat, check on and help other people who may be at a higher risk of heat-related illness:

- Stay connected with sick or frail friends and family.
- Call them at least once on any extreme heat day.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of water.
- Offer to help family, friends and neighbours who are aged over sixty-five or have an illness by doing shopping or other errands so they can avoid the heat. Take them somewhere cool for the day or have them stay the night if they are unable to stay cool in their home.
- If you observe symptoms of heat-related illness, seek medical help.

Prepare for extreme heat.

You can prepare for extreme heat by:

- Stocking up on food, water and medicines so you don't have to go out in the heat. Visit your doctor to check if changes are needed to your medicines during extreme heat.
- Storing medicines safely at the recommended temperature.
- Checking that your fan or air-conditioner works well. Have your air-conditioner serviced if necessary.
- Looking at the things you can do to make your home cooler such as installing window coverings, shade cloths or external blinds on the sides of the house facing the sun.

Prepare for a power failure.

Power failures can happen during times of extremely hot weather. Some things you can do to prepare for a power failure are:

- Ensure you have a torch, fully charged mobile phone, a battery-operated radio and some spare batteries.
- Stock up on food items that do not require refrigeration or cooking such as tinned fruit and vegetables, tinned meats or fish, bread and fruit.
- Have plenty of drinking water available.
- Stock up on medications and other essential items.
- Consider a battery-operated or handheld fan to assist with cooling.

Where to get help

- In an emergency, call triple zero (000)
- Your doctor – if you, or someone you know, may be suffering from a heat-related illness

- **NURSE-ON-CALL** Tel. **1300 60 60 24** – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- Department of Health – Survive the Heat information in community languages.
- Maternal and Child Health Line, Victoria Tel. **132 229** (24 hours)

The Pyrenees Community Co-ordinator contacts all persons on Pyrenees Shire vulnerable list to advise of cooling options, reminders for hydration and or other actions worth considering such as staying with friends and going into a large town for protection against the weather conditions during the heatwave.

Cooling Centres

A **cooling centre** is an air-conditioned public space set up by local authorities to temporarily deal with the health effects of a heat wave. **Cooling centres** are to assist to prevent hyperthermia caused by heat, humidity, and poor air quality.

The Pyrenees Shire has identified the following cooling centres:

Beaufort Community Resource Centre

- Indoor.
- Air conditioned.
- Water available.
- Tea and coffee making facilities available.
- Within walking distance to shops.
- Internet facilities available; and
- Open business hours only.

Beaufort Swimming Pool

- Outdoor facility.
- Some shaded areas.
- Lifeguards on duty
- Toddler and adult pools; and
- Pool to remain open until 9pm on days of extreme heat.

Avoca Information & Community Centre

- Indoor.
- Air conditioned.
- Water available.
- Tea and coffee making facilities available.
- Within walking distance to shops.
- Internet facilities available; and
- Open business hours only

Avoca Swimming Pool

- Outdoor facility.
- Some shaded areas.
- Lifeguards on duty
- Toddler and adult pools; and
- Pool to remain open until 9pm on days of extreme heat days

RELATED STAFF DOCUMENTS

Council has an Extreme Weather policy and procedure that incorporates heat wave actions and prevention for staff working outdoor and contractors must have operational procedures in place to also protect their staff during as heat wave event, in absence they will be under the same advice as staff.

The regulations under OHS and Local Government Act ensure the workplace has actions and plans in relation to risks related to working in the heat.

In escalating conditions, staff will follow a range of processes activated until all works cease at a given temperature and this will often be a decision of the MRM, CMT or CEO.