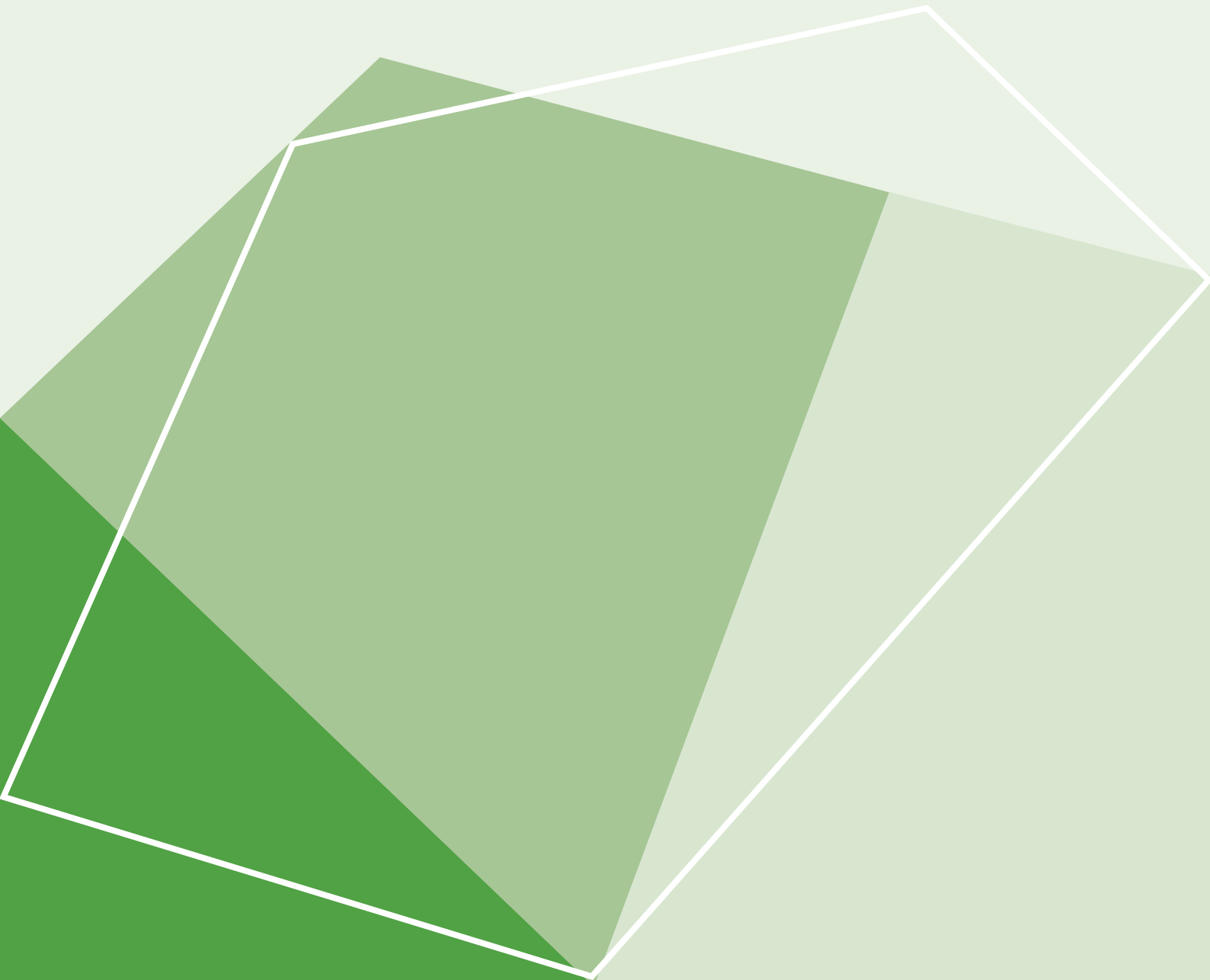




Municipal Heatwave Sub-Plan.

2020-2023



Heatwave Plan

Baw Baw Shire Council

Authorisation and Endorsement

Baw Baw Shire Council is the custodian of this Municipal Heatwave Plan (MHP), as a sub-Plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

This MHP has been produced by a sub-Committee of the Baw Baw Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).

Version Control

Version	Release Date	Author	Changes
2	18 September 2012	R Duffy (MRM)	1 st draft of plan
3	15 August 2019	Ken Jones (DMRM)	Update and modernised plan
3.1	19 November 2019	MEMPC	Endorsed

The MEMPC has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this plan.

Any inaccuracies or omissions should be notified to:

Coordinator Emergency Management

Baw Baw Shire Council

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Part 1 – Introduction

What is a Heatwave Plan?

The Municipal Heatwave Plan (MHP) and accompanying appendices are intended to outline preparations for heatwave and measures to reduce the effects of heatwaves, extreme hot weather events. The plan includes actions that will be undertaken by the MEMPC and our partner organisations to mitigate the impact of a Heatwave event on the community.

Why have a Heatwave Plan?

Australia commonly experiences higher than average temperatures during the summer season. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has predicted that there is likely to be an increase in the frequency and intensity of heatwaves across Victoria, as well as other extreme events like drought, bushfire and flooding. The State of the Climate Report for 2016 presents a summary of temperature, rainfall, tropical cyclone, sea level and greenhouse gas concentration observations over recent years.

Evidence shows that prolonged periods of high temperatures, heatwaves, can contribute to illness and death, particularly in vulnerable population groups. This poses a significant challenge to all communities to ensure that its most vulnerable groups are supported and mitigations are in place to deal with the impact of extreme heat events. Governments and health agencies will be required to respond to the increasingly severe impacts that these extreme heat events are expected to produce.

What is a heatwave?

Although there is no standard definition of a heatwave, it is usually defined as a “period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot weather that can impact on human health, community infrastructure and services”.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has a technical definition of a heatwave. The BoM defines a heatwave as three or more days of unusually high maximum and minimum temperature in any area. The Heat Health Plan for Victoria sets out actions to protect public health during extreme heat. DHHS also helps local government to support members of their communities most at risk of heat-related illness.

History of heatwave events

Since 1950, the number of extreme heat days each year in Australia has been increasing. The nature of heatwaves in Australia is also changing. They are becoming hotter, lasting longer, starting earlier, and occurring more frequently¹.

Year	Event
2019	Hottest Melbourne day (42.8°C) recorded since February 2009.
2014	Victoria experienced its hottest four consecutive days on record with day time temperatures recorded in Melbourne above 41°C and two nights above 27°C.
2009	27-31 January 2009, Victoria experienced Heatwaves with many records set for high day and night time temperatures. 374 persons have their deaths attributed to this heatwave.

The future climate of West Gippsland is expected to be hotter and drier than it is today, according to climate change projections published by the Victorian Government based on research by CSIRO and the BoM. Warming is likely to be greatest in the summer, while the greatest reductions in rainfall are likely to occur in spring.

Although average changes in temperature, rainfall and evaporation will have long term consequences for the region, the impacts of climate change are more likely to be felt through extreme events such as the number of hot days which are projected to double by 2070. Bushfire risk is also expected to increase.

Although average annual and seasonal rainfall is expected to decline slightly, the intensity of heavy daily rainfall is likely to increase in most seasons by five to ten percent. However, fewer rain days are anticipated with more droughts.

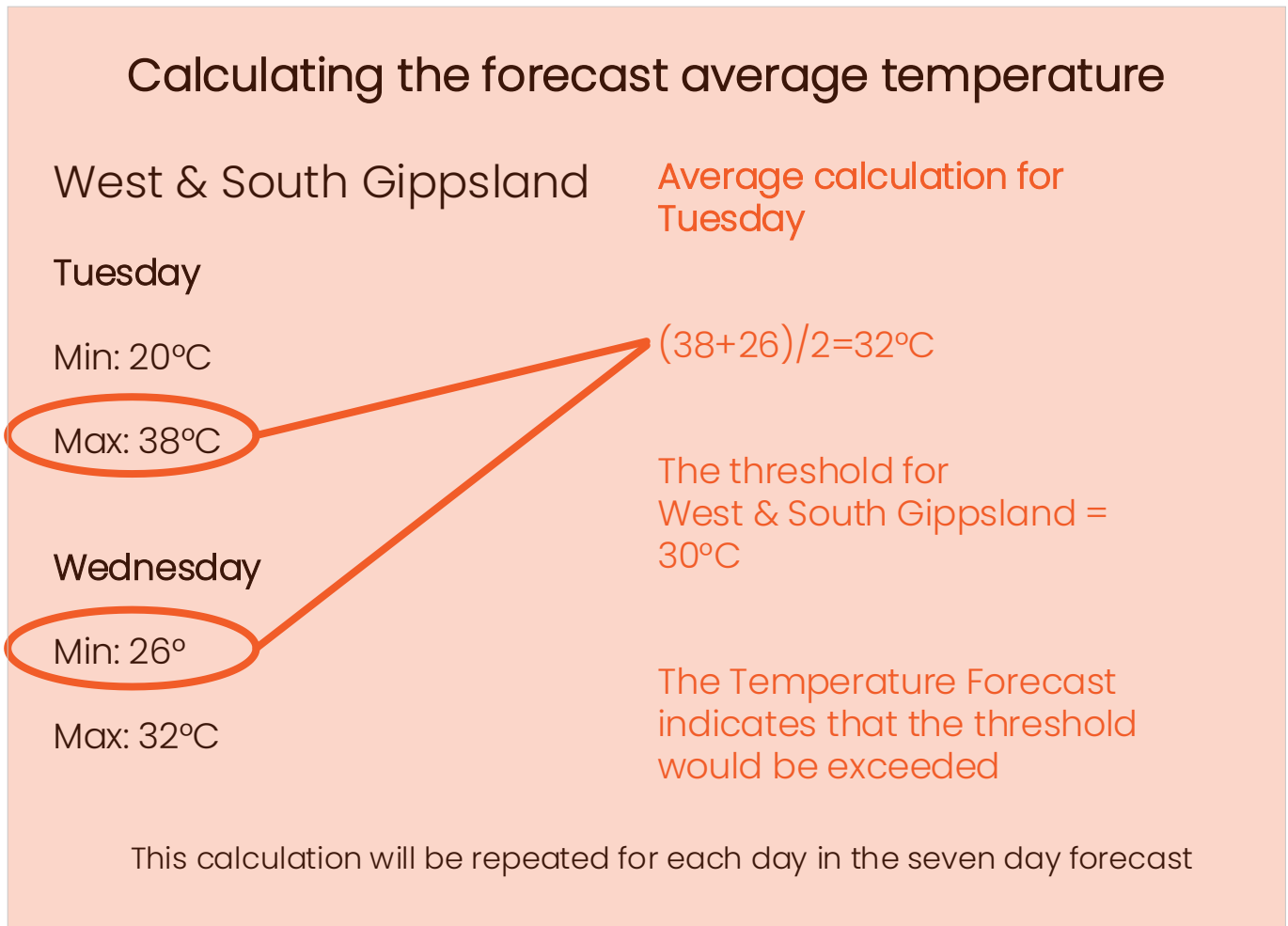
Heat health alert thresholds

DHHS has developed heat health alert thresholds for all local government areas in Victoria. The heat health threshold is the average temperature in any 24-hour period from 9am to 9am (refer to Figure 1 for calculation method). The heat health threshold for Baw Baw Shire, as part of the BoM West & South Gippsland forecast district, has been set at an average of 30°C.

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.

¹ Perkins and Alexander 2013; Climate Council of Australia 2014
Municipal Heatwave Sub-Plan Version 4 2020 - 2023

Figure 1.



Heat health alerts

Heat health alerts are issued by DHHS to advise the Victorian community of an issue that is urgent, poses an immediate threat to public health and requires an immediate response. A heat health alert is issued to advise when the forecast temperatures meet or exceed the heat health threshold for any given area.

DHHS will issue heat health alerts to the public health and community service sector. Providers can subscribe to the service through the DHHS website. Further information on heat health temperature thresholds for Victorian districts is available on the DHHS website [Heat Health Alerts](#).

How heatwaves affect our health

As temperatures rise, so does the risk of contracting a heat related illness, a medical condition that results from the body's inability to cope with heat and cool itself. If left untreated, a heat illness can lead to serious complications, even death.

Heat related illness can make people feel uncomfortable, not so much because they feel hot, but rather because they sense how difficult it has become to lose body heat at the rate

necessary to keep their inner body temperature close to 37°C. The body responds to this stress progressively through three stages.

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

Source – DHHS.

Who is most at risk?

Although anyone can suffer from the effects of prolonged periods of heat at any time, some people are at greater risk than others:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

The aboriginal community are at risk during a heatwave due to the likelihood that they live in housing that has limited cooling. As a cohort, they are likely to have health vulnerabilities and medical conditions that makes them susceptible to the affects of heat. In addition, aboriginal communities are unlikely to access Council’s heatwave response information or attend cool public spaces.

Babies and young children

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

People on medication

People who are taking a prescribed medication can be at an increased risk of heat related illness due to heat reducing the effectiveness of some medications and adverse reactions in others. Most medications need to be stored under 25°C in order to remain effective and safe for use. It is important for people who are taking a medication to ensure that they have discussed what implications may be caused by heat with either their General Practitioner (GP) or Pharmacist.

For further information on the effects of heat on prescribed medications, refer to *Staying healthy* in the heat factsheet for clinicians. How this works varies according to the medication, for example:

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

Older adults

Older adults in our community are more prone to heat stress. People aged 65 years and over may be at increased risk of heat related illnesses and may need special care in hot weather. Heat stress can cause mild conditions such as a rash or cramps, serious and life-threatening conditions such as heat stroke and worsen pre-existing medical conditions.

There are a number of older people, within the municipality, who are engaged in the agriculture sector who may not take responsibility for or acknowledge the warnings regarding heat health issues. As a cohort within the older adults they are more susceptible to the affects of the changing conditions as they may not heed the warnings or modify their work practices.

People with a disability

Some people with a disability can be affected by heat because their body may not be able to regulate body temperature. This means the body may not be able to lose heat through skin by sweating or by having blood flow to the surface of the skin. Both these help the body to cool down.

Dehydration can also cause stress on the heart and induce cardiac stress. A person with cognitive impairment, whether from disease or injury, may not be able to communicate distress.

In some cases, they may not even “feel” the heat or discomfort because of changes in the brain’s abilities to process sensory information or regulate their body’s responses to heat.

People who are culturally and linguistically diverse

The culturally diversity of Baw Baw is changing, at the 2016 Census 10.8% of Baw Baw’s population indicated that they were born overseas. New arrivals may not be aware of the risks of the heat and the impact on their health. In addition, the level of literacy even in their own language may be low therefore the heat health messaging and warnings must be tailored to accommodate this vulnerability.

Our visitors

During heat events, heat stress can also be a risk for non-acclimatised visitors. These individuals are not influenced by traditional messaging as they are not necessarily traditional domestic radio listeners or television viewers. They primarily gain their information whilst in transit from Visitor Information Centres, however provision of messaging and materials in relation to UV exposure, ensuring that they carry adequate water, wearing loose cool clothing and a hat as well as using sun screen and reducing exercise in the hottest parts of the day is very limited.

In addition, the availability and awareness of free, potable public water supplies will be examined with a view to making free water points more visible for users. This is particularly important for the RV/Motorhome sector, where there is a need to fill 90 litre, under floor water tanks for drinking, washing and cooling off purposes. Provision and advice regarding the location of taps and water availability is a key element of maintaining hydration and health during hot weather events.

Part 2 – Community Profile

A comprehensive community profile including population, demographics and industry is contained in the MEMP and is available from the Baw Baw Shire Council website www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.

Current information regarding the demographics for the Baw Baw Shire can be obtained by going to <https://profile.id.com.au/baw-baw>

Vulnerability in Baw Baw

Baw Baw Shire has identified in Part 2 of the MEMP 2.6 Vulnerable Persons in Emergencies, that its most vulnerable population groups are older people; people who are socially isolated; people living with a disability and people with young children.

These residents can be reliant on local service providers to support in the provision of the various services. The demand for services will increase as the Baw Baw population grows. Long term plans need to be considered to ensure our vulnerable residents are well placed to cope with the predicted increase in average temperatures and can respond appropriately.

A person most at risk during a heatwave;

- are socially isolated and without any other supports, family or friends;
- lives alone and has additional needs and/or lives with an individual with similar or greater level of additional needs and/or physical dependence; and/or
- is unable to make an independent decision due to cognitive or other impairment (including acquired brain injury) in relation to activating/implementing a personal survival plan.

The details of aged and disability support services and residential accommodation facilities have also been identified in the MEMP and are held in Crisisworks. The contacts list also contains details of facilities where vulnerable individuals are likely to be situated and also include:

- hospitals;
- aged care facilities;
- schools;
- kindergartens; and
- child care facilities.

This will allow for early warning and arrangements to limit the impact of an emergency on vulnerable people.

Part 3 – Heatwave Plan

Our Partners

This MHP is a sub-Plan of the MEMP, is subject to the endorsement of the MEMPC and will be reviewed annually.

This Plan has been developed with reference to the Victorian State Heat Plan which details the different areas of response and action across government and the health and community sectors.

Council works alongside stakeholders from within the Baw Baw community to act as key partners in the MHP. We have partnered with government, private sector, service providers and community group organisations that represent our vulnerable communities of the isolated, very young, elderly residents and visitors. These partners include:

- Aged care providers – public and private
- AusNet Services
- Central West Gippsland Primary Care Partnership
- Centrelink
- Childcare centres and kindergartens
- Community service providers including Uniting Care Gippsland, Disability Service providers, Salvation Army and Victorian Council of Churches
- Educational institutions
- Emergency broadcasters
- Emergency services (VicSES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, VicPol)
- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)
- Gippsland Primary Health Network
- GippSport
- Latrobe Community Health Service
- Maternal child and health services
- Ramahyuck Aboriginal Cooperative
- Senior citizens clubs
- Tourist Information Centres
- West Gippsland Healthcare Group

Activation

Baw Baw Shire is in the West & South Gippsland BoM forecast district for the purpose of issuing heat health alerts. The heat health threshold for West and South Gippsland (Baw Baw) has been set at an average of 30°C, as described above. The plan can be activated following;

- a heat health alert from DHHS; or
- when major events are occurring within the municipality and there is a likelihood that a heat health alert will be issued.

Following advice from DHHS, the MERO/MRM/EHO will alert the Council's Executive. Council may activate appropriate internal procedures or the Business Continuity Plan.

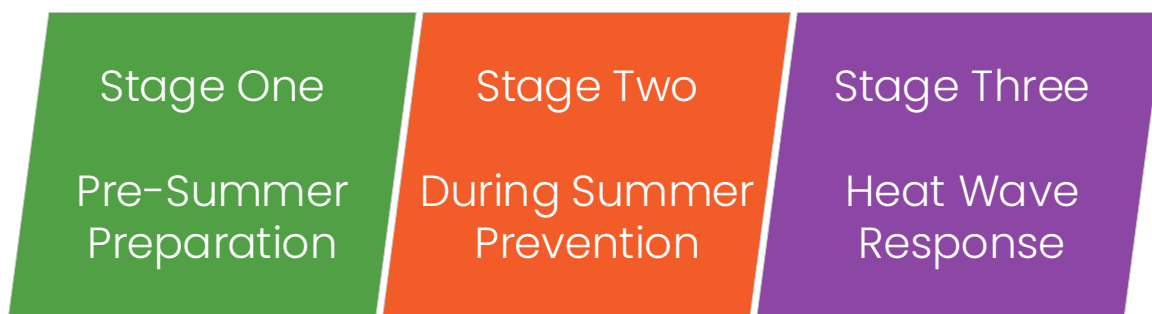
Activation will follow the process outlined in the MEMP unless advised otherwise.

To be better prepared for extreme heat conditions in summer, Baw Baw Shire Council will:

- include heatwave preparation, response and recovery into existing municipal plans;
- promote the use of cool areas in key locations around the shire;
- work with our community services and organisations to support vulnerable populations;
- engage in a communication and media campaigns using heat health messages consistent with DHHS materials; and
- respond to state activated heat alert system in a planned and considered way provide information to event organisers regarding any heat health alerts.

Our Action Plan

Our action plan is not just about responding to a pending heatwave, instead, it provides guidance all-year-round as we prepare our community in advance for very hot summers. Our actions then can be divided into three stages.



Stages	Actions	Who is Responsible
Stage One Pre-summer preparation April 1 to 30 November	Implement Heat Health Action Plan (April to November).	Coordinator Emergency Management (CEM)
	Coordinate pre prepared media releases.	EM/Coordinator Media and Public Relations (CMPR)
	Identify vulnerable groups and update community/agency registers.	All stakeholders
	Identify and promote cool areas across the Shire.	All stakeholders
	Restock heat health information in public places, GP clinics, community health, shopping centres, libraries and swimming pools.	All stakeholders
	Engage key stakeholders.	CEM
Stage Two During summer prevention 1 December to 31 March	Implement Heat Health Action Plan (December 1 to March 30).	CEM/CMPR
	Advise key stakeholders of roles and responsibilities.	CEM
	Organise cool areas for possible use.	All stakeholders
	Monitor and report on BoM forecasts for Baw Baw Shire.	CEM/Environment Health Officer (EHO)
Stage Three Heat Health Response Trigger: DHHS Heat Health alert	Implement Heat Health Action Plan following heat health alert trigger.	CEM/CMPR
	Alert key stakeholders to enact specific actions.	All stakeholders
	Promote cool areas.	All stakeholders
	Monitor BoM and DHHS reports.	CEM/EHO

What we do in preparation

Prepare/revise plans

All stakeholders will prepare or revise standard heat health alert templates and FAQs for distribution prior to and during summer. External communication and action plans (Appendices 1 & 2) have been developed to ensure health information and support is readily available to our community and to provide timely and appropriate advice to targeted stakeholders.

Identify vulnerable groups and update community registers

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

Identify cool areas

During Stage One, Council and partner agencies will identify cool places across the Shire where people can easily get to in the event of a heatwave. These areas could include swimming pools, air-conditioned public spaces, libraries, neighbourhood houses, community centres and shops.

Engage key stakeholders

Successful implementation of our MHP is dependent upon key stakeholders understanding their role in the event of a declared heatwave in the Shire. Stakeholders will have different responsibilities according to the stage of the plan and context of the heatwave conditions. They will be reminded of these in Stage One. Key stakeholders are encouraged to have their own heat health plans where possible and appropriate.

What key stakeholders can do in Stage One

In Stage One, key stakeholders will be advised by Council to consider;

- revisiting their actions from the previous summer and evaluate their levels of effectiveness;
- meeting with other stakeholders to revise and amend key heat health messages and actions;
- reviewing heat health protocols for workplace supervisors and staff;
- updating their community or agency registers;
- preparing or revising pre-prepared key heat health messages;
- identify cool areas within each groups control which could be promoted to the general public during the awareness campaign;
- restocking heat health information in relevant places;
- educating staff of key heat health messages;
- assist vulnerable persons to include heat health planning in personal emergency management plans; and
- auditing client homes (if appropriate).

What we do in Stage Two?

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

Implement the Heat Health Communication Plan

The communication plan provides key heat health messages to the community during Stage Two via media releases, website news, tourist information centres, community newsletters, agency newsletters, emergency broadcasters. These will include:

Cool your home	Avoid the heat	Keep cool and hydrated	Support those around you
<p>Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day and opened at night when the temperature has cooled.</p> <p>Turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment.</p> <p>Move to the coolest room to sleep.</p>	<p>Keep out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.</p> <p>Avoid extreme physical exercise.</p> <p>Wear light, loose fitting clothes.</p> <p>Reschedule essential appointments to early morning.</p>	<p>Drink plenty of water, avoid caffeine/ alcohol.</p> <p>Take a cool shower.</p> <p>Spray water over your skin or clothing.</p> <p>Keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck.</p>	<p>Phone or visit elderly or sick family/ neighbours.</p> <p>Be aware of phone numbers you can ring to get help.</p> <p>Know where cool areas are in the Shire.</p>

Advise key stakeholders of roles and responsibilities

Council will contact key stakeholders to advise them to subscribe to the DHHS Heat Health Alerts. Sporting bodies and summer event organisers will also be informed heat health alerts.

Organise cool areas for possible use

During Stage Two, Council will work with key stakeholders to ensure that cool areas within the Shire are ready for use in the event of a heatwave. Public pools will be informed of Stage Three actions. Air conditioning and water access will be checked at key cool locations.

What key stakeholders can do in Stage Two

In Stage Two, key stakeholders will be advised by Council to consider;

- identifying and organising cool areas;
- distributing DHHS heat health information posters to cool areas;
- promoting heat health messages through their agency newsletters and media;
- keeping in regular contact with vulnerable clients; and
- consider modifying client programs.

What we do in Stage Three?

Stage Three is triggered when imminent heatwave temperatures for Baw Baw Shire are predicted by the BoM. Council has been set up to receive the Heat Health Alerts from DHHS and will monitor forecast temperatures in our area.

The communication plan (Appendix 1) will be followed to ensure this process is carried out smoothly and effectively.

During Stage Three, Council's key responsibilities are to:

- alert key stakeholders to enact their heat health plans;
- promote community awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect;
- provide information to the community about cool areas (including swimming pool and library opening and closing times) and how to beat the heat;
- monitor DHHS and BOM reports daily;
- alter staff scheduling (particularly outdoor workers);
- cancel any Council outdoor events; and
- inform Council's Emergency Management team of actions taken.

At the time of activation, a list will be provided on Council's website and social media pages of the cool areas and air-conditioned spaces that are suitable and available for use during a sustained heatwave. Aspects of the MEMP would be activated by Baw Baw Shire Council only in response to declared emergencies resulting from heatwave conditions.

What key stakeholders can do in Stage Three

Prompt action by stakeholders during Stage Three will ensure the impacts of heat on the elderly, very young, visitors and community are kept to a minimum.

All key stakeholders will be advised by Council to consider;

- contacting those listed on the Vulnerable People Register or community registers by telephone or visit;
- develop support plans for heatwave conditions for vulnerable clients;
- prioritising tasks especially for those involving physical exertion;
- assessing risk for clients and staff;
- rescheduling staff work times and hours;
- providing additional fluids and cool places to rest for clients and staff;
- modifying client programs;
- transporting clients in cooler parts of the day; and
- altering children's outdoor activities and play times.

How we evaluate the plan's effectiveness

To ensure the MHP remains relevant and meets the changing needs of our community, it will be reviewed annually after each summer and outcomes used to inform and update the Plan. All relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate in the evaluation. The following questions will be addressed:

- Were the actions in Phase Three appropriate and timely?
- What worked?
- What didn't work?

- Was information communicated effectively to stakeholders?
- Was information communicated effectively to the general community?
- What could we do differently next summer?

Appendix 1 – Communications Plan

Situational Analysis

The MHP determines how the MEMPC will support the local community to adapt and minimise the impact of Heatwave events. This should be read in conjunction with relevant agencies policies, plans and procedures.

Objectives

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Support the community to prepare for, respond to and recover from heatwave conditions.
- Develop long term changes in our behaviour to improve our health and wellbeing.
- Identify vulnerable population groups in our community and the risks they face during Heatwave events.
- Develop partnerships with local organisations to better coordinate a response to heatwaves.

The objectives of the External Communications Plan are to:

- Ensure health information and support is readily available to our community.
- Increase the capacity of our community to respond during heatwave events.
- Provide information and advice in a timely and appropriate manner targeted at the identified stakeholders.

Stakeholders

- Baw Baw Shire community
- Councillors
- Baw Baw Shire Council staff
- Local health services
- Government agencies (DHHS, DELWP and DJPR)
- Aged care providers - public and private
- Community centres
- GippSport
- Local pharmacies
- Emergency services (VicSES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, VicPol)
- Emergency broadcasters
- Uniting Care Gippsland
- Disability service providers
- Visitor Information Centres
- Gippsland Primary Health Network
- Educational institutions
- Baw Baw childcare providers
- Senior Citizens Clubs and groups

Key Messages

- Encourage residents to become familiar with ways to stay healthy in the heat. (Achieved by directing residents to DHHS resources).
- Baw Baw Shire Council maintains a list of cool areas. These are places to go when the temperature climbs so that you can gain some respite from extended periods of hot weather.

Key heat health messages include:

Cool your home down

- Keep your windows closed during the daytime and open them at night after the temperature has dropped.
- Turn off non-essential electrical equipment and lights.
- Move to the coolest room in your house to sleep.

Stay out of the heat

- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.
- Avoid extreme physical exercise.
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes.

Keep yourself cool and hydrated

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

What you can do for others

- Telephone or visit sick or elderly neighbours.
- Keep telephone numbers handy for services which may provide assistance.
- Be familiar with the cool areas in Baw Baw Shire.

Collateral

Media releases and alerts

At Stage Two, one media release will be distributed to all media outlets including local community newsletters each summer. Media alerts will be distributed to all local media and across Council's social media channels upon implementation of Stage Three.

Media Distribution List

Standard media distribution list will be utilised for all Stage One, Two and Three information. This includes local emergency broadcasters, commercial and public radio, television stations, local newspapers and the offices of local politicians.

The majority of these channels manage secondary social media channels and we specifically request for emergency information to be shared via this as well as the traditional mediums. In addition, Stage One and Two media releases will be distributed to local community newsletters. If additional stakeholders would like access to this material for their own publication, it can be made available upon request.

Baw Baw Shire Council external newsletter article

One brief article pointing to additional information will be included in the summer edition of the Baw Baw Matters (or Council external newsletter, should the newsletter format change). Council's Emergency Management (EM) team are responsible for providing information to the Communications team.

Baw Baw Shire Council website

A heatwave page is to be created and maintained on Council's website. The EM team are responsible for providing the content to Council's Communications team. The EM team will review the content annually prior to each summer and ad hoc at each Stage Three implementation and inform the Communications team if any amendments are required. At each Stage Three implementation the website will include a heatwave slide on the homepage.

FAQ information sheet

An FAQ/information sheet will be produced, in Council format. This will be available via Council's website and printed copies provided to Customer Service Centres, libraries including the mobile library and Council sports facilities. These will be reviewed annually prior to summer by the EM team and updated ad hoc through summer as required.

Paid advertising

One heatwave main article will be produced early summer each year within the 'Council News' Warragul and Drouin Gazette paid advertisement. If Stage Three is predicted, a media release may be produced and included but must be confirmed with the Communications team by 12:00 noon Friday the week prior to publication.

Posters, brochures etc.

DHHS produce excellent heat health resources including posters, easy English posters, brochures and large format brochures. These resources form an integral part of this communications plan. All stakeholders will ensure that supplies of these resources are restocked and available throughout each summer.

Customer Service

Council's Customer Service team will be advised via email to Customer Service – Front Counter upon implementation of Stage Three and provided with the most up to date information. If this information is already available online, they may be provided with a link to this content.

Action	When	Responsibility
Stage one – 1 April to November 30		
Prepare/revise standard heat health alert templates	October–November	DHHS, BBSC,
Prepare external newsletter article	September for December publication	BBSC
Prepare/revise FAQ sheet	October	BBSC
Prepare/revise website content	October	BBSC
Stage two		
News article	By mid December	BBSC
Media release, including community newsletters	By mid December	BBSC
Distribute heat health information posters and easy read posters to cool areas (DHHS)	By mid December	All Stakeholders
All Stakeholders		
Activate homepage slide on website	Immediately Stage three called	
Issue heat health alert(s) to local media	Immediately Stage three called	
Issue banner ads in the Baw Baw News	Stage Three, ad hoc	
Monitor media activity and incoming calls, respond accordingly with information and/or alerts	Duration of heatwave	

Stage 3 Media Alert Templates

Media Alert #1: Beating the coming heat

DHHS has issued a heat health alert with the weather predicted to be unusually hot and uncomfortable over the next [insert number] days. Baw Baw Shire Council is advising residents to become familiar with ways to stay healthy in the heat. These include:

Cool your home down

- Keep your windows closed during the daytime and open them at night after the temperature has dropped.
- Turn off non-essential electrical equipment and lights.
- Move to the coolest room in your house to sleep.

Stay out of the heat

- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.
- Avoid extreme physical exercise.

- Wear light, loose fitting clothes.

Keep yourself cool and hydrated

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

What you can do for others

- Telephone or visit sick or elderly neighbours.
- Keep telephone numbers handy for services which may provide assistance.
- Be familiar with the cool areas near you.

More information is available on Council's website www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au or in hard copy at Council's Customer Service Centres and branches of the West Gippsland Library.

If you feel unwell in the heat contact your GP or telephone Nurse on Call on 1300 60 60 24. For life-threatening emergencies dial 000 or 106 for people with a hearing or speech impairment.

Media Alert #2: Cool areas to chill out

Don't get beaten by this heat; if you're getting too hot under the collar, visit a cool area within Baw Baw Shire:

- Air conditioned public places list, with opening times [to be provided at the time of activation].

For more information on how to stay healthy during a heatwave, visit Council's website www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.

Appendix 2 – Action Plan

This Plan has been prepared based on knowledge and experience of previous heatwave events. Adherence to this plan is based upon past heatwave events and the structures used to manage them. Should a heatwave event, combined with other overlaying circumstances, trigger actions outside this plan, alternative actions will be determined at the time in consultation with the control agency and the MEMPC accordingly.

Stage	Action	Responsibility
One		
Pre-summer preparation 1 April – 30 November	Develop a series of pre-prepared heat health alert templates/messages for distribution prior to and during summer, promoting community awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect.	BBSC
	Review/update heat health FAQs.	BBSC
	Review heat health protocols for workplace supervisors, staff and clients.	All Stakeholders
	Prepare/revise Council website content re heat health information, including cool places where people can seek heat relief.	BBSC
Two		
1 December – 31 March	Advise key stakeholders via email of roles and responsibilities.	BBSC
	Distribute media release, including community newsletters (by mid December).	BBSC
	Review and promote cool areas for possible use in a heatwave.	All Stakeholders
	Erect heat health posters around workplaces and designated cool areas.	All Stakeholders
	Distribute DHHS heatwave information to key stakeholders.	BBSC
Three		
Response Trigger: DHHS Heat Alert	Activate External Communications Plan - Stage Three.	BBSC
	Activate homepage slide on Council webpage with current heat health information.	BBSC
	Issue heat health alert(s) to local media.	BBSC
	Phone high risk people, activate community phone trees and remind neighbours to check on each other every day during a heatwave.	All Stakeholders
	Continue to promote cool areas across the Shire for people. Promote community awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect.	All Stakeholders
	Enact heat health protocols for workplace	All Stakeholders

Stage	Action	Responsibility
	supervisors and staff.	
	Monitor BoM and DHHS reports.	BBSC
	Monitor media activity and incoming calls. Respond accordingly with information and/or alerts.	BBSC

Appendix 3 – Frequently asked questions. (template)

What is a Heatwave?

A heatwave is a period of unusual and uncomfortably hot weather that can affect anybody. It can also affect community infrastructure such as the power supply, public transport and other services. In Australia, BoM defines a heatwave as three or more days of high maximum and minimum temperatures that are unusual for that location.

DHHS issues heat health alerts when temperature thresholds are likely to be reached/breached in specific weather forecast districts and conditions are likely to impact human health. A heat health alert could be issued for one day of extreme heat. Heatwaves can make existing medical conditions worse and cause a heat related illness, which may be fatal.

Medical Advice

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) or 106 for people with a hearing or speech impairment <http://relayservice.gov.au/making-a-call/emergency-calls/>

For 24-hour health advice call Nurse-On-Call on 1300 60 60 24 for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria. (Calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate.)

Tune into ABC radio for regular updates ABC 828AM and 100.7FM

<http://www.abc.net.au/gippsland>

Important Heat Related Advice from Department of Health and Human Services

General consumer information

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Heat Health Alert System - Information and guidance for Councils and stakeholders

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heat-health-alert-status>

Where can I find information about*

- Cool places in Baw Baw Shire where I can find some heat relief
- Heat stress and Older People
- Heatwave precautions for babies and young children
- Child Safety - Hot weather
- Heat and Pets

*Communications will populate information regarding the above information at the time of the heatwave so that it is current, timely and relevant to the event.

Weather

For information on the weather forecast, visit the BoM's website at www.bom.gov.au or call 1300 659 217.

Transport

Extreme heat conditions can affect bus, train and tram services. People using public transport are encouraged to check with local transport operators for up-to-date information. The V/Line website provides a list of bus and rail services and timetables or phone 1800 800 007.

V/line Service Updates – Gippsland <https://www.vline.com.au/?tab=live-serviceupdates>

Guide to Power Outages

Tell your electricity provider if you rely on power for special needs.

For information about possible supply interruptions contact AusNet Services on 131 719 or visit their website <http://ausnetservices.com.au> Have a backup plan in case electricity fails [Your guide to power outages](#).