

Colac Otway Shire

Municipal Emergency Management Plan

2024-27



A collaborative and multi-agency emergency management plan.

September 2024



TABLE of CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Acknowledgement of Country	4
1.2	Authority	4
1.3	Plan testing, exercising and review.	4
1.4	Emergencies and privacy information	5
1.5	Planning context	5
1.6	Audience	6
1.7	Aim and objectives	7
2	CONTEXT	8
2.1	Overview	8
2.2	The land, climate & climate change	10
2.2.1	The land	10
2.2.2	Climate	11
2.2.3	Climate change	11
2.3	The Community	13
2.3.1	Community Vision	13
2.3.2	Demographic data	14
2.3.3	Visitor Vs permanent population	16
2.3.4	Community resilience	16
2.3.5	Individuals at risk	16
2.3.6	Vulnerable Persons Register	16
2.3.7	Vulnerable facilities list	17
2.4	History of emergencies	17
2.4.1	Bush fire	17
2.4.2	Flood and storm	17
2.4.3	Pandemic	18
2.4.4	Other emergencies	18
3	PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS	20
3.1	Victorian emergency management planning framework	20
3.2	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)	21
3.3	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Process	22
3.4	Sub-plans and complimentary plans	22
3.5	Restricted information	24
4	RISK MITIGATION ARRANGEMENTS	25
4.1	Introduction	25

4.2	Risk mitigation	25
4.2.1	Risk determinants.....	25
4.2.2	Risk mitigation as a shared responsibility.....	26
4.3	The role of MEMPC in risk management	26
4.4	CERA risk assessment - process and results	27
4.4.1	The CERA process	27
4.4.2	CERA results	27
4.5	Community resilience building	28
5	RESPONSE	30
5.1	Introduction	30
5.2	Response management arrangements	30
5.2.1	Operational Tier	30
5.2.2	Classes of Emergencies (including non-major emergencies).....	30
5.2.3	Classification	31
5.3	Command, Control, Coordination	31
5.4	Incident Controller and Structure	32
5.5	Municipal Emergency Coordination	32
5.6	Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC)	33
5.7	Crisisworks	33
5.8	Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP)	33
5.9	Planning for cross boundary events	33
5.9.1	Resource Sharing.....	34
5.10	Communication	34
5.10.1	Warning Systems.....	34
5.10.2	Emergency Alert	34
5.10.3	Standard Emergency Warning Signals.....	35
5.10.4	Community Alert Sirens.....	35
5.10.5	Warning Levels	35
5.10.6	Public information	36
5.10.7	Information resources	36
5.11	Community shelter	36
5.12	Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places and Community Fire Refuges	37
5.13	Evacuation and traffic management	37
5.14	Response financial arrangements	37
6	RELIEF	39
6.1.1	Emergency relief activities	39
6.1.2	Emergency Relief Centres (ERC)	39

6.2	Impact Assessment	40
6.3	Transition to Recovery	40
6.4	Debriefing arrangements	41
7	RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS	42
7.1	Introduction	42
7.2	Community-led recovery	43
7.3	Objectives of Recovery	43
7.4	Municipal recovery arrangements	44
7.4.1	Activation of municipal recovery coordination arrangements	45
7.4.2	Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration	45
8	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	47
9	APPENDICIES	48
	Appendix 1 COLAC OTWAY SHIRE – EMERGENCY RELIEF CENTRE SITES	49
	Appendix 2 Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP):	50
	Things to know about Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP):	50
	Locations of Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places in Colac Otway Shire	50
	Community Fire Refuges (CFRs)	50
	Locations of Community Fire Refuges in Colac Otway Shire	51
	Appendix 3 – Contact directory	51
	Appendix 4 – Community network contacts	51
	Appendix 5 – Exercises and briefings undertaken	51
	Appendix 6– Links and Resources	51
	Appendix 7 – Community Profiles	52

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

We proudly acknowledge the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples as the traditional custodians of the Colac Otway Shire. We pay our respects to their ancestors and elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their unique cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to their traditional lands, which continue to be important to all of us today and into the future.

1.2 Authority

In 2020 the Emergency Management Act 2013 (the Act) was amended to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the State, regional and municipal levels; and created 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.

This plan has been prepared by the Colac Otway MEMPC in accordance with the requirements of the Act, including having regard to the guidelines issued under S77, Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans. The plan comes into effect (active) when published and remains in effect until superseded by an approved and published update.

1.3 Plan testing, exercising and review.

The Victorian Preparedness Framework (Critical Task 1.6, p20) guides our MEMPC to:

“Exercise, review and update emergency management plans regularly with agencies and community stakeholders using scenarios related to the relevant emergency risk profile”.

Accordingly, the MEMPC will exercise and review the Plan at least annually to test:

- if the Plan guides the effective application of resources to mitigate the consequences of an emergency event
- if the Plan remains contemporary, meeting the changing needs of stakeholders
- the capability and capacity of those in the Plan

Any critical changes will be made by the MEMPC at the earliest opportunity. Urgent updates of the Plan are permitted if there is significant risk that life or property will be endangered if the plan is not updated (Act S60AM). Urgent updates come into effect when published on the municipal council website and remain in force for a maximum period of three months.

To comply with Section 60AN, section 6.1 of the Act, the plan will be thoroughly reviewed every three years or following a significant emergency event which may require changes to the plan. This version will be reviewed, approved, and re-published no later than December 2027.

The MEMPC regularly exercises its skills and knowledge through various emergency management scenarios designed and delivered with other MEMPCs or agency and community partnerships. An example is the annual Emergency Relief Centre exercise done in collaboration with the Surf Coast and Corangamite MEMPCs, other agencies and community volunteers. This exercise has occurred every year for close to two decades.

1.4 Emergencies and privacy information

In accordance with the Victoria's Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014, an organisation can only use or disclose personal information for the primary purpose it is collected.

Personal information collected as part of responding to an emergency will be treated in accordance with Part VIA of the Commonwealth's Privacy Act 1988. Part VIA of the Privacy Act regulates how entities may collect, use and disclose personal information in a declared emergency or disaster. It provides clarity around the handling of personal information about deceased, injured and missing individuals in a declared emergency or disaster.

The Privacy Act is not a barrier to necessary information sharing in a declared emergency or disaster, however, entities that collect, use or disclose personal information about individuals affected by the declared emergency or disaster need to comply with Part VIA. The Office of the Australian Information Commission website has information about privacy considerations and requirements during an emergency. www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/guidance-and-advice/emergencies-and-disasters

1.5 Planning context

The Colac Otway Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) has been prepared within the context of the objectives of the Emergency Management Act 2013 to:

- a) foster a sustainable and efficient emergency management system that minimises the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies; and
- b) establish efficient governance arrangements that:
 - i. clarify the roles and responsibilities of agencies.
 - ii. facilitate cooperation between agencies.
 - iii. ensure the coordination of emergency management reform within the emergency management sector; and
- c) implement an "all communities—all emergencies" approach to emergency management; and
- d) establish comprehensive and integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the state, regional and municipal levels.

The core capabilities and the critical tasks outlined in the *Victorian Preparedness Framework* set the foundation for how we prepare, respond to and recover from emergency incidents. The emergency management capability model diagram below (from the framework) shows the process for understanding and applying the capabilities required for managing major emergencies. <https://files-em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/VictorianPreparednessFrameworkMay2018.pdf>



Image: Emergency Management Capability Model from the Victorian Preparedness Framework

The MEMP also exists in the context of, and must be consistent with, the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the Barwon South-West Regional Emergency Management Plan (BSW REMP)

1.6 Audience

The plan's intended audience is:

- Colac Otway Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)
- Barwon South West Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Other stakeholders who have emergency management responsibilities or interests in the Colac Otway Shire.
- Colac Otway Shire community.

Acknowledging Lived Experience: unequal burden of disaster impacts

Disasters don't discriminate but the burden of disaster impacts our community differently, and unequally. We acknowledge the uneven impacts and recognise the lived experience of those over exposed and underrepresented in disaster and emergency management. This includes those facing compounded challenges due to how factors like race, gender, age, and disability intersect (shape each other's impact) to create individual experiences.

Our commitment

We are committed to embedding intersectional perspectives, especially from marginalised individuals and communities, to continuously improve decision-making across all phases of emergency and disaster management: mitigation, planning, preparedness, response, and recovery.

By working together and sharing resources within our community, we can strengthen our overall efforts for a just and equitable future.

By listening and learning from all of community, we can draw and build on local competencies to co-create and empower community-led and owned place-based risk reduction efforts.

1.7 Aim and objectives

The aim of the Colac Otway Shire MEMP is to document agreed management arrangements for the prevention of, preparedness for, response, relief and recovery of emergencies that could occur in the Colac Otway Shire.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- a) Identify, evaluate and manage potential risks that could impact the Colac Otway Shire communities.
- b) Implement measures to prevent or reduce the likelihood or consequences of emergencies.
- c) Provide assistance to meet the essential needs of individuals, families and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.
- d) Manage support that may be provided to or from adjoining municipalities. – consider and plan for cross boundary events resource sharing.
- e) Assist the affected community to recover following an emergency.
- f) Frame all planning, preparation, response and recovery activities around the needs of the community and their ongoing resilience.
- g) Complement other local, regional and state government planning arrangements.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Overview

Located approximately 150 kilometres south-west of Melbourne, Colac Otway Shire Council sits upon the land of its traditional custodians the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples of the Maar Nation.



A large rural and coastal shire with a population of 21,662, Colac Otway Shire is within commuting distance from major regional cities of Geelong to the east, Warrnambool to the west and Ballarat to the north.

Colac Otway's landscape is made up of a unique and precious natural environment, from a rural idyll with fertile farmland and volcanic lakes and craters inland, to beautiful rainforest, National Park, waterfalls, beaches and rugged coastlines.

Much of the rural area is used for agriculture, with farming, cropping and dairying being the main agricultural pursuits. Agricultural activity is concentrated in the northern part of the Shire, with timber and fishing prevalent in the south. Tourism is an important industry, especially in the southern section along the Great Ocean Road.

Major infrastructure includes:

- an extensive road system that includes sections of the Great Ocean Road and Princes Highway
- major gas transmission pipeline
- water supply and sewerage networks
- Warrnambool to Geelong railway
- High voltage transmission lines
- Mt Gellibrand windfarm
- Port of Apollo Bay

A balance of renewable energy generation and storage will be required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and replace retiring coal-fired power stations and ensure Victoria's electricity system is affordable, reliable, safe, and sustainable. The Shire already has one significant wind farm, and it is reasonable to expect others in the future. Building energy storage and upgrading the grid will also be required to help provide reliable renewable energy.

The Shire has two main townships, with many small villages and localities. The largest town is Colac, which serves as an administrative, retail and commercial centre. Its population of 13,000 is well serviced by high quality education, health, recreation, arts and social facilities. Colac, set on the shores of Lake Colac, is a vibrant city which boasts thriving national industries, diverse small businesses and a community with strong connections to each another. \

Apollo Bay is the Shire's major tourism centre, along with the neighbouring hamlets of Marengo and Skenes Creek, showcasing beautiful beaches, fresh local seafood and the lure of the Great Ocean Road and its breathtaking scenic views, all drawing local, interstate and international visitors to our unique region. This coastal community on the Great Ocean Road is one-hour drive from Colac, with holiday homes and short-term rental properties making up almost 70% of its housing. Apollo Bay has a permanent population of about 2000 that swells to approximately 20,000 during the summer holiday months.

Colac Otway's other townships include Alvie, Beeac, Birregurra, Carlisle River, Cororooke, Cressy, Forrest, Gellibrand, Swan Marsh, Beech Forest, Lavers Hill, Kennett River, Separation Creek and Wye River.

Include here a map showing townships and their permanent populations. Note how populations include large tourist population along the coast and that this fluctuates significantly depending on the weather and time of year.

2.2 The land, climate & climate change



2.2.1 The land

The southern landscape of the Shire includes large areas of dense, tall forest in hilly terrain extending to the coast in places, terminating at high sea cliffs such as those located at Cape Otway. At the foothills of the Otway Ranges, the landscape is undulating, rural land with patches of native bush.

The southern area also includes the flat Aire River valley marshes. The northern part of the Shire is characterised by a plains landscape, punctuated in some areas by volcanic cones, craters and rocky outcrops.

The Shire contains some of the most significant environmental assets found in Australia. There is an extensive network of water bodies, some of which are of international significance. In addition, the Shire has over 300 km of very high conservation roadside reserves, as well as approximately 100km of the internationally recognised Great Ocean Road. This spectacular coastal environment includes not only the coastal dunes and estuaries but also the marine environment.

The majority of vegetation in the Shire has been cleared since European settlement and although some pristine areas remain in the Otways, 29 of the 54 vegetation communities in the region are listed as endangered or vulnerable and only nine are not of concern. The Plains Grasslands have been nationally listed under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) because only very small areas remain intact, the majority of which are on private land.

The environmental assets found in the Shire can be categorised by the Bioregions in which they are found. Bioregions reflect natural boundaries and relationships between biodiversity assets and natural resource-based activities. Four Bioregions are found in the Shire: Victorian Volcanic Plain (VVP), Warrnambool Plain, Otway Plain and the Otway Ranges.

There are several listed threatened flora and fauna species in the region. A large proportion of the Otway Ranges bioregion is protected by being in the Great Otway National Park. This ensures protection of many high value waterways that flow to the sea from the Otway Ranges. Internationally significant lakes located in the VVP bioregion are surrounded by farmland and face more significant threat of degradation than those located within the national park.

Colac Otway Shire has many rivers, lakes, creeks and reservoirs including: Aire River, Barham River, Barwon River East Branch, Barwon River West Branch, Carlisle River, Gellibrand River, Atkins Creek, Barongarook Creek, Lake Beeac, Lake Colac, West Gellibrand Reservoir, West Barwon Reservoir, Lake Cundare Olangolah Reservoir, Lake Elizabeth, Arkins Creek Weir.

2.2.2 Climate

Colac Otway Shire is in a mild temperate zone with definite seasons of summer, winter, autumn and spring however the location in southwest Victoria means the weather can be highly variable from one day to the next, particularly in spring and early summer. Annual rainfall is relatively reliable and varies significantly from around 550mm in the north to more than 1800mm in the Otway rainforests. Winters are generally wet and cool. Summers can be hot, particularly in the north of the Shire. There are very significant grassfire and bushfire risks throughout the Shire between late Spring and mid-Autumn.

2.2.3 Climate change

The Shire is increasingly experiencing the impacts of climate change. The region's natural environment is under threat, with changing weather patterns, rising temperatures and extreme weather events all having significant impacts on the Shire's natural landscapes, local community and economy.

Current climate change trends mean hotter and drier conditions for the future of South West Victoria, less rain in winter, more intense rainfall events, biodiversity loss and sea level rise. Current predictions suggest that by 2030 we can expect the Barwon South West to experience:

- An average temperature rise of almost 1 degree C
- An increase in the number of hot days (over 30 degrees C)
- A decrease in rainfall over spring of 7% and a decrease in the annual average rainfall of 4%.

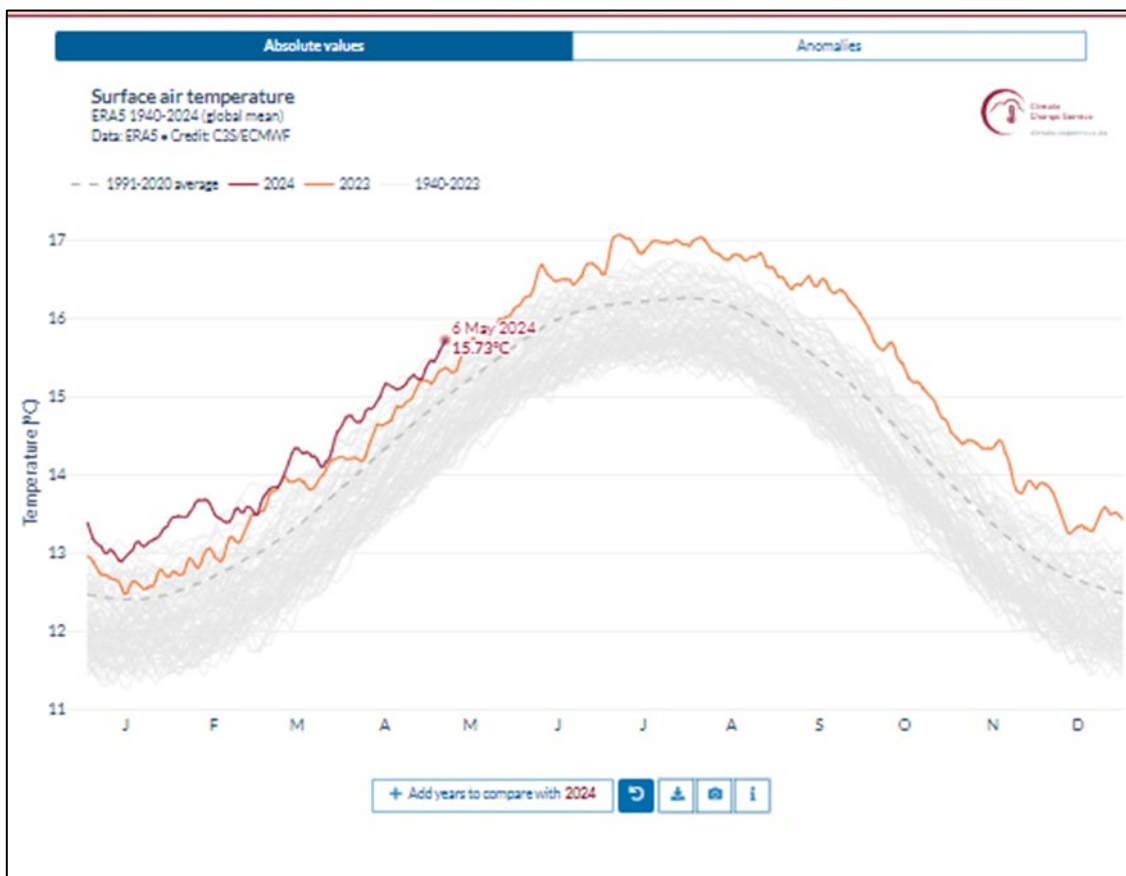
Climate projections highlight the likelihood that the impacts of climate change will significantly increase over the coming decades and the urgency of the need for strong action if we are to prevent the most catastrophic harms of global warming. Climate change impacts us at national, state, regional

and local levels, down to households and individuals. Climate action must therefore be collectively undertaken through strategic planning, shared responsibility, partnerships and collaboration.

Further information can be found in the Barwon South West Regional Climate Adaptation Strategy. https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0033/549717/Barwon_South_West_Regional_Climate_Adaptation_Strategy.pdf

Climate Change Update - June 2024

Global warming is occurring much faster than previously predicted for reasons that are not fully understood. In May 2024, global average surface temperatures were 1.6°C (2.88°F) above the preindustrial average, according to preliminary data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service in Europe. This exceeded the most ambitious target laid out in the Paris Agreement, but only for a short period. The agreement's 1.5°C (2.6°F) aspirational target applies to multiple decades. April 2024 extended the duration of the warmest 12-month global running mean temperature on record and marked the first time that the 12-month running mean has eclipsed the Paris Agreement 1.5°C target.



Source: <https://climate.copernicus.eu/> via <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/change/?ref=ft>

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (often abbreviated as C3S) is one of the six thematic services provided by the European Union's Copernicus Programme. The Copernicus Programme is managed by the European Commission and the C3S is implemented by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF).

2.3 The Community

2.3.1 Community Vision

The Colac Otway Shire Council worked with the community to develop a long-term Community Vision for the whole of the Shire. The Vision aimed to articulate where the community wants to be in the future and capture what they value, their hopes and dreams for the future, what they would like to keep and what they would like to see changed.

The Shire community's 2050 Vision is:

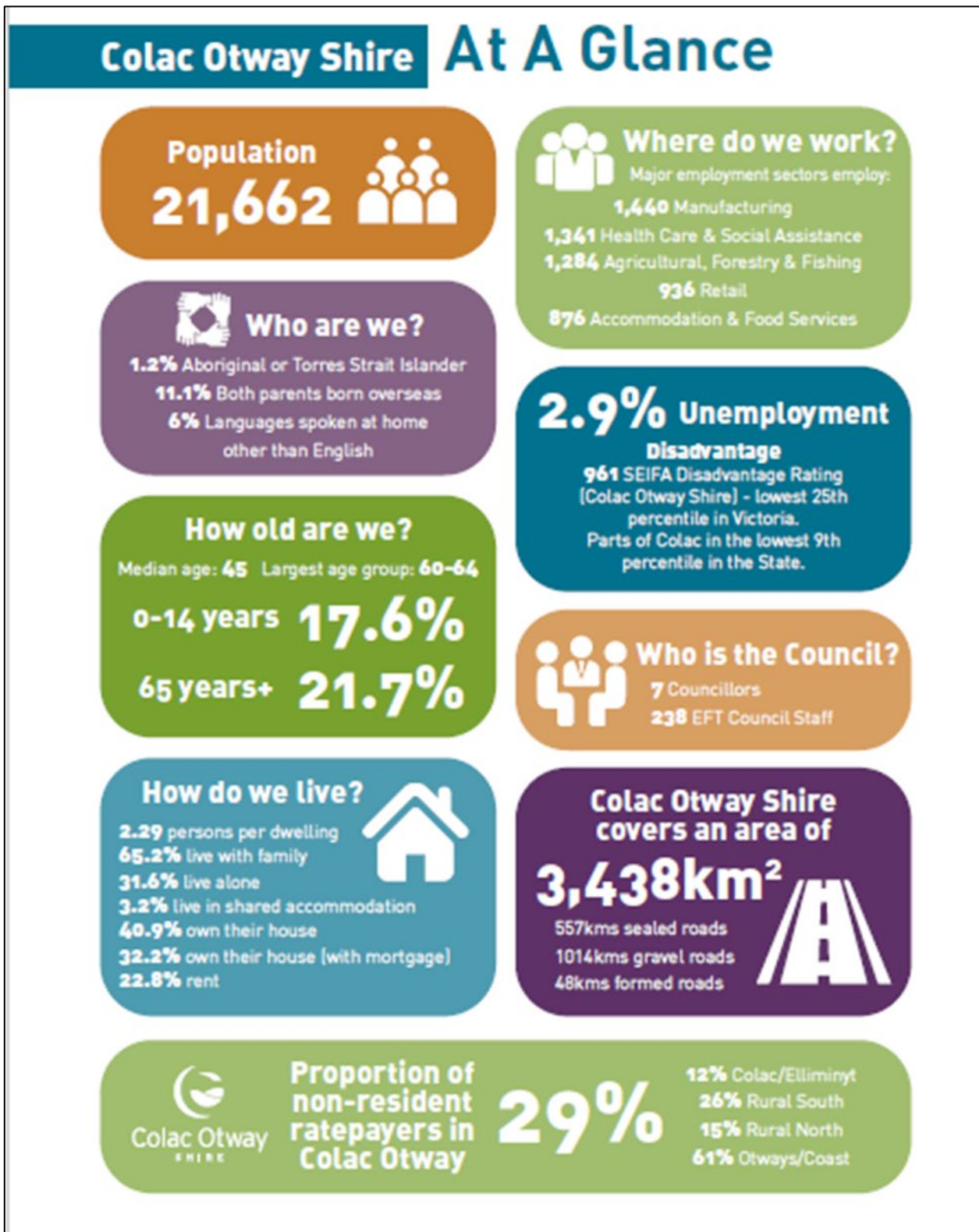
“By 2050, Colac Otway Shire will be a destination where people come to appreciate our unique and diverse environment and friendly communities.

We value the wisdom of this land’s first caretakers, the Gulidjan and Gadabanud peoples, and recognise all those who have cared for the land since.

We work to preserve what makes our place special. We focus on environmental sustainability to protect our precious natural assets.

We are a proud and resilient community that values our welcoming spirit. We embrace new people, new business, new ideas. Our region is a great place to learn, live, work and play.”

2.3.2 Demographic data





The most recent demographic data for the Shire can be found at

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/LGA21750>

<https://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/Council-the-shire/Our-shire/Colac-Otway-regional-profile>

2.3.3 Visitor Vs permanent population

The Colac Otway Shire welcomes thousands of visitors each year from across and around the world. The exact number of visitors per year hasn't been recently specified. The coastal town of Apollo Bay within the shire sees its population temporarily increase to around 20,000 each summer, indicating the area's popularity during peak tourist season which also coincides with the peak fire danger period.

International visitors account for a significant percentage of the overall tourism visitation, this includes people from a broad range of cultural backgrounds. Tourists from non-English speaking background may not be as aware of the water and bushfire risks or know how to find information in an emergency. Currently, the UK accounts for the largest number of international visitors (17%) closely followed by Germany (10.5%) and China (9.86%). It is important that any community emergency information uses simple language and symbols where possible.

2.3.4 Community resilience

Resilience is an important concept in emergency management planning and can be thought of as the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

" Victoria's Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management states:

'Communities are rich, complex and exist in many shapes and forms, generally sharing common characteristics or interests. They can be communities of place (defined by a geographical area such as a city, township, suburb or locality) or communities that share a similar interest, attribute, bond or passion (including faith-based groups, sporting clubs or other social networks).'

'The more that emergency managers can support these different communities to be resilient, the stronger and more prepared Victoria will be to navigate the chronic stresses and acute shocks that may come in the future. Understanding the needs, capabilities and expectations of these different communities is essential in ensuring their safety and strengthening their resilience.'

The Framework describes resilient communities in terms of the following characteristics:

- Safe and well
- Connected, inclusive and empowered
- Dynamic and diverse local economy
- Sustainable built and natural environment
- Culturally rich and vibrant
- Democratic and engaged
- Reflective and aware

Community profiles for the Colac Otway Shire are provided in Appendix 7.

Communities and individuals could be encouraged and supported to evaluate their resilience against the characteristics describes in the Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management to identify options to increase their resilience to chronic stresses and acute shocks that may come in the future. This approach has recently been trailed locally in the townships of Forrest, Apollo Bay and Wye River.

2.3.5 Individuals at risk

During an emergency special consideration must be given to people who may be more susceptible to risk in the community. This may include the elderly, young people, people with disability, people who are isolated, or have economic or social disadvantage.

2.3.6 Vulnerable Persons Register

People with particular vulnerabilities can be recorded in the Vulnerable Persons Register. Individuals on the register are socially isolated and without any other supports and who are defined as:

- Frail, and/or physically or cognitively impaired; and
- Unable to understand or act on a warning, direction and/or respond in an emergency; and
- Has no personal or community support; and
- Would be reliant on assistance from emergency service organisations in an emergency.

The Department of Family, Fairness and Housing's Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy applies to organisations funded by the department to provide personal care, support and/or case management services to clients living in the community. It provides guidance on planning for the needs of vulnerable people.

As per the DFFH guidelines, council coordinates a local Vulnerable Persons Register. A database of these individuals is maintained through the municipal council administered Crisisworks emergency management system.

Funded agencies, including local government, are not expected to be a part of client's plan for emergency response or evacuation – where this is outside of current agency practices. Management of evacuation is the responsibility of Victoria Police.

Funded agencies are responsible for identifying vulnerable individuals and maintaining information for any of their clients on the register. The Vulnerable Persons Registers is accessible to authorised Victoria Police representatives, for consideration in evacuation planning and management of emergencies.

For further information on the above refer to the DFFH Vulnerable People In Emergencies Policy. <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/vulnerable-people-in-emergencies-policy>

2.3.7 Vulnerable facilities list

A Register of Facilities, maintained by the Colac Otway Shire Council, where vulnerable people are likely to be situated is included as Appendix X which includes:

- Maternal and child health centres
- Childcare centres
- Primary and secondary schools
- Camp facilities.
- Mental health and drug treatment facilities
- Caravan parks
- Aged care facilities

Council also maintains a 'Funded Agency Contact List' of agencies that provide services to vulnerable people.

2.4 History of emergencies

2.4.1 Bush fire

Colac Otway Shire is prone to fires both in the grasslands in the north and the forested areas throughout the south. From early in the century the Shire has suffered significant losses of life, property and livestock in the fires of 1919, 1939, 1944, 1977, the Ash Wednesday fire of 1983, and more recently the Christmas Day fires in Wye River and Separation Creek fires in 2015.

For a list of documented bushfires in Colac Otway Shire refer to Appendix 13.

2.4.2 Flood and storm

Parts of Colac Otway Shire can experience both riverine and flash flooding. The Barham River, flowing down from the Otway Ranges, cuts through the western side of Apollo Bay and, during prolonged rainfall, the river swells, forming a natural floodplain.

The Shire is also home to significant catchments which are vulnerable to flood events and steep topography susceptible to landslip. Storm events of 2016 resulted in multiple landslip incidents recorded along the Great Ocean Road that in 2024, eight years later, were still being repaired.

Climate change is expected to increase storm intensity. The severe windstorm that impacted Barwon Downs on 14 December 2023 being one example with trees, some around hundred years old, lifted from their roots from an intense tornado like storm.

Trail of destruction from damaging storm

Share this:  



WILD WEATHER: Ed Morrissy, pictured on the Forrest-Colac road, and SES crews were busy on Wednesday morning cleaning up from a devastating storm which hit the region.

2.4.3 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Colac Otway Shire. By August 2020, 40-45% of businesses in Colac Otway Shire were registered to receive government support payments. Covid restrictions on tourism visitation and business operations had a major very significant impact on tourism, one of Colac Otway Shire's largest sectors of the economy. By the six months ending June 2020 visitation levels to the Great Ocean Road decreased by 40% of the previous six months on average.

Business and community relief support increased with businesses required to transform their operations to keep afloat and continue to provide services. Food relief providers in the municipality experienced high demand. Council, health services and support agencies worked closely to ensure testing, vaccination and appropriate healthcare was available and accessible for community.

2.4.4 Other emergencies

Bass Strait, which forms the southern boundary of the Shire, has a history of maritime disasters dating back to the settlement of Victoria. With improvements in maritime technology and navigation, the risk of shipwreck has diminished although the potential for emergencies including oil spills at sea is still a risk.

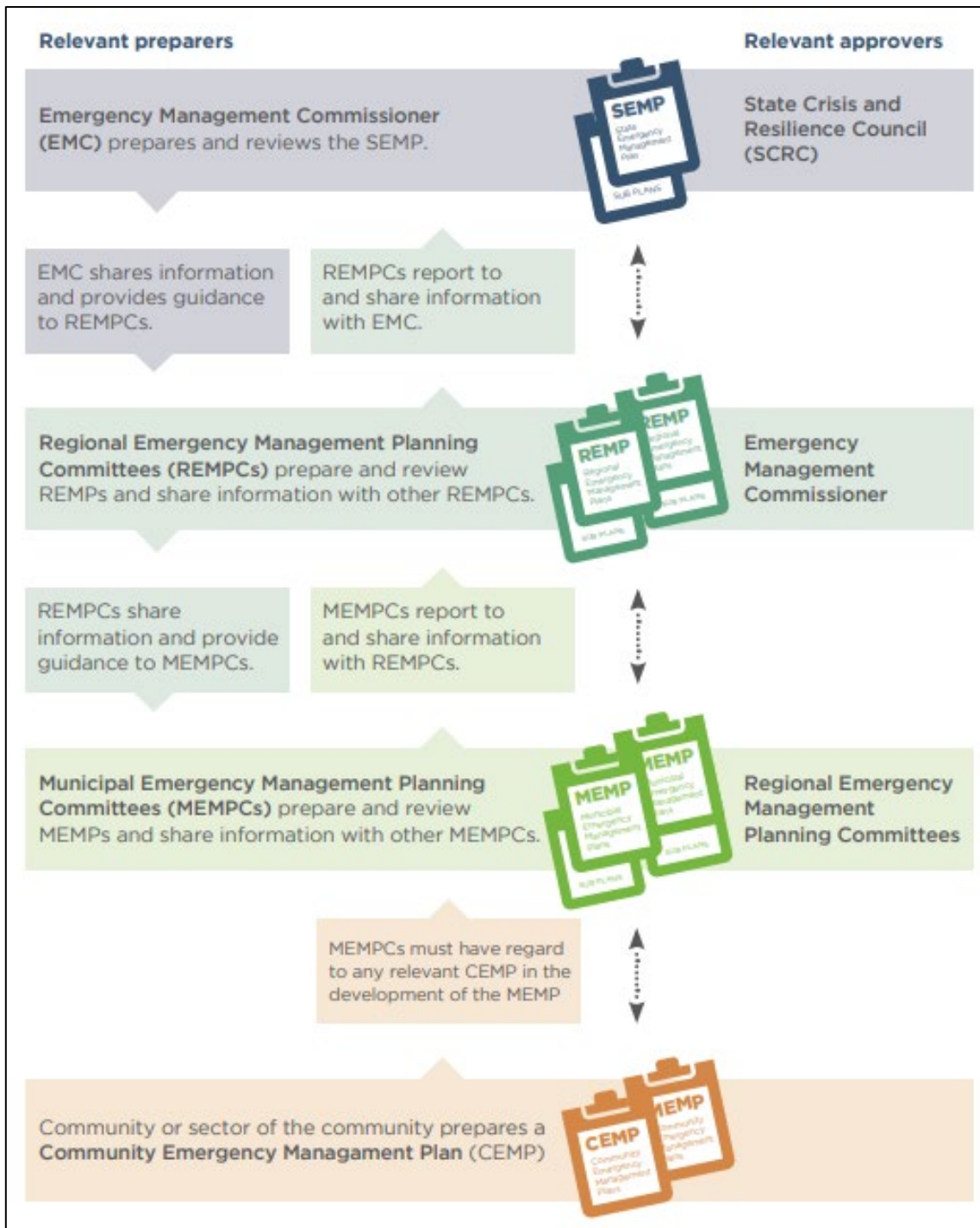
The extensive road network within the Shire includes the Hamilton Highway, Princes Highway and Great Ocean Road and many other roads that have increasing amount of tourist traffic. Road accidents occur regularly and the risk of major collisions involving many casualties on the Great Ocean Road and hinterland is high.

A history of emergency incidents in the Shire is included as Appendix 13.

3 PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Victorian emergency management planning framework

This plan supports holistic and coordinated emergency management arrangements within the Barwon South-West Region. It is consistent with and contextualises the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and Barwon South-West Regional Emergency Management Plan (BSW REMP). The BSW REMP is a subordinate plan to the SEMP and the MEMP is a subordinate plan to the BSW REMP. To the extent possible, this Plan seeks not to conflict with or duplicate other in-force emergency management plans that exist.



Framework for emergency management planning, Source: State Emergency Management Plan

The MEMP must also have regard for any Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) prepared in the Shire. Community Emergency Planning is a community led approach driven by each community. Colac Otway communities, including Apollo Bay and Forrest communities are actively involved in community emergency planning and have developed their own CEMPs. These plans are community owned and not a sub-plan to the MEMP. The process of community led planning, which is strongly encouraged, is seen as community development, resilience building and community preparedness for emergency. The CEMPs are communicated to the MEMPC for awareness and integration into municipal planning through the Council members of the committee.

The MEMP is also consistent with the [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#) which sets out a common language and processes that planners at the State, regional, municipal, community, agency or group levels are encouraged to integrate into their emergency management planning.

The Victorian Preparedness Goal is:

“A safer and more resilient community that has the capabilities to withstand, plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies that pose the greatest risk.”

3.2 Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

The Colac Otway Shire MEMPC is established in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (S59). The MEMPC is responsible for preparing this plan.

The MEMPC is multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to ensure that appropriate emergency management planning occurs in the Shire. The Colac Otway Shire MEMPC also includes two community members who provide a community perspective to the committee.

Sub-committees and Working Groups are appointed by the MEMPC to take on the responsibility of planning for specific risks or tasks such as fire management and community relief and recovery. The MEMPC also works with other agencies that are represented at regional level when required and other agencies not represented on the MEMPC such as Traditional Owners Corporations, where relevant.

Chair - A Council Officer nominated by its CEO (usually the Municipal Emergency Manager)

Core committee (to comply with the Emergency Management Act 2013) - Victoria Police (usually the MERC), Victoria State Emergency Service, Country Fire Authority, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Ambulance Victoria, Australian Red Cross

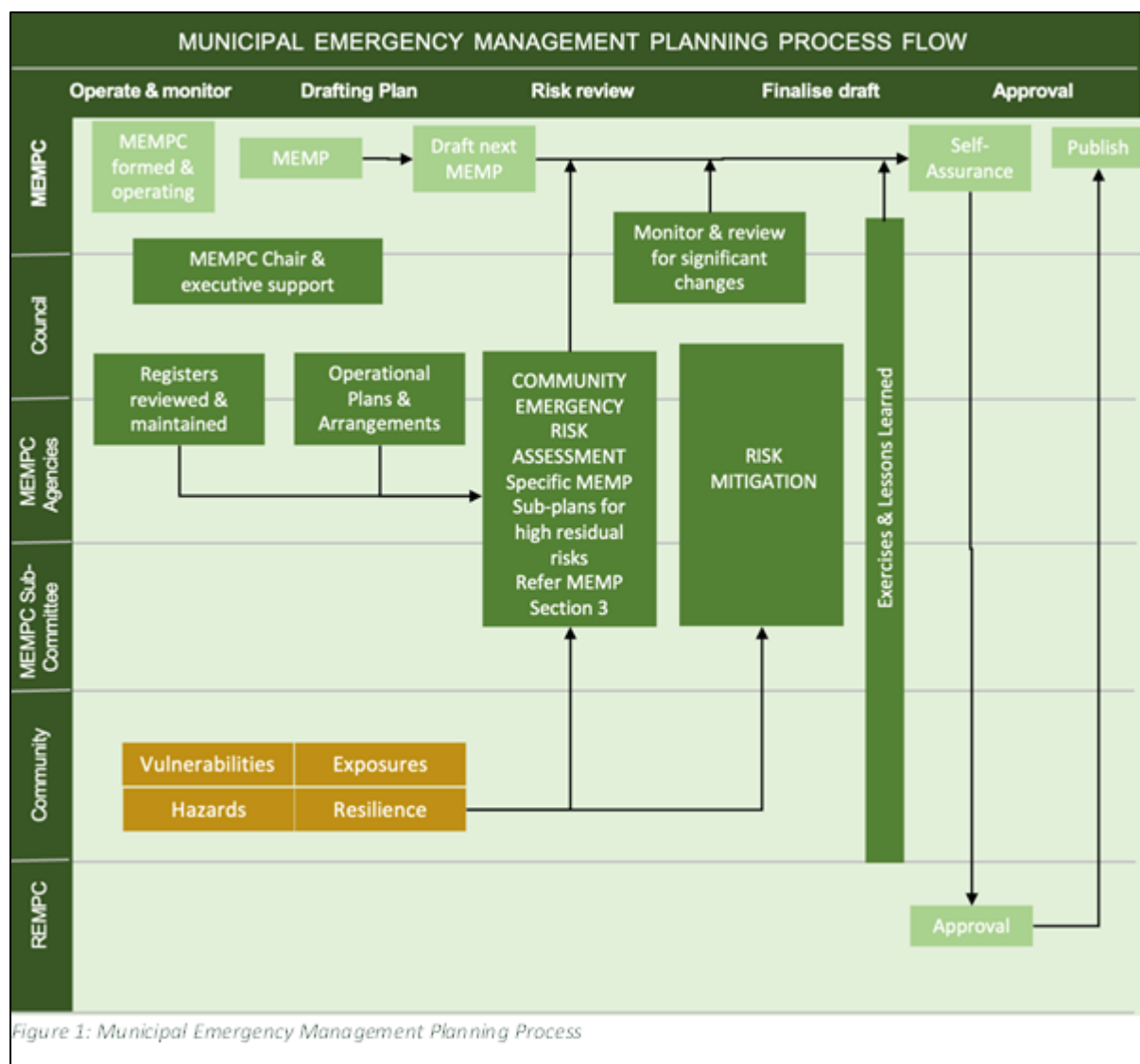
Council - Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO), Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM), Colac Otway Shire Council Emergency Management Officer (Secretariat)

Other government departments – (invited in addition to core membership to ensure adequate planning for relevant hazards) Department of Health, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Parks Victoria, Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, Emergency Recovery Victoria, Agriculture Victoria and Barwon Water.

Community, recovery and other representatives - Independent Community Representatives

See Appendix 11 for the Terms of Reference and the Committee Membership

3.3 Municipal Emergency Management Planning Process



3.4 Sub-plans and complimentary 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 to this Plan are subject to the same preparation, consultation, assurance, approval, and publication requirements as this Plan, as outlined in the Act Part 6. Agencies with roles or responsibilities in a sub-plan must act in accordance with the plan (Act S60AK).

Title	Location (Council's CM link)
MEMP Sub Plans	
Otway District Strategic Fire Management Plan	D22/48010
Apollo Bay Response Plan Bushfire	D23/1100061
Forrest Response Plan Bushfire	D23/1100064

Gellibrand Response Plan Bushfire	D24/78105
Wye River Response Plan Bushfire	D23/1100066
MEMP Complimentary Plans	
Otway District Relief & Recovery Plan (draft)	D24/31651
Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan	D23/1129092
Birregurra Flood Study	D23/1069572
Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Sub Plan	D22/199020
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority Emergency Response Plan (to be published later in 2024)	ccma.vic.gov.au
MEMPC Procedures and Operating Guidelines	
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee Terms of Reference	D24/95673
Council Procedures and Operating Guidelines	
Emergency Relief Centre Standard Operating Guidelines	D21/281989
Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee Terms of Reference	D23/1033542
Single Incident Flow Chart	D24/136010
Secondary Impact Assessment Procedure	D22/80923
High Risk weather day – preparation checklist	D24/32271
Other Relevant Documents	
Community Emergency Risk Assessment – Jan 2020	D21/189619
Memorandum of Understanding – Otway District Relief and Recovery Planning Committee	D23/1033540

Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) have been developed or planning processes underway as follows:

- Fire Ready Apollo Bay <https://firereadyapollobay.org.au/>
- Forrest community bushfire and emergency planning <https://www.forrestvictoria.com/events/event/community-bushfire-and-emergency-planning>
- Wye River Bushfire Plan

3.5 Restricted information

Section 60AI(2) of the EM Act 2013 allows the MEMPC and Emergency Management Victoria to exclude information from this published plan that is related to critical infrastructure, personal information or information that is of a commercially sensitive nature. A short summary of the restricted information is included here, including who the contact point is should the user of this plan seek access to this information.

Summary of the restricted information	Reason for restriction	Agency that holds this information in full	Contact point
Appendix 3 – Barwon South West Contact Directory	Personal Information	Department of Families Fairness and Housing	EMCOP
Appendix 4 – Community Network Contacts	Personal information	Colac Otway Council	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
Appendix 11 – MEMPC Terms of Reference	Agency representative contact details	Colac Otway Council	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
Appendix 8 – Vulnerable Community Facilities	Information that is commercially sensitive in nature	Colac Otway Council	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
Appendix 1 - Emergency Relief Centre locations	Operational information	Colac Otway Council	Municipal Emergency Management Officer

4 RISK MITIGATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Introduction

Emergency risk management is a process which aims to reduce risks within a community. This can be done by identifying the risks that a community faces, assessing the vulnerability of the community to those risks and providing options to reduce or eliminate the risks.

Emergencies of some kind or another occur every day within a municipality. The aim of emergency management is to reduce the likelihood and/or consequence of these emergencies – this is referred to as risk mitigation.

4.2 Risk mitigation

4.2.1 Risk determinants

The concept of risk in the context of emergency management combines an understanding of the likelihood of a hazardous event occurring with an assessment of its possible impacts (consequences). Risk is the outcome of interactions between a specific hazard (for example bushfire) and assets or functions that are of value to the human system. The consequence from this interaction will be dictated by determinants of exposure, vulnerability/resilience of specific assets, values or functions. The response to an event will also interact with, and impact, the extent of consequences.



*Interactions between determinants of risk from 'A framework for complex climate change risk assessment'
Nicholas P. Simpson et.al.*

4.2.2 Risk mitigation as a shared responsibility.

Emergency risk management is a shared responsibility and therefore should be understood and managed at individual, household, community, business and government levels.

- **Individuals and households** should undertake diverse activities to mitigate emergency risks to oneself and others, support response activities by the emergency management (EM) sector and meet their own relief and recovery needs where possible.
- **Business** (small, medium and large) should undertake diverse activities to mitigate emergency risks to employees and customers, support response activities by the emergency management (EM) sector and meet their own relief and recovery needs where possible.
- **Community groups and networks** should undertake diverse activities to mitigate emergency risks, support response activities by the emergency management (EM) sector and meet their own relief and recovery needs where possible.

Government agencies can mitigate emergency risk mitigation in many ways, for example, they can:

- Formulate and implement policy and regulation (such as land use planning and building regulations and floodplain management) to mitigate the risks.
- Build, operate and maintain infrastructure to appropriate standards.
- Promote financial resilience to emergencies through, for example, encouraging adequate home and contents insurance.
- Facilitate community resilience to, and awareness of, risks and promote protective actions by others.

4.3 The role of MEMPC in risk management

Agencies participating in the MEMPC have a key role in emergency risk assessment and mitigation.

The Colac Otway MEMPC has endorsed the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) as its method of risk assessment. The CERA is an all hazards, all agencies integrated risk assessment approach developed and maintained by the VICSES is designed to systematically identify hazards, determine risks and prioritise actions to reduce the likelihood and effects of an emergency. The CERA process is consistent with Australian Standard AS/NZS ISO 31000 2018 Risk management – principles and guidelines.

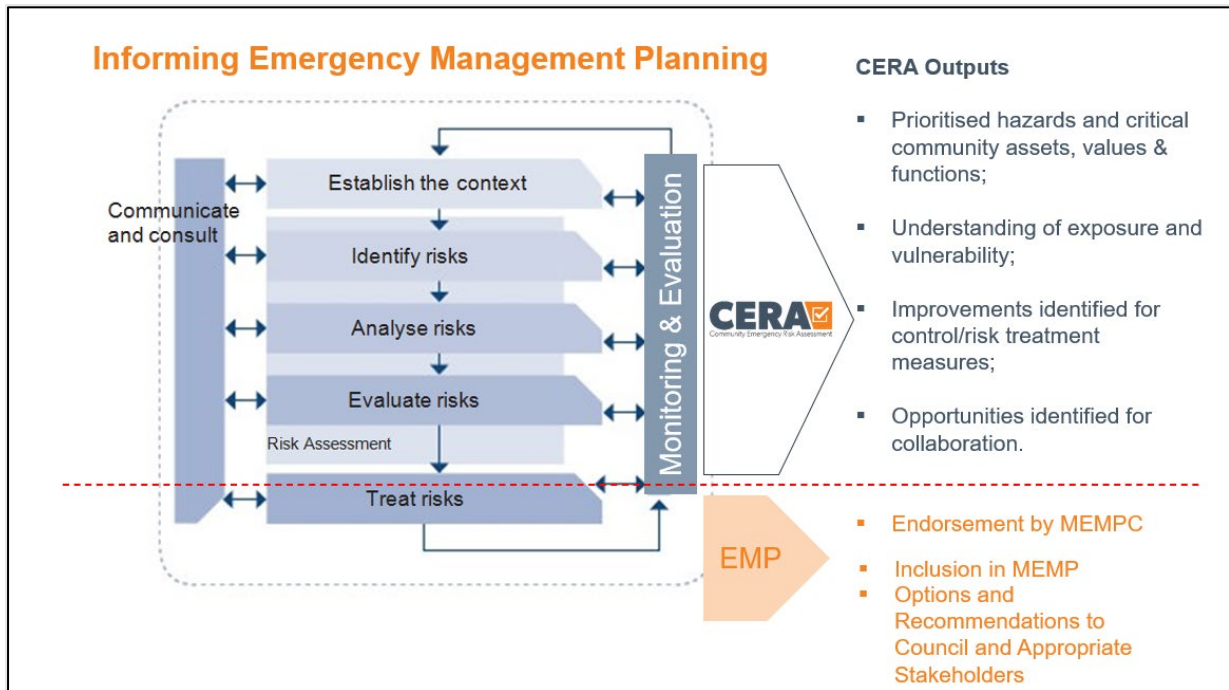
If a major risk is identified by the MEMPC as requiring assessment and the relevant agency is not represented on the MEMPC, that agency will be requested to provide information to the CERA process.

Most risk mitigation activities occur within respective organisations outside of the MEMPC. An example is the Victorian Fire Risk Register - Bushfire (VFRR-B) which involves representatives from local government, fire services, public land managers, utilities and community groups mapping assets at risk from bushfire and assessing the level of risk to the assets. The VFRR-B supports and informs our MEMPC's Otway District Strategic Fire Management Plan.

The MEMPC also has a responsibility to ensure new or emerging risks relevant to the Shire are properly planned for. For example, recent emerging risks relevant to planning at the municipal scale might range from cybersecurity to renewable energy facilities.

4.4 CERA risk assessment - process and results

4.4.1 The CERA process



National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG)

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 MEMPC and key stakeholders from the major emergency service/support organisations have identified the top risks in the Shire. These risks are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

4.4.2 CERA results

The current risk assessment recorded on the CERA portal is as follows:

Hazard	Risk rating	Mitigation action status
Storm	High	draft
Rescue	High	accepted
Human disease (pandemic)	High	accepted
Flood	High	accepted

Hazard	Risk rating	Mitigation action status
Essential Services Disruption	Medium	accepted
Landslide	High	accepted
Structural failure	Medium	accepted
Storm	High	draft
Earthquake	High	draft
Bushfire/ Grassfire	High	draft
Hazardous Materials Release - marine	High	draft
Fire- Commercial/ Industrial/ High-rise (commercial)	High	draft
Extreme Temperatures (heat and cold)	Medium	draft
Hazardous Materials Release - land	High	draft

The MEMPC has commenced a CERA review to update its important risks and determine if current controls adequately mitigate the risks or if additional risk mitigation controls are needed. The MEMPC will implement a schedule for regular risk review as part of its MEMPC meetings. Any new or emerging risks will be identified as part of this process.

An updated snapshot of risks for the Colac Otway municipality will be included in this plan once the review is complete.

4.5 Community resilience building

Community development programs that aim to build resilience is a vital component of prevention and preparedness because resilient communities are well prepared, better able to respond to an emergency, have reduced consequences and are better able to recover from the impacts of an emergency.

Colac Otway Shire Council, together with emergency management services/agencies actively engage the community through a range of mechanisms including community programs and projects, media releases, advertisements, Council's website and newsletters. Recently, the MEMPC appointed two community members to help make sure the MEMPC remains focused on the needs of its community and building their resilience.

Victoria's Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management (<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/resilience/community-resilience-framework-for-emergency-management>) is about ensuring that the actions of those involved in emergency management in Victoria help to build a safer and more resilient community.

The Framework identifies resilience characteristics that emergency managers should aim to strengthen and encourage in communities. These characteristics are:

- Safe and well
- Connected, inclusive and empowered
- Dynamic and diverse local economy
- Sustainable built and natural environment
- Culturally rich and vibrant
- Democratic and engaged
- Reflective and aware.

These characteristics reflect the qualities that enable communities to avoid or manage emergencies, and to rebuild and re-establish when necessary.

Increasing resilience involves a focus on the strength and sustainability of a community's lifelines, as well as building and strengthening the links between people and the services, systems and structures that support the community to function.

Local examples of community resilience capacity programs in include:

- Emergency management planning by the Apollo Bay, Wye River and Forest communities.
- CFA's Local Area Information for each of the Colac Otway townships, detailing current fire danger ratings, social media links, maps, Neighbourhood Safer Places, Brigades and current events and meetings. Go to www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/cfa-local-find-local-area-information

5 RESPONSE

5.1 Introduction

The [State Emergency Response Plan Part 3](#) (SEMP) defines Emergency Response as:

“The action taken during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs.”

Emergency response is based on a set of arrangements which are always in effect, which means there is no need for activation of response. Agencies or strategies may be activated when needed. Emergency response arrangements operate for any emergency, no matter how small, in which more than one organisation is involved in emergency response.

The SEMP outlines response arrangements (including roles and responsibilities) for emergencies as directed by the Emergency Management Acts. The Emergency Management Commissioner leads the response to major emergencies in Victoria and is accountable for ensuring the response to emergencies in Victoria is systematic and coordinated.

5.2 Response management arrangements

Response management arrangements provide for the structure of appropriate resources to manage emergencies throughout the state. It also provides for requests for assistance from the Commonwealth when State resources have been exhausted.

Emergency events are categorised using three parameters:

- Operational Tier
- Class of Emergency
- Classification

5.2.1 Operational Tier

Victorian emergency response management operates at the following three tiers:

- Incident
- Regional (also where multiple regions are involved, they may be combined into Zones)
- State

Emergencies are managed at the lowest tier until the event requires escalation to a higher level. State level arrangements are outlined in the SEMP and regional level arrangements in the Barwon South-West Regional Emergency Management Plan (BSW REMP). Where multiple regions may be involved in an emergency they may be combined into Zones. In the case of Colac Otway Shire, this would be West Zone.

5.2.2 Classes of Emergencies (including non-major emergencies)

The State Emergency Management Plan categorises emergencies into three classes:

Class 1 Emergency – is a major fire or any other major emergency for which Fire Rescue Victoria, the Country Fire Authority or the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority is the Control Agency under the SEMP

Class 2 Emergency – is a major emergency which is not a Class 1 emergency: or a warlike act or act of terrorism, or a hi-jack, siege or riot.

Class 3 Emergency - is a warlike act or act of terrorism. Class 3 emergencies may also be referred to as security emergencies.

Within these classes of emergencies, emergency service and supporting agencies work together at the state, regional and incident tiers to ensure collaboration and coordinated whole of government approach to the management of emergencies.

Non – major emergency - Other events that are not a Class 1, 2 or 3 emergency, but still meets the definition of an emergency. The most senior member of Victoria Police at the first response to a non-major emergency is the incident emergency response coordinator (IERC). For a minor incident or in the absence of the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) the IERC performs the coordination role of the MERC. The IERC is assisted by the MERC if required. Responsibilities of the IERC are listed in the SEMP.

Municipal Recovery Managers (MRM) within Council are responsible for recovery coordination for non-major emergencies. They are assisted by Regional Recovery Coordinators within Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) as required.

Many small events, that meet the definition of emergency, are managed by community members or through the normal or business continuity arrangements of industry, agencies or government and the roles and responsibilities listed in the SEMP.

Refer also to Appendix 16 – Single incident flowchart

5.2.3 Classification

There are three classifications of emergency response:

Level One – Small Scale Emergency (less than 24- hour impact) - Level one incident normally requires the use of local or initial response resources.

Level Two – Medium Scale Emergency (more than 24 hours) - A level 2 incident is more complex in size, resources or risk than Level One. It is characterised by the need for:

- deployment of resources beyond initial response
- sectorisation of the emergency
- the establishment of functional sections due to the levels of complexity or
- A combination of the above.

Level Three – Large Scale Emergency (multiple days impact) - A level 3 incident is a large- scale emergency and is characterised by the levels of complexity that will require the activation and establishment of an ICC. This level of emergency will require forward planning as the emergency continues and will specifically require recovery planning during the early stages of the response phase of the emergency.

5.3 Command, Control, Coordination

Emergency response management is based on the functions of *Command, Control and Coordination*. Including *Communication, Consequence, and Community Connection* into this well-established and tested emergency management system is the next logical step to better focus on the community being central to everything we do in emergency management.

Command – the internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency, operating vertically within the agency.

Control – the direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies.

Coordination – the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies.

Communication – the engagement and provision of information across agencies and proactively with the community to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Consequences – the management of the effect of emergencies on individuals, the community, infrastructure and the environment.

Community Connection – The understanding of and connecting with trusted networks, trusted leaders and all communities to support resilience and decision making.

These functions are detailed further in the Response section of the [SEMP](#).

5.4 Incident Controller and Structure

The Incident Controller is appointed and deployed through defined arrangements for a Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies. They have overall responsibility for incident response operations even when some of their responsibilities have been delegated.

The Incident Controller will establish a control structure to suit the circumstances and monitor its performance. This may include an Incident Management Team (IMT) and an Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT).

The IMT supports an Incident Controller to perform their control function. The IMT is usually part of an overall incident management system adopted by the agency for the specific class of emergency. Members of the control and support agencies provide the Incident Controller with support in functions that could include:

- Planning
- Intelligence
- Public information
- Operations
- Investigation
- Logistics
- Finance

The IEMT supports the Incident Controller in determining and implementing appropriate incident management strategies for the emergency. Their focus is on managing the effect and consequences of the emergency. If the emergency is large enough to require an ICC the IEMT would exist as an Emergency Management Team (EMT) with the same purpose.

The SEMP outlines which agencies have responsibilities for each type of emergency. A Control Agency is assigned to control the response activates for a specific type of emergency. A Support Agency is defined as a government or non-government agency that provides essential services, personnel, or material to support or assist a Control Agency or other Support Agencies.

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) contains further details on the members and purpose of the Incident Controller, IMT, IEMT and Control Agency and Support Agency.

5.5 Municipal Emergency Coordination

Councils undertake a support role to the control agency during the response to an emergency. The primary role of municipal emergency management coordination is to coordinate the provision of Council's human and material resources within the municipality during emergencies. It also assists in maintaining an overall view of the operational activities within this Plan's area of responsibility, for recording, planning and debrief purposes. Municipal emergency coordination may also be required during support operations to a neighbouring municipality.

5.6 Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC)

Colac Otway Shire Council will perform the function of its coordination through a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC) that brings together key council staff, to coordinate the provision of council and community resources during an emergency for the response and recovery effort.

Provision of the MECC functions may be conducted remotely in the first instance or, in the event of a complex, large or protracted emergency, in a designated MECC room at COPACC Colac.

Administrative staff for the MECC will be drawn from municipal employees.

Whilst there is no formal requirement for the MERC or agencies to attend the MECC, they are welcome to do so if it assists in their response effort.

5.7 Crisisworks

Like most other Councils in Victoria, Colac Otway Shire Council use the cloud-based program Crisisworks to assist in the management of their emergency response. Crisisworks can be used to track requests and activities relating to the incident, record information about impacted community members; and record and track impact assessment data to assist in the recovery phase of the incident.

Crisisworks can be used as a multi-agency platform to manage response and recovery activities to an emergency incident from a municipal level. Contact the MEMO to obtain a user account for your agency.

The Vulnerable Persons Register is a module of Crisisworks but only accessible by those with certain permission.

5.8 Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP)

Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP) is a web-based information gathering, planning and collaboration tool that runs on any full screen device with a modern browser such as desktop computers, laptops and tablets. It is designed to provide users with a simple way to gather, organise, create and share emergency management information between emergency managers at no cost to agencies. It also acts as a portal to state government agency web sites and planning tools.

EM-COP can be used in any control centre, shire council, not-for-profit relief organisation, essential service provider or on the ground. It is used before an emergency (to help plan and prepare), during and after an emergency (to assist with recovery). EM-COP can also be used to manage planned events. Refer to EM-COP for further information.

5.9 Planning for cross boundary events

Planning for both response and recovery at the regional level is required because many emergencies traverse municipal boundaries, and because many services provided by State government agencies are administered and delivered at a regional level.

At a local level, communication of identified risks across municipal boundaries take place through provision of MEMP plans to municipalities that border Colac Otway Shire. Every opportunity is taken to include bordering shires with fire management planning and MEMP relief and recovery exercises and to contact those municipalities if new risks are identified that may impact them.

Neighbouring Councils

Surf Coast Shire	5261 0600	www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au
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Corangamite Shire	5593 7100	www.corangamite.vic.gov.au
Golden Plains Shire	5220 7111	www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au

5.9.1 Resource Sharing

Colac Otway Shire Council is a signatory to the Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing Protocol. The purpose of this protocol is to provide an agreed position between councils for the provision of inter-council assistance for response and recovery activities during an emergency. This protocol details the process for initiating requests for resources from another council and identifies associated operational and administrative requirements.

This protocol applies to requests for human resources, equipment and/or facilities in relation to response or recovery activities associated with an emergency. Duties undertaken by council staff seconded to another council for assisting with response and recovery operations should be within the scope of councils' emergency management responsibilities as set out in the SEMP.

See: MAV Resource Sharing Protocol - <https://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/emergency-management/protocol-for-inter-council-resource-sharing>

Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Corangamite Shire have formed the Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration. This involves a Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee, a joint emergency relief and recovery plan, resource sharing arrangements in responses, planning and training. The Collaboration also shares resources under the Victorian Government's Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program (MERP) which supports rural, regional and outer-metropolitan councils to plan and prepare for emergencies.

5.10 Communication

Communication is a critical element to the response of an emergency.

Communication relates to communicating to the public, reporting to Government and communicating with stakeholder agencies during emergencies. Warnings and public information are an important element where community action is necessary, primarily to save lives and also for the protection of property and the environment.

The Control Agency has the responsibility to issue warnings to potentially affected communities and other agencies. Warnings and the release of other public information should be authorised by the Incident Controller prior to dissemination. Where extreme and imminent threat of life exists and authorisation from the Incident Controller is not practicable, warnings may be issued by any response agency personnel. Further information can be found in the SEMP.

The section below outlines the variety of ways communications are issued to the public.

5.10.1 Warning Systems

Emergency warning systems aim to warn individuals and communities in the event of a major emergency. Individuals and communities, however should still prepare themselves in case of an emergency. Once the decision has been made to issue a warning, the emergency services organisations will determine which method to use (i.e. television, radio or internet) and determine whether a telephone alert needs to be issued.

5.10.2 Emergency Alert

Emergency Alert is the national telephone warning system. Emergency Alert is not used in all circumstances, this will depend on the nature of the incident. The warning systems sends voice messages to landline telephones and text message to mobile telephones within a specific area

defined by the emergency service organisation issuing the warning message. The message will be about likely or actual emergencies such as fire, flood or extreme weather events.

5.10.3 Standard Emergency Warning Signals

The Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) is an electronic warning signal, to be used in assisting the delivery of public warnings and messages for major emergencies. It is designed to:

- Alert listeners/viewers of radio/television that an official emergency announcement is about to be made concerning an actual or potential emergency which has the potential to affect them.
- Alert the community at large, via public address system, that an important official emergency announcement is about to be broadcast.

The use of SEWS must be authorised by the Incident Controller.

5.10.4 Community Alert Sirens

Sirens to alert communities to all hazard emergencies are part of the future of Victoria's emergency warning system. There are currently no community sirens operating in the Colac Otway Shire.

5.10.5 Warning Levels

Warnings will be issued when an emergency is likely to impact, these are detailed on the VicEmergency website at www.emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare/#understanding-warnings/understanding-warnings. There are three different levels of warnings. Warning icons will be reflective of the type of emergency.



Emergency Warning – You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately. You will be impacted.



Warning (Watch and Act) – An emergency is developing nearby. You need to take action now to protect yourself and others.

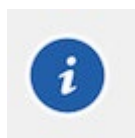


Advice – An incident is occurring or has occurred in the area. Access information and monitor conditions. Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.

Additional messages that may be issued:



Evacuation – An evacuation is recommended or procedures are in place to evacuate.



Community Information – Specific information and updates for affected communities regarding a particulate event or incident.

An “All Clear” message is issued when the incident activity in the area has subsided and there is no longer a danger to the community.

The Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub has more information about the Australian Warning System. <https://www.australianwarningsystem.com.au/>

5.10.6 Public information

The provision of information to the broader public/community, including those attending an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC), is vitally important to their capacity to understand what is happening, and to assist them in making informed decisions during a time of crisis.

Typically, the type of information provided relates to identifying the signs of and coping with stress, health matters, where and how to access financial assistance, where to access general emotional/psychosocial support, and other information relating to the specifics of the emergency.

Role of Council in public information

In many instances Council will be the first point of contact for information for community. If required a community call centre will be established to facilitate the delivery of accurate and important information.

The release of information by Colac Otway Shire Council, and all other agencies, during the response phase is the responsibility of the Control Agency in conjunction with the MERC. Any information released by Council must be approved by the MEMO (General Information) or the Chief Executive Officer / Senior Management (policy, financial, political matters). Council has organisational policies relating to media relations and social media and assistance for preparing and disseminating information will be provided by Council media and public relation staff.

5.10.7 Information resources

The following functions are an essential part of these arrangements and should be utilised when required:

- Council's media and public relations staff; and
- Police Media Liaison

If an emergency requires concurrent media response through radio, television and newspaper outlets, the Police Media Liaison section may be contacted through the MERC.

5.11 Community shelter

In an emergency, having access to and being aware of shelter options may assist people in considering how they will respond to an emergency.

The State Government's *Bushfire Safety Policy Framework* recognises that there are different ways people may respond to the threat of bushfire. This process applies to other emergencies and may include other shelter options such as shelter inside or shelter in-place depending on the emergency as has been a part of the response during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The framework includes a Shelter Options Hierarchy which ranges from the lowest to highest risk options:

- Leave Early – leaving a bushfire prone area before a fire has started on high-risk days.
- Private Bushfire Shelter (Bunker) – Under immediate effects of a bushfire and constructed to standard.
- Community Fire Refuges – a specifically designed building to provide short term shelter. There is one Community Fire Refuges in Colac Otway Shire at Lavers Hill.
- Defending a well-prepared home or property – requires adequate defensible space and extensive planning and effort. This will not be a valid strategy in all circumstances.
- Bushfire Place of Last Resort – should only be accessed when personal bushfire survival plans have failed.
- Informal gathering places – a not fit for purpose location.
- Defending an ill prepared property – very high-risk activity.
- Leaving late – once a bushfire is in the area.

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/bushfire-shelter-options/community-fire-refuges/bushfire-safety-policy-framework>

5.12 Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places and Community Fire Refuges

Bushfire Places of Last Resort (BPLRs) are municipal council designated buildings or spaces within the community that may afford some protection from radiant heat, the biggest killer during bushfire. They are a place of last resort in bushfire emergencies only. They are a last resort shelter that may assist people when there is imminent threat of bushfire and they have no plan, or their planned options are not possible.

BPLRs are identified in the Otway District Strategic Fire Management Plan and meet guidelines issued by the Country Fire Authority and the criteria in the Colac Otway Shire Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Places of Last Resort Plan.

Locations are clearly identifiable with agreed signage and information on BPLRs and locations across the Colac Otway Shire are contained on the Council's website. Processes for informing the community of the location of BPLRs are detailed in the Colac Otway Shire Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfires Places of Last Resort Plan and the CFA website.

<https://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/My-property/Fire-and-emergencies/Bushfire-Places-of-Last-Resort>

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places>

Refer also to Appendix 2 – Colac Otway Shire Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan - Bushfire Places of Last Resort

5.13 Evacuation and traffic management

Victoria Police is responsible for managing evacuation in Victoria. Evacuation is a risk management strategy which involves the movement of people to a safer location and the return of them at an appropriate time. As with all emergency response activities, the main priority when deciding to undertake an evacuation is protection of life. Evacuation is scalable in that it may be applied to individuals, a house, a street, a large facility, a suburb, a town or a large area of the state.

The decision to evacuate people at risk during an emergency is not always straight forward, as it is often based on incomplete or unverified information in a rapidly developing situation. In some cases, especially where access and egress are blocked it may not be the best option and it may be safer for people to seek other alternatives depending on the emergency.

Further information on evacuation can be found at Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) – Evacuation for Major Emergencies (JO3.12) available from EMV. Additional information pertaining to evacuation is also detailed in MEMP sub plans.

The Incident Controller is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring a traffic management plan, which may include establishing traffic management points to restrict access coordinate the implementation of the traffic management plan or traffic management points. The Great Ocean Road through the Colac Otway Shire is heavily impacted during the summer period and will therefore require traffic management during an emergency.

Further information on traffic management can be found at JSOP – Traffic Management (JO3.10) available from EMV.

5.14 Response financial arrangements

Control Agencies are responsible for all costs involved in that agency responding to an emergency.

The emergency management arrangements are predicated on the assumption that agencies agree to meet reasonable costs associated with the provision of services. The general principal is that costs that are within the reasonable means of an agency or organisation are met by that agency or organisation.

Outside the above, financial accounting for municipal resources utilised in emergencies must be authorised by the MEMO or the MRM and be in accordance with the normal financial arrangements of Colac Otway Shire Council.

The following applies to requests for resources:

- Any requests by the control agencies will be at the cost of the control agency.
- If the resource is requested by agencies working within the ICC it will be considered that the ICC has requested that resource and the control agency has approved the purchase.
- Requests made from any agency must be accompanied by a purchase order or supporting information confirming financial responsibility.

Municipal Councils are responsible for the cost of emergency relief measures provided to an impacted community and can claim some expenditure through the Disaster Recovery Funding arrangements (DFRA) which is a cost sharing arrangement between the Commonwealth and State governments to support certain relief and recovery efforts following an eligible disaster.

The Victorian Natural Disaster Financial Assistance (NDFA) guidelines align to the Commonwealth DRFA and are targeted at local councils and catchment authorities. The guidelines outline the processes, documentation requirements, reference tools, forms and templates to be used prepare and assess claims under the NDFA. Further information can be found at <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/natural-disaster-financial-assistance>

6 RELIEF

Emergency relief is the provision of essential needs to individuals, families and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

Colac Otway Shire Council has joined with Surf Coast and Corangamite Shires to establish a cross council relief and recovery committee known as the Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration. This committee recognises that one municipality alone lacks the capacity and capability to effectively address relief and recovery services following a major event. A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the three councils, the prime purpose is to request extra resources for the provision of relief and recovery services for each other, to the maximum extent practicable.

The following is a summary of Emergency Relief activities and facilities. For further information regarding emergency relief can be found in the Otway District Relief and Recovery Plan.

6.1.1 Emergency relief activities

Council, assisted by other organisations and with the support of Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) as the organisation responsible for relief coordination at Regional and State level, is responsible for implementing emergency relief measures.

- Relief services may include:
- Reconnecting families and friends (Register Find Reunite)
- Food and water
- Drinking water for households
- Material aid (non-food items)
- Psychological support (personnel support/counselling)
- Emergency shelter
- Animal welfare – livestock, wildlife, domestic animals
- Emergency Financial Assistance
- First aid
- Community Information

Relief services may also be provided remotely with the use of online resources and telephone to communicate and to support community who have been impacted by an emergency. This is often seen following a non-major emergency such as a house fire, over floor flooding or storm damage where there is an immediate need for emergency relief to mitigate hardship and family or friends provide the physically safe place to shelter.

Reports of a non-major emergency may be initiated from a range of sources but predominately from the control agency and Victoria Police. The MEMO will be notified to ensure coordination of relief services at the local level.

6.1.2 Emergency Relief Centres (ERC)

An ERC is a building or place that has been activated for provision of life support and essential personal needs for people affected by, or responding to an emergency, and is usually established on a temporary basis to cope with the immediate needs of those affected during the initial response to the emergency. The decision to activate an ERC is the incident controller in conjunction with the Colac Otway MERC, MEMO/MRM and evacuation manager. Emergency relief can also be provided at the site of the emergency.

Colac Otway Shire Council has designated appropriately assessed buildings as Emergency Relief Centres. The locations are listed in the Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration Plan. Arrangements for activation and operation of relief activities and ERCs exists and are available in this sub plan and supporting Emergency Relief Centre Standard Operating Procedures.

6.2 Impact Assessment

Impact assessment is conducted in the aftermath of an emergency 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. It is a three-stage process to gather and analyse information following an emergency event.

Initial Impact Assessment (IIA) – is a preliminary appraisal of the extent of damage, disruption and breakdown to the community and its infrastructure resulting from the emergency. This is managed by the control agency.

Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) – is a subsequent progressive and more holistic assessment of the impact of the event on the community; and considers 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 initial impact assessment. This is coordinated by the MRM (Municipal Recovery Manager)

Post Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA) – is an ongoing assessment and estimates the long-term psychosocial impacts of a community, displacement of people, cost of destroyed assets, the changes in the “flows” of an affected economy caused by the destruction of assets and interruption of business. Such assessments inform the medium and long-term recovery process and build the knowledge base of the total cost of emergencies that informs risk assessment and management. This is undertaken within the recovery structure.

For further information on impact assessment refer to EMV’s Impact Assessment Guidelines (add link)

6.3 Transition to Recovery

It is essential to ensure a smooth transition from the response phase to the recovery phase of an emergency at the municipal level. While recovery activities will have commenced alongside response activities, there will be a conclusion to the response activities and a hand over to recovery activities.

This occurs when the MERC, in conjunction with the Control Agency, MEMO and MRM, call together relevant relief and recovery agencies, to consult with, and agree upon the timing and process of the response “Stand Down”.

Working collaboratively, transition to recovery will consider if:

- The emergency response has or will soon be concluded.
- The immediate needs of the affected persons are being managed.
- The relevant agencies are ready to start, or continue, providing and/or managing recovery services.
- The Incident Controller has supplied a current handover document; and
- Sufficient damage/impact information has been passed to the MECC to enable detailed planning for recovery activities.

If an emergency is of significant size to actively involve Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV), the ERV will coordinate the Transition from Response to Recovery by requiring relevant agencies to complete and endorse an *Agreement for Transition of Coordination Arrangements from Response to Recovery*. The purpose of this document is to assist emergency management agencies involved in response and recovery to achieve a seamless transition of information, resources, management, and coordination of activities. The scope of the transition agreement arrangements includes.

- Authorisation arrangements
- Coordination and management arrangements
- Transition activities and tasks to ensure continuity of essential community support.
- Information and communication arrangements.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for facilities and goods obtained under emergency response arrangements during response to be utilised in recovery activities. In these situations, there would be an actual handover to the Recovery Manager of such facilities and goods and the details should be included in the transition agreement. This handover 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.

Resources acquired for the response, which are not required for recovery, remain under the control of the requesting response agency which remains responsible for their return or disposal.

6.4 Debriefing arrangements

As soon as practicable following an incident, all agencies and organisation involved should arrange a (cold) debrief that addresses the agency's response and asset recovery operations.

Agency and organisational debriefs are to take place prior to a multi-agency debrief to ensure that an accurate picture can be portrayed. The MERC will convene the meeting and all agencies who participate should be represented with a view to assessing the adequacy of the MEMP and to recommend changes. These meetings should be chaired by a Vic Police officer not involved in the incident. Meeting to assess the adequacy of the MEMP should be chaired by the MEMPC chairperson.

An additional debrief may be conducted for the Recovery Team to cover specific relief and recovery issues. This will be convened by the MRM and will be in addition to debriefs conducted by the MERC and MEMPC.

7 RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

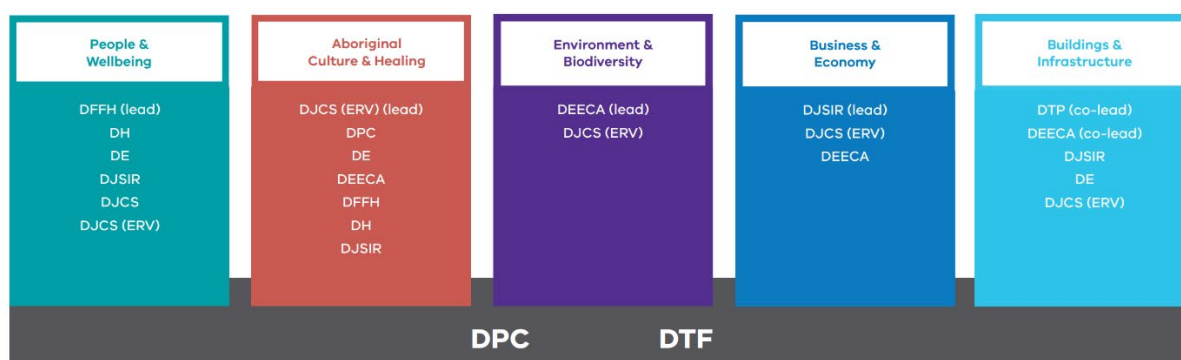
7.1 Introduction

Emergency recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency affected communities in the restoration of their emotional, economic and physical well-being, plus the reconstruction of physical infrastructure and rehabilitation of the natural environment. The process of recovery begins as soon as possible when an emergency occurs and may continue for many years post emergency.

Colac Otway Shire Council is responsible for the coordination and management of recovery at the municipal level. Emergency Recovery Victoria is responsible to support recovery at the regional and state level.

According to [Emergency Recovery Victoria's Recovery Framework](#), recovery is undertaken across five environments that provide a framework within which recovery can be planned, reported, monitored and evaluated:

- People and wellbeing;
- Aboriginal culture and healing;
- Environment and biodiversity;
- Business and economy; and
- Buildings and infrastructure.



Each environment overlaps considerably and requires coordination and collaboration to address issues arising from an emergency effectively and efficiently. The environments and their areas of activity can be adapted to meet the needs of people and communities affected, such as consideration for Aboriginal culture and healing.

People and wellbeing

Aims to ensure community members impacted by emergencies are healthy, safe and connected within their community.

Aboriginal culture and healing

Aims to ensure the voice of Aboriginal Victorians affected by disasters is represented in government decision-making. This line of recovery was designed to ensure overall recovery efforts consider and safeguard a culturally appropriate and safe recovery for Aboriginal Victorians.

For more information, refer to ERV's Aboriginal Community-led Recovery Strategy <https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/Strategy-for-Aboriginal-Community-led-Recovery-2023.pdf>

Environment and biodiversity

Aims to coordinate and support recovery efforts for biodiversity and environment with a focus on biodiversity, water and catchments, and sustainability.

Business and economy

Aims to support businesses and industry sectors impacted by disasters to recover and strengthen while ensuring employment opportunities are accessible and resilience is increased.

Buildings and infrastructure

Aims to restore essential community and state-wide infrastructure safely and quickly.

7.2 Community-led recovery

Colac Otway Shire communities have high social capital and therefore a community-led recovery will be instrumental in any recovery approach.

Community members are the first responders during an emergency, and take actions to save and protect themselves, their families and their communities. As part of this response, disaster-affected communities often spontaneously begin their own recovery processes. Recovery agencies will provide structured support, communication and coordination to assist these efforts. Community-led recovery involves the community in leading their own recovery and will be varied and relevant to the situation at the time. It is essential that the intent and process of recovery for a community is clear at the outset and may:

- involve supporting and facilitating a community to lead
- be inclusive, enabling equitable participation and building the capacity of individuals in the community to contribute and lead
- evolve around networks and connections
- resolve and embrace the “hard” issues while being emotionally supportive
- by its very nature need to be flexible to consider possibilities
- connect with both the past and future

7.3 Objectives of Recovery

Recovery for each individual and community is different. The State Emergency Management Plan outlines the Victorian Government’s recovery outcomes which guide recovery planning. They are:



The State Emergency Management Plan outlines successful recovery as:

- based on an understanding of the specific communities affected by recovery activities: each community has its own history, values and dynamics.
- recognising and responding to the complex, dynamic nature of emergencies and communities.
- community-led and community-centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with communities and supporting them to move forward.
- managed locally, closest to the community, and can be scaled up to deal with more widespread, complex issues and support needs. This recognises the key role of non-government organisations, community groups, businesses and others.
- requiring a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.
- built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.
- recognising, supporting and building on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.

These principles align recovery efforts across jurisdictions, and they can also guide recovery planning and activities that are flexible and locally driven and delivered. Engagement with the many groups that make up Victoria's communities, including Traditional Owners, is necessary to ensure the recovery process is effective and culturally appropriate.

The Barwon South West Relief and Recovery Plan (an appendix of the Barwon South West REMP), provides a regional context for relief and recovery, coordination responsibilities and shared arrangements. The plan provides direction of escalation to arrangements and recovery governance at a regional level. The BSW Relief and Recovery Committee meet regularly to work towards their objectives, including the support of municipal level relief and recovery planning. Authorised emergency management officers can access the BSW Relief and Recovery Plan via EMCOP/Desktop/BSW/Plans.

7.4 Municipal recovery arrangements

The Surf Coast, Corangamite and Colac Otway municipalities share similar risk environments from an emergency perspective. The three councils also share common responsibilities in relation to preparing for and responding to emergencies of varying scale. As such the MEMPC for each of the three Shires have formed a combined Cross-Council Relief and Recovery Committee that covers the three municipalities. The Committee has developed a memorandum of understanding for this collaboration, known as the Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration.

The Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee aims to ensure the provision of effective emergency relief and recovery services across the three municipalities. To do this the Committee focuses on the development of the Otway District Relief and Recovery Plan that addresses four major areas:

- Roles and responsibilities of the three councils
- Planning and preparedness
- Activation processes; and
- Support arrangements.

Payment for goods and services used in the recovery process is the responsibility of the MRM through the MEMPC arrangements. Resources acquired for the response, which are not required for recovery, remain under the control of the requesting response agency which remains responsible for their return or disposal.

Municipal recovery should align with the eight ERV Recovery Principles which support flexible, locally driven and locally delivered action and can be applied to deal with complex issues and support needs as required. The principles are based on the National Principles for Disaster Recovery. The 8 principles are:

1. Understand the context

Successful recovery is based on understanding the community context—the unique history, values and dynamics of a community.

2. Communicate effectively

Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.

3. Strengthen communities

Successful recovery should leave communities stronger by reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience.

4. Ensure an inclusive approach

Successful recovery recognises that communities are made of many groups and ensures that actions, both intentional and unintentional, do not exclude groups of people.

5. Recognise complexity

Successful recovery responds to the complex and dynamic nature of disasters and the community.

6. Recognise and build capacity

Successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.

7. Use community-led approaches

Successful recovery is community centred, responsive and flexible, and it relies on community engagement to support them to move forward.

8. Coordinate all activities

Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.

Further information about this recovery approach is available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-framework/principles>

7.4.1 Activation of municipal recovery coordination arrangements

Recovery coordination refers to the arrangements that will be used in any situation where more than one department, agency or organisation is required to provide services to assist communities and individuals from the impact of an emergency.

The responsibility for coordination of recovery at municipal/local level is the MRM. Depending on the event, recovery arrangements can be initiated in the following ways:

- MRM is contacted directly or indirectly (through the MEMO) by the Incident Controller, Regional Controller or Regional Recovery Manager.
- In large scale or protracted emergencies, the MRM, in consultation with the MEMO, senior Council Officers and Regional Recovery Manager, is responsible for forming the Municipal Recovery Coordination Group.

7.4.2 Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration

The Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration support arrangements allow for the three councils to provide resource support to the impacted municipality. These arrangements are enhanced by the Collaboration's Recovery Blueprint Project. Through this project, each Council has developed a relief and recovery functional structure that facilitates the best use of council's capacity and capabilities in an emergency. The project promotes consistency of approach to enable interoperability across councils.

The Collaboration train and exercise together, provide mentorship and learning opportunities and participate in strategic risk planning through their committees.

Local relief and recovery agencies are outlined in the Otway District Relief and Recovery Plan. The community profiles listed in Appendix 7 highlight community facilities, resources and values to guide recovery.

8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilities outlined in this plan are specific to the region and are in addition to, or variations on, what is outlined in the [Victorian Preparedness Framework \(VPF\)](#), SEMP and BSW REMP which outline agreed agency roles and responsibilities, noting that existing duties, functions, power, responsibility or obligation conferred on an agency by law, licence, agreement or arrangement prevail if there is inconsistency with this plan (Act s60AK).

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/sempr/roles-and-responsibilities>

The SEMP lists the following functions of MEMPCs:

- Be responsible for the preparation and review of their MEMP
- Consider community EM plans if they have been developed
- Ensure the MEMP is consistent with the SEMP, including consideration of shared responsibility for people most at-risk in emergencies, and with the relevant REMP
- Provide reports and recommendations to the region's REMPC in relation to any matter that affects or may affect EM planning in their municipal district
- Share information with the region's REMPC and with other MEMPCs to assist effective EM planning in accordance with Parts 6 and 6A of the EM Act 2013
- Collaborate with any other MEMPC that the MEMPC considers appropriate in relation to EM planning including preparing MEMPs

See [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\) | Emergency Management Victoria \(emv.vic.gov.au\)](#)

All agencies with responsibilities under the MEMP should provide confirmation of their capability and commitment to meet their obligations. Confirmation can be provided by endorsement of the draft MEMP, including revisions, before it is presented to the REMPC for consideration. An agency that has a role or responsibility under this plan must then act in accordance with the plan.

In addition, the following table lists local organisations that have emergency management functions, roles, responsibilities, or have made commitments to emergency management in the Shire that may not be include

Organisation	Function/role
Barwon Water	Dam safety, emergency water supply, wastewater treatment advice
BlazeAid	Fencing recovery
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority	Flood modelling and intelligence
Clinical labs	Covid-19 testing
Colac Area Health	Aged care, hospital care, community care. Colac Hospital
Disaster legal Help Victoria	Legal Assistance
Great Ocean Road Health	Community care, clinical services, aged care and respite. Apollo Bay Hospital
Hesse Rural Health	Acute, aged and community-based services
Insurance Council of Australia	Insurance advice
Salvation Army	Material Aid
VCC Emergencies Ministry	Personal support
Need for Feed	Livestock Fodder
Local Op shops	Material Aid
Rural financial Counselling Service	Personal support, financial counselling

9 APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 – Colac Otway Shire – Emergency Relief Centre Sites

Appendix 2 – Bushire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP)

Appendix 3 – Contact directory

Appendix 4 - Community network contacts

Appendix 5 – Exercises and briefings undertaken

Appendix 6 – Links and Resources

Appendix 7 – Community Profiles

Appendix 8 – Register of Facilities – Vulnerable People

Appendix 9 – MEMP Distribution List

Appendix 10 - Terms of Reference

Appendix 11 - Municipal Resources – Heavy Equipment

Appendix 12 – Acronyms and Abbreviations

Appendix 13 – Incidents

Appendix 14 – Single Incident Flow Chart

Appendix 1

Appendix 2 Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP):

A 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort' also known as a 'Neighbourhood Safer Place' (NSP) is a place of last resort when all other bushfire plans have failed. Your safety or survival at one of these locations is not guaranteed.

Things to know about Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP):

- It does not replace a well thought out and practised plan. Going to a *Bushfire Place of Last Resort* should be your last resort when your plans have failed.
- It may be that your home or one of your neighbours' offers better protection than an NSP.
- Travelling to an NSP when there is a bushfire can be extremely dangerous, there is no guarantee that you will be safe doing so.
- Sheltering at an NSP may not prevent death or injury from fire, embers or radiant heat.
- You should only use an NSP when your primary bushfire plan has failed or cannot be implemented.
- There is no guarantee that CFA or other emergency services will be present during a bushfire.
- No special facilities will be provided for people with special needs, including those requiring medical attention.
- NSPs have limited capacity and may be uncomfortable.
- You may be on your own, emergency service agencies may not be able to assist you at an NSP.
- Food, drinks and provision for animals will not be provided.

Locations of Bushfire Places of Last Resort – Neighbourhood Safer Places in Colac Otway Shire

Township	Location	Address
Barwon Downs	Barwon Downs Parkland	1595 Birregurra-Forrest Road
Beeac	Beeac Park	Corner of Main Street and Wallace Street
Beech Forest	Gravel area next to Beechy Hotel	Beech Forest – Lavers Hill Road
Birregurra	Birregurra Park – Grassed area at northern corner	35-39 Main Street and Strachan Street
Cressy	Cressy Community Hall	41 Yarima Road, corner of Lyons Street
Gellibrand	Rex Norman Park	Corner of Colac-Lavers Hill Road and Old Beech Forest Road

Community Fire Refuges (CFRs)

Community Fire Refuges (CFRs) are only activated and opened once there is significant fire in the local area. Community Fire Refuges offer a last resort shelter option if you cannot leave the area in the event of a fire.

CFRs are purpose-built or modified buildings that provide protection from radiant heat and embers. They are designed to be a last resort option where nearby residents or visitors can

seek shelter if they are trapped by a significant fire. The presence of emergency services is not guaranteed at a community fire refuge. Safe travel to and from the site cannot be guaranteed.

Locations of Community Fire Refuges in Colac Otway Shire

Township	Location	Address
Lavers Hill	Otway Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fire Station	8-14 Lavers Hill-Cobden Road Lavers Hill

Appendix 3 – Contact directory

Barwon South West emergency contacts

The contacts directory for the Barwon South West Region is available on the EM-COP website at

<http://files.em.vic.gov.au/OpFac/BSW/RCCBSW-Contacts-LGARespRec.pdf>

Appendix 4 – Community network contacts

This information is for operational use only, for access contact:

Agency responsible: Colac Otway Shire Council

Contact: MEMO@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Reference: CM Link D24/82097

Appendix 5 – Exercises and briefings undertaken

Otway District Collaboration Recovery Blueprint Exercise Relief and Recovery July 2022

Surf Ex 4 – Otway District Collaboration Emergency Relief Centre Exercise December 2022

'The Collaboration Games' Emergency Relief Centre Exercise October 2023

Appendix 6– Links and Resources

Emergency Management Act 1986 and 2013 www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/emergencymanagement-act-1986/051

www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/emergencymanagement-act-2013/019

Emergency Management Victoria www.emv.vic.gov.au/

Emergency Recovery Victoria www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria

State Emergency Plan (SEMP) www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/sempr

Regional Emergency Management Plans www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/emergencymanagement-planning/rempr

Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) www.ses.vic.gov.au/about-us/emergency-managementtraining/

[community-emergency-risk-assessment-cera](http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/about-us/emergency-managementtraining/community-emergency-risk-assessment-cera)

Ambulance Victoria www.ambulance.vic.gov.au

Australian Red Cross www.redcross.org.au

Country Fire Authority www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

(Forest Fire Management Victoria)

www.deeca.vic.gov.au

Department of Families Fairness and Housing <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management>
<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergencies>

Department of Health <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/>

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions <https://djpr.vic.gov.au/>

Department of Transport <https://transport.vic.gov.au/>

Parks Victoria (Fire Management) www.parks.vic.gov.au/fire-management

VCC Emergencies Ministry <https://vccem.org.au/>

Victoria Police – Emergency response www.police.vic.gov.au/emergency-response

Victoria State Emergency Service www.ses.vic.gov.au

Appendix 7 – Community Profiles

The below profiles provide a snapshot of eleven townships in the municipality including existing services and infrastructure, community groups and networks, commonly used communication channels, key risks, access and transport and location of Bushfire Place of Last Resort (if applicable)

Apollo Bay/Marengo Community Profile

Apollo Bay is a medium sized coastal town on the Great Ocean Road. Marengo is situated west of the main town. Then population increases significantly during peak periods such as public holidays and summer. International tourists travel through and visit the town year-round as they travel to Cape Otway and the Shipwreck Coast.

Nearby townships include; Skenes Creek.

Population 1,491(2021)	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
Dwellings 1,574 (2021)	Summer, public and school holidays. Year-round international visitors	Apollo Bay Seafood Festival Winter Wild Festival Farmers Market

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Bushfire, Severe Weather, Flooding, Storm Surge, Human Epidemic/Pandemic, Drowning

Other risk factors specific to the township

Large numbers of tourists in the town during events and summer holidays.
Access and egress roads may be blocked, and the town may be isolated in an emergency event.
Main access and egress roads are Great Ocean Road, Forrest/ Skene’s Creek Road. Both are narrow and windy

Community Strengths and Assets

Numerous Community Groups and connections in town including, Men’s Shed, Landcare, Apollo Bay Voice, Football/Netball Club
Local services such as P – 12 College, Great Ocean Road Health Centre, CFA, Life Saving Victoria, Vic Police, and Port of Apollo Bay
Community Emergency Response plan developed by local community <https://firereadyapollobay.org.au/>
Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Leisure Centre to be used in Emergency Communications for community.
VLine bus to and from Geelong 7 days a week with regular adjoining train services to and from Melbourne
Public Transport Vic operate a bus service each Wednesday Colac – Apollo Bay.
Local media – Apollo Bay News Sheet



Barwon Downs Community Profile

Barwon Downs is a small rural hamlet to south of Colac on the Birregurra/Forrest road. As well as an agricultural focus the community includes weekender and other small acreage residences in the township. Residents travel to Colac, Forrest and Birregurra for schools/kindergarten and household shopping.

Nearby townships include; Birregurra, Deans Marsh, Forrest

Population 136	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
	Tourists travel through the township in peak holiday and summer periods	
Dwellings 93	N/A	

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Grassfire, Bushfire, Severe Weather, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Agricultural risk of Emergency Animal Disease, treed and windy roads to the south of the township.

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups and connections in town: Barwon Downs Community Group and Barwon Downs Tennis Club
 Local services such as CFA,
 Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Public Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.
 Public Transport:- Bus to and from Colac every Wednesday. Tuesday/Wednesday - Train Melbourne/Geelong- Bus Geelong/Birregurra – Bus Birregurra/Barwon Downs.
 Local Media – Find it Locally – Barwon Downs Community Notice Board - 3243
Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Barwon Downs Parkland, Barwon Downs Community Hub



Beeac Community Profile

Beeac is a small rural hamlet to the East and North of Colac on the Colac/Ballarat Road. As well as an agricultural focus there are residents who commute to nearby centres such as Colac for work.

Nearby townships include; Cressy, Colac

Population 394	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods N/A	Regular Events
Dwellings 209	N/A	Beeac Community Market

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Grassfire, Severe Weather, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Lack of Public Transport, agricultural risk of Emergency Animal Disease

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups and connections in town: Social Support Group, Book club, Playgroup, Yoga Club, Men’s Group, Beeac Progress Association

Local services such as Beeac Primary School, Beeac Community Health Centre, CFA, Police Station

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Community Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.

Public Transport: No public transport is available.

Local Media – What’s On in 3251

Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Beeac Park – Corner Main Street and Wallace Street



Beech Forest Community Profile

Beech Forest is a small hamlet situated on the ridge of the Otways, it has high visitation of day tourists during peak periods

Nearby townships include; Lavers Hill

Population 125	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
Dwellings 95	Summer, public and school holidays.	

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Bushfire, Landslide, Severe Weather, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Access roads are treed, narrow and windy with potential to be blocked in a storm or emergency event. Lack of Public transport

Community Strengths and Assets

Community groups include Otway Districts Historical Society, Community Hall committee, Beech Forest Progress Association

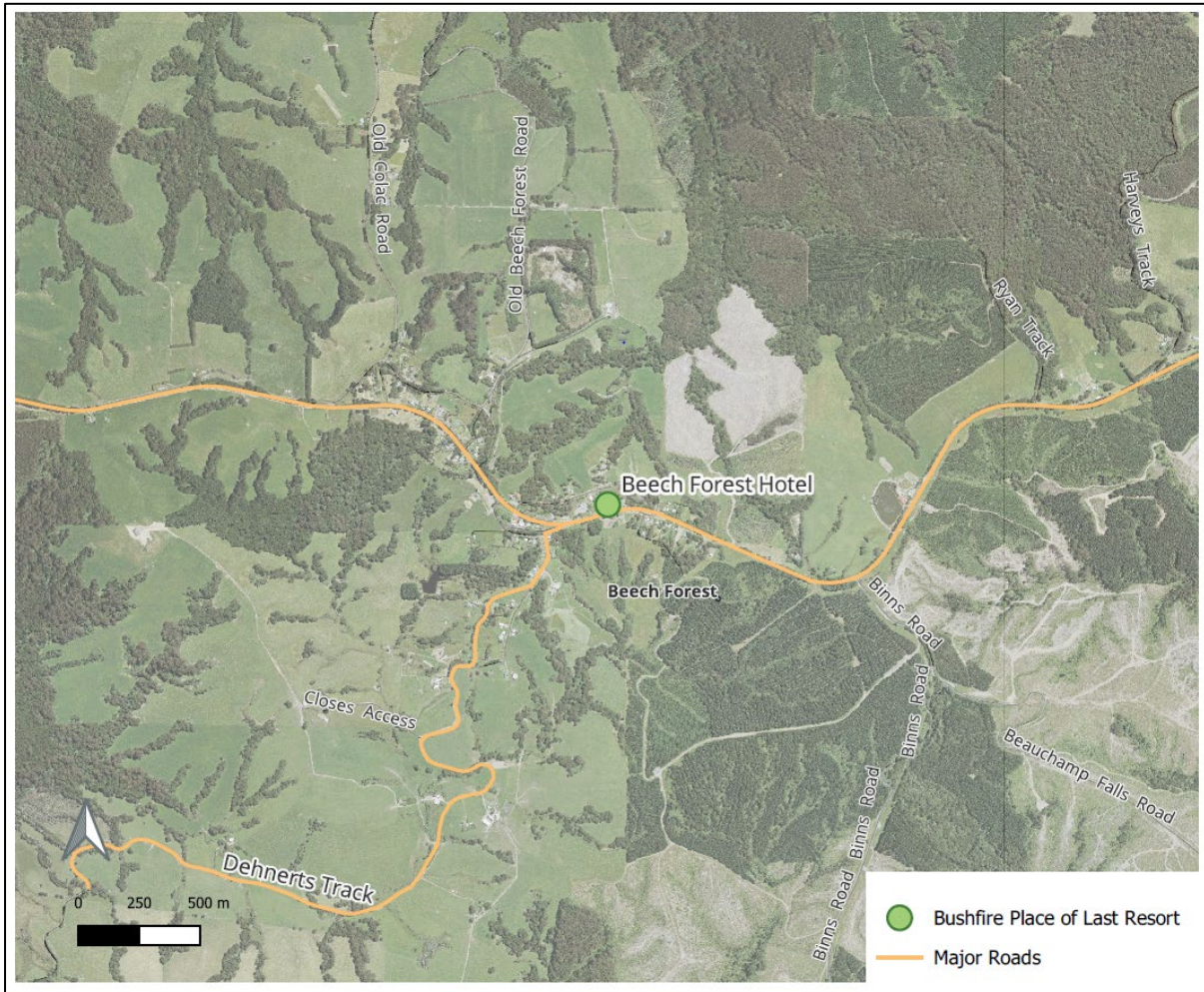
Local services - CFA

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Community Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.

Public transport: No services available.

Local Media – Otway Light

Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Grassed area next to Beechy Hotel



Birregurra Community Profile

Birregurra is a small rural township south of the Princes Highway between Colac and Winchelsea. Mainly agricultural focus with service and retail, including niche businesses and restaurants which attract day and short-term visitors.

Nearby townships include; Deans Marsh, Winchelsea

Population 942

Dwellings 461

Peak Tourist Visitor Periods

Summer, public and school holidays.
Weekend day trippers and visitors throughout the year.

Regular Events

Annual Auction
Festival/Art Show

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

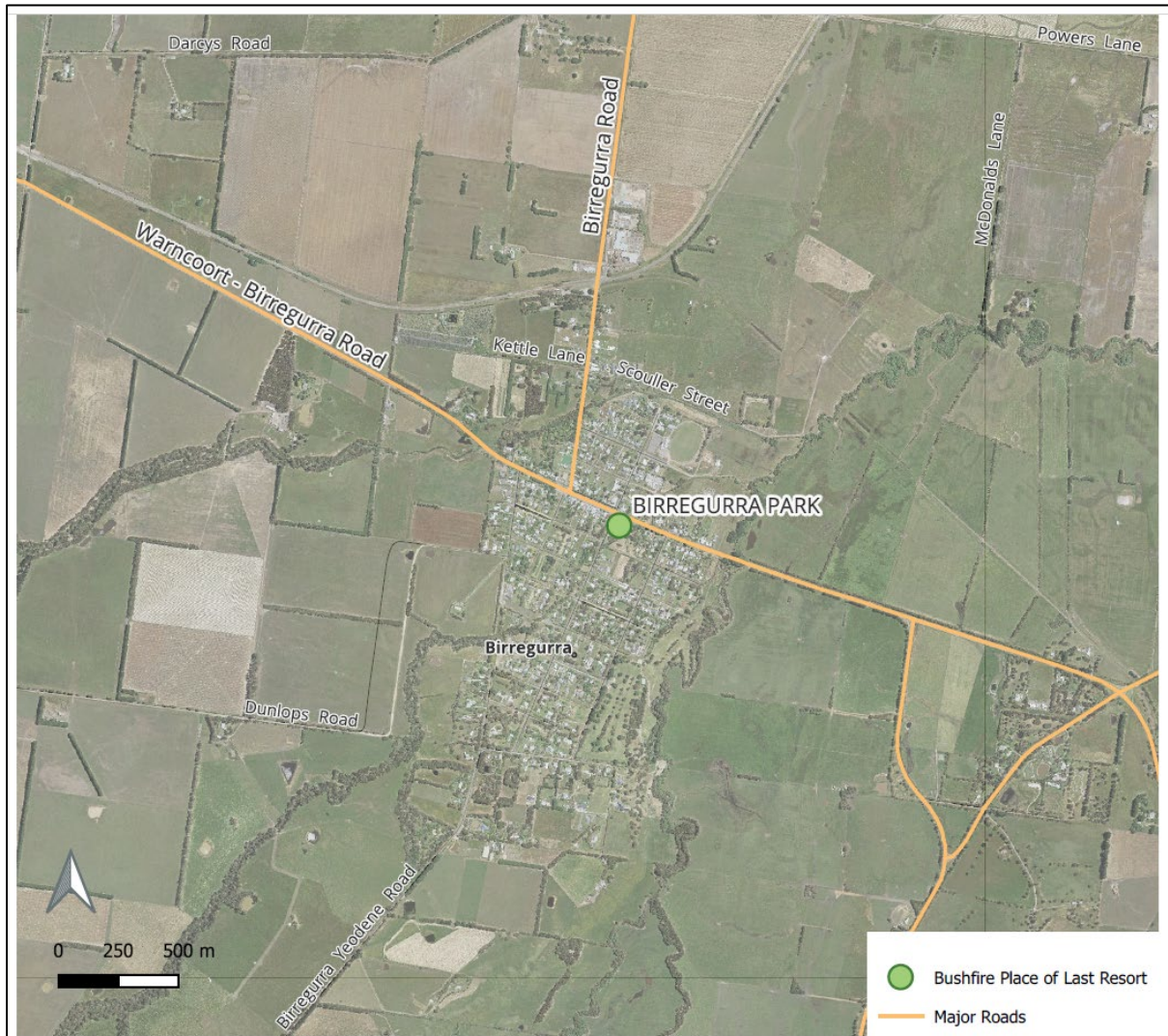
Grassfire, Severe Weather, Flooding, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Localised flooding of the Atkins creek, agricultural risk of Emergency Animal Disease

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups and connections in town including Birregurra District Historical Group, Community Arts Group, Hall Committee, Landcare, Men's Shed, CWA, Lions Club, Football/Netball Club
Local services such as Birregurra Primary School, Kindergarten, Birregurra Health Centre, CFA, Police Station, Pharmacy, post Office.
Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Birregurra Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.
Train services to and from Warrnambool/Melbourne.
Bus service to Colac and Lorne during Dec and Jan.
Local Media – Birregurra Mail
Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Birregurra Park, grassed area at Northern corner 35 -39 Main Street and Strachan St



Carlisle River Community Profile

Carlisle River is a small rural hamlet located south/west of Colac. It includes agricultural land as well as pockets of forest

Nearby townships include;

Population 168

Peak Tourist Visitor Periods

Regular Events

Dwellings 84

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Bushfire, Landslide, Severe Weather, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Access roads are treed, narrow and windy with potential to be blocked in a storm or emergency event. Lack of Public Transport . Agricultural risk of Emergency Animal Disease

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups include Landcare Group, River Detectives (CMA), Playgroup.

Local services - Carlisle River Primary School, CFA

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Community Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.

Public Transport: Not available.



Cressy Community Profile

Cressy is a small rural hamlet to the North of Colac. As well as an agricultural focus there are residents who commute to nearby centres for work.

Nearby townships include; Beeac

Population 176	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
Dwellings 101	n/a	Working Sheep dog trials.

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Grassfire, Severe Weather, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Cressy has a history of being impacted by Grassfire. Lack of Public Transport, Agricultural risk of Emergency Animal Disease

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups include Cressy & District History Group, Cressy & District Action Group, Bowling Club. Local services - CFA.

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Community Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.

Public Transport: Not available.

Local Media – Cressy Newsletter

Bushfire Place of Last Resort – 41 Yarima Road, corner of Lyons Street



Forrest Community Profile

Forrest is a small rural township with tourism focus, mountain bike riding, fishing, and niche businesses.

Nearby townships include; Barwon Downs, Gerangamete, Kawarren

Population 257

Peak Tourist Visitor Periods

Regular Events

Dwellings 165

Summer, public and school holidays.
Weekend visitation and tourist
throughout the year.

Forrest Soup Fest, Otway Odyssey
Bike Ride, annual auction

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Bushfire, Severe Weather, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Access roads are treed, narrow and windy with potential to be blocked in a storm or emergency event. No identified Bushfire Place of Last Resort in township.

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups include Studio Forrest, Men's shed, Forrest & District Historical Society, Forrest Hub, Community House, Landcare, Lions Club, Football/Netball Club

Local services - Forrest Primary School/Kindergarten/Childcare, CFA, Police Station,

"FLARE" Community Emergency Response plan developed by local community.

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Community Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.

Bus service to Colac operates on Wednesdays.

Local Media – The Forrest Post



Gellibrand Community Profile

Gellibrand is a small community in the Gellibrand valley on the Colac/Lavers Hill Road. It is a mixture of small blocks, agricultural land, and township. The township is largely in grassland and surrounded by Bush.

Nearby townships include; Kwarren

Population 230	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
Dwellings 127	Summer, public and school holidays.	Blueberry Festival, Annual Easter Picnic

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Bushfire, Landslide, Severe Weather, Storm Surge, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Access roads are treed, narrow and windy with potential to be blocked in a storm or emergency event. Limited mobile coverage in some areas.

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups include Art Group, Cards Group Garden Group, Walking Group, Acoustic Sessions, Football/Netball Club

Local services - Gellibrand Community House, Echidna House, CFA, DECCA depot

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Community Hall to be used in Emergency Communications for community.

Bus service to Colac

Local Media – Otway Light

Bushfire Place of Last Resort – Rex Norman Park – Corner of Colac – Lavers Hill Road and Old Beech Forest Road



Lavers Hill Community Profile

Lavers Hill is a small rural township situated on the ridge of the Otway's southwest of Colac. It is surrounded by native forest including Mountain Ash. It contains businesses which cater for domestic and international travellers who are visiting the Great Ocean Road, The 12 Apostles and Otway Coast.

Nearby townships include; Beech Forest

Population 87	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
Dwellings 63	Summer, public and school holidays. Year round International travellers	

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

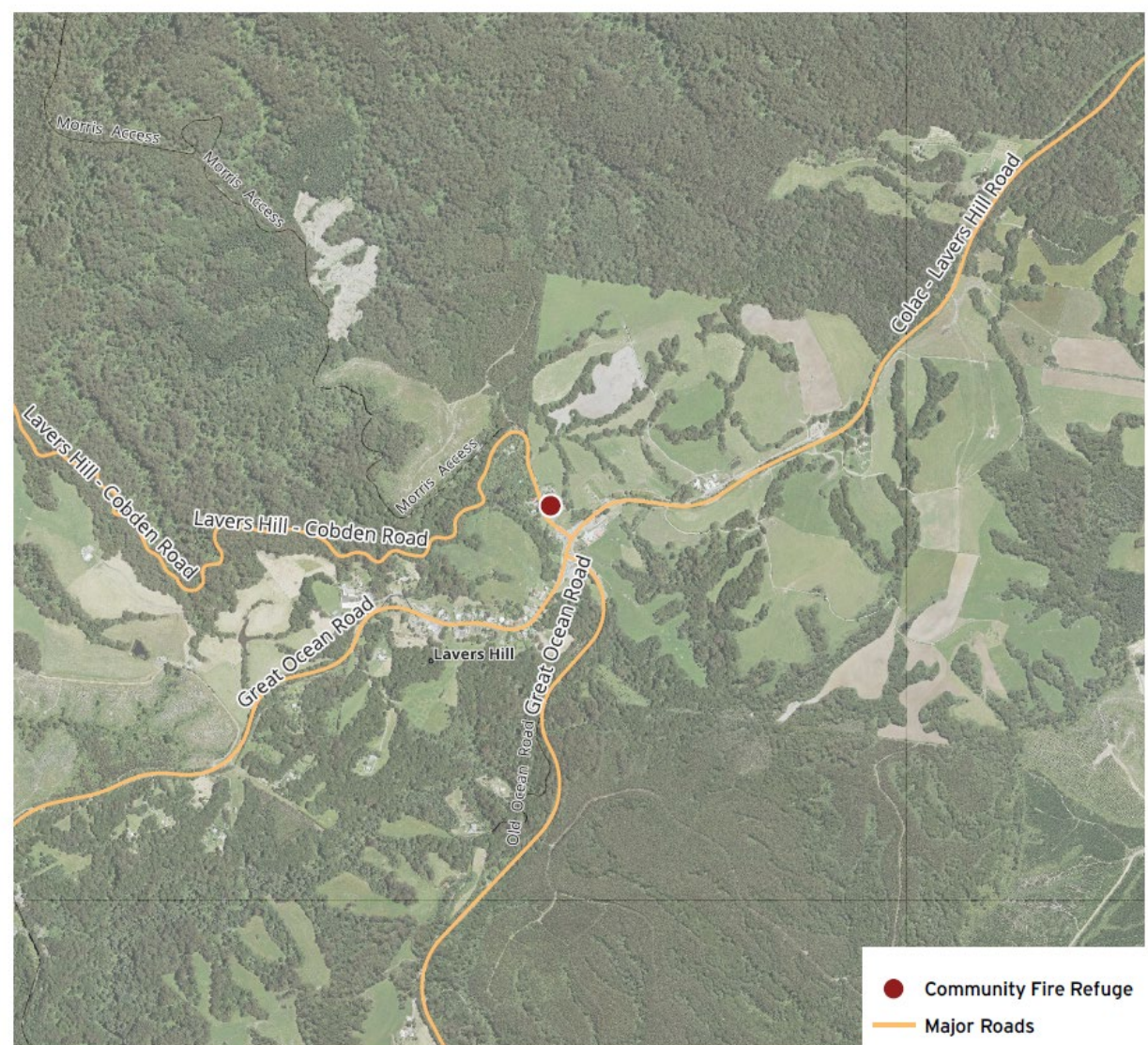
Bushfire, Landslide, Severe Weather, Storm Surge, Human Epidemic/Pandemic

Other risk factors specific to the township

Access roads are treed, narrow and windy with potential to be blocked in a storm or emergency event

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups include Lavers Hill Playgroup, Garden Club, Dance Club, Art & Craft Club.
 Local services - P – 12 College, CFA, SES, Police Station
 Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Leisure Centre to be used in Emergency Communications for community
 Bus service: Wednesdays Lavers Hill to Colac.
 Local Media – Otway Light
Community Fire Refuge located at Otway CFA Fire Station, 8 – 14 Lavers Hill - Cobden Road



Wye River/Separation Creek Community Profile

Wye River/ Separation Creek connected as a small coastal town on the Great Ocean Road. Then population increases significantly during peak periods such as public holidays and summer. International tourists travel through year round as they travel to Cape Otway and the Shipwreck Coast.

Nearby townships include; Kennet River, Grey River

Population 67	Peak Tourist Visitor Periods	Regular Events
Dwellings 257	Summer, public and school holidays.	Wye CFA Easter and Summer Fairs, Melbourne Cup weekend Fire awareness event.

Key Risks from Community Emergency Risk Assessment

Bushfire, Landslide, Severe Weather, Storm Surge, Human Epidemic/Pandemic, Drowning

Other risk factors specific to the township

Great Ocean Road access can be slow and busy during peak tourist periods, the road is potentially subject to land slip and congestion in a storm or emergency event.

Many streets in town are narrow and steep and have limited access for Emergency vehicles.

Community Strengths and Assets

Community Groups include Landcare, Wye/Sep connect.

Local services - CFA, Life Saving Victoria

Community Emergency Response plan developed by local community.

Satellite Wi-Fi installed at the Wye Surf Life Saving Club to be used in Emergency Communications for community V/Line bus to and from Geelong with regular adjoining train services to and from Melbourne



Appendix 8 – Register of Facilities – Vulnerable People

A detailed list of vulnerable facilities in the municipality is updated annually, prior to the Fire Danger Period.

This information is for operational use only, for access contact;

Agency responsible: Colac Otway Shire

Contact MEMO@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Appendix 9 – MEMP Distribution List

Organisation	Organisation
Unrestricted (full) version	Victoria Police
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colac Police Station • Geelong – Regional Emergency Response Coordinator-Inspector • Geelong – Regional Emergency Response Coordinator-WDI • Apollo Bay Police Station • Beeac Police Station • Birregurra Police Station • Cressy Police Station • Forrest Police Station • Lavers Hill Police Station
Ambulance Victoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Manager – BSW2 • Senior Team Manager – Colac 	Vic Roads, Geelong
Australian Red Cross, Divisional Operations Officer – ES Inner Barwon	Vic SES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Officer Emergency Management • South West Region Office
Barwon Water, Emergency Risk Management Advisor	Wannon Water
Country Fire Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 7 Headquarters • District 6 Headquarters 	Restricted Version
Colac Otway Shire Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEMO • MEM • MRM • MFPO • Chief Executive Officer 	Geelong Regional Library
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colac • Anglesea 	Colac Otway Shire Council, front counter, and Councillor Chambers
Department of Health, Geelong Office	Colac Regional Library
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	State Library of Victoria, Government Publications vgp@slv.vic.gov.au
Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions	Telstra Area General Manager - Geelong
Department of Transport, Emergency Management Coordinator	
Emergency Victoria Common Operating Platform - EMCOP	
Emergency Recovery Victoria	
Hospitals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colac Area Health 	
Neighbouring Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Plains Shire • Corangamite Shire • Surf Coast Shire 	
Otway Health and Community Services	
Powercor Geelong	
State Library of Victoria	
VCC Emergencies Ministry, Area Coordinator	

Appendix 10 – Terms of Reference

This information is for operational use only, for access contact:

Agency responsible: Colac Otway Shire

Contact: MEMO@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Reference: CM link D24/95673

Appendix 11 – Municipal Resources – Heavy Equipment

Plant	ID	Location	Description
Grader	540	Apollo Bay	CAT 12m Grader
Backhoe/Frontend Loader	549	Apollo Bay	New Holland Backhoe/FEL
Loader - small	293	Apollo Bay	CAT 908 H Loader
Truck 3m	551	Apollo Bay	Fusso 3m Tipper Crane Truck
Grader	387	Gellibrand	CAT 12m Grader
Truck 3m	334	Gellibrand	Isuzu 3m Tipper with Fassi M30a Crane
Truck 3m	335	Gellibrand	Isuzu NPR 300
Truck 9m	267	Gellibrand	Hino 700 series FS28844 Air
Truck 9m	574	Gellibrand	Mitsubishi Fuso Model
Tractor	377	Gellibrand	John Deere Tractor
Tractor	589	Gellibrand	Kubota B3150 Tractor
Excavator	546	Colac	Kobelco SK75SR
Excavator	565	Colac	CAT 301.8
Grader	359	Colac	CAT 12m with freeroll roller
Grader	381	Colac	CAT Grader 12m
Grader	323	Colac	John Deere 70P Grader
Backhoe/Frontend loader	36	Colac	Volvo Front End Loader
Bobcat	516	Colac	CAT Bobcat 259D
Backhoe Loader	575	Colac	4 x 4 Backhoe Loader
Truck 3m	130	Colac	2T Tipper
Truck 3m	247	Colac	Isuzu NPR 300
Truck 3m	520	Colac	Isuzu 3m Crane Truck
Truck 9m	165	Colac	Isuzu GIGA 9m Tipper
Truck 9m	259	Colac	Freightliner CST112 Tipper
Tip Truck 2t	130	Colac	Isuzu 2t Tipper
Tip Truck 3m	552	Colac	Fusso 3m Tipper
Tip Truck 9m	587	Colac	Freightliner 9m Tipper
Tip Truck (chipper) 5m	554	Colac	Hino 5m Tipper (Chipper)
Tip Truck 700 series	541	Colac	Hino 700 series Tipper
Tipping Dog Trailer	166	Colac	Hercules Tipping Dog Trailer
Tip Truck 5t	267	Colac	Isuzu Tip Truck 5 t
Tractor	590	Colac	Ventrac Mower Tractor
Tractor	573	Colac	John Deere 6110M
Tractor	599	Colac	John Deere 6110M
Water Tank 9m – 13000L	537	Colac	Hino 13000L Water Truck
Water Truck	567	Colac	1100L – slip on Water Cart (1)
Water Truck	566	Colac	1100L – slip on Water Cart (2)
Street Sweeper	290	Colac	Hino FG Street Sweeper
(VMS) Variable Message Sign	432	Colac	VMS Board Trailer Amber C size1
(VMS) Variable Message Sign	524	Colac	VMS Board Trailer Amber C size 2
Bobcat/ Skid Steer Loader	376	Saleyards	Skid Steer Loader

Appendix 12 – Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ARC	Australian Red Cross
AV	Ambulance Victoria
BSW	Barwon South West
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse – used to refer to the broad range of Victorian communities.
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DH	Department of Health
EMCOP	Emergency Victoria Common Operating Platform
ERV	Emergency Recovery Victoria
FFMV	Forest Fire Management Victoria
LSV	Life Saving Victoria
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Committee
MFMP	Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee
ODSFMP	Otway District Strategic Fire Management Plan
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMPC	Regional Emergency Management Plan Committee
COS	Colac Otway Shire
COSC	Colac Otway Shire Council
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SES	State Emergency Service
VCC EM	Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry
VicPol	Victoria Police

Appendix 13 – Incidents

Incident	Date	Details	Other
Bush Fire	25 Dec 2015	Wye River & Separation Creek – destroyed 116 homes and burnt through 2600 hectares of the Otway Ranges	
Train Crash	13 July 2016	Larpent Truck/Train crash -	19 people injured, 103 people onboard train – Truck driver critically injured 13
Workplace accident	Dec 2016	COS – Pound Road facility – Council employee	Fatality
Fire	18 Jan 2018	Dreeite fires burnt 423ha, 2 unoccupied houses lost along with substantial farming infrastructure	
Car Crash	28 Feb 2018	Car Crash into COS Rae Street building	Structural damage
Drowning	Oct 2018	Drowning - beach	Drowning
Drowning	Oct 2018	Drowning - beach	Drowning
Death	Dec 2021	Forrest Caravan Park resident	Death
Carbon Monoxide poisoning	July 2022	Woodrowvale Rd Elliminyt	Death
Quad bike accident	21 Dec 2022	Farm accident - Colac	Death
Earthquake	22 Oct 2023	Otway district	
Bus Crash	27 Mar 2024	Lavers Hill	Casualties
Glider accident	10 Feb 2024	Rossmoyne Rd Colac - Paraglider crash	Fatality

Appendix 14 – Single Incident Flow Chart

