



Wellington Municipal **Heat Health Plan**

Version 2.4 - 2019



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
The Heart of Gippsland

Contents

- 4 Introduction
- 5 Why we need a Heat Health Plan
- 6 Wellington Statistics
- 10 Extreme Heat and Health Risks
- 18 What we are going to do?
- 20 What we do in Stage One
- 22 What we do in Stage Two
- 24 What we do in Stage Three
- 28 Resources and Reference Material
- 30 Appendix 1 - External Communications Plan
- 36 Appendix 2 - Heat Health Action Plan
- 38 Appendix 3 - Frequently Asked Questions
- 40 Appendix 4 - Air-conditioned Public Places
- 43 Appendix 5 - Swimming Pools

Activation of the Plan

When a heat health alert is issued for the West and South Gippsland weather district by the Chief Health Officer, Stage 3 of the Municipal heat health plan is automatically activated.

Subscribe to heat health alerts and receive automatic alerts when temperature thresholds are reached.



Introduction

In Australia, a heatwave is defined as a period of at least three days where the combined effect of high temperatures and excess heat is unusual within the local climate (BOM 2012; Nairn and Fawcett 2013). Heatwaves have widespread impacts, ranging from direct impacts on our health to damage to ecosystems, agriculture and infrastructure (Climate Council 2014).

Climate change is already increasing the intensity and frequency of heatwaves in Australia. Heatwaves are becoming hotter, lasting longer and occurring more often.

Heatwaves and extreme hot weather have plagued much of Australia over the past few years. Preliminary accounts of the January 2014 heatwave in Victoria point to significant health impacts—203 heat-related deaths, a 20-fold increase in ambulance call-outs, a four-fold increase in calls to nurses-on-call, and a four-fold increase to locum doctors.

Wellington Shire Council and its partners are committed to promoting community

awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect.

As we face a future with an increased likelihood of hot weather, it is important that Council and its partners develop and implement a municipal wide approach to dealing with heatwave events. Our plan will provide a framework of support to our local communities and vulnerable population groups so we can be better equipped to handle more intense and frequent heatwaves.

The Wellington Shire Heat Health Plan will be used by Council and its partners in the planning for and responding to heatwave conditions. It has been developed using the general principles of emergency management as a guide to planning, preparation, response and recovery. The plan is underpinned by a long term approach by Wellington Shire Council to make our public (and private) spaces more heat friendly through the provision shade.

The Heat Health Plan has been written to:

- Be consistent with Department of Health guidelines and other Council Planning frameworks;
- Outline health, community and emergency service actions and response arrangements to heatwave alert;
- Identify vulnerable persons within the communities of Wellington;
- Propose a clear communication strategy to initiate alert, response and recovery phases of the plan;
- Describe key stakeholder roles and responsibilities; and
- Promote a community awareness and education component.

Why we need a Heat Health Plan

Local councils in Victoria have been asked to prepare heat health plans to support their local communities to adapt and minimise the health impact of heatwaves. By developing our own plan, we can use our understanding of local conditions and resources to better prepare for, respond to and recover from heatwave conditions and days of extreme heat.

High temperatures can seriously impact on the health and wellbeing of people in our shire particularly among vulnerable population groups such as babies and young children, older people, people with a pre-existing

medical condition and people with a disability. Heatwaves affect people in a number of ways. The direct effects of extreme heat can cause heat stress, exacerbate the symptoms or existing or underlying illness and, in extreme cases, cause long-term impairment or death.

Heatwaves also affect infrastructure and services, which in turn can further affect health and wellbeing. This includes power failures, breakdowns in the public transport system, cessation of some support services and overstretching of health and emergency services.

By having a Heat Health Plan, we can:

- Ensure health information and support is readily available to our community;
- Increase the capacity of our community to respond during heatwaves;
- Manage a heat health emergency more effectively; and
- Develop long term changes in our behaviour to improve our health and wellbeing.

The aim of our Heat Health Plan is to:

- Support the Wellington community to prepare-for, respond-to and recover-from heatwave conditions

We will achieve this by:

- Identifying vulnerable population groups in our community and the risks they face during heatwaves;
- Developing partnerships with local organisations to better coordinate a response to heatwaves;
- Outlining effective strategies and actions to implement in the event of a heatwave; and
- Building practices to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of the plan.

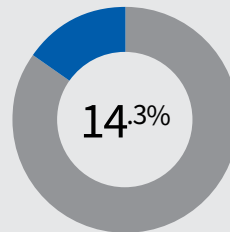
Wellington Statistics

Population 2016

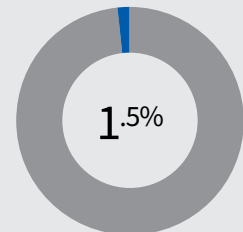
Age	Number	%
0-14	7,627	17.8%
15-24	4,656	10.8%
24-45	9,790	22.7%
45-64	12,231	28.4%
65-84	7,650	17.8%
85+	1,032	2.4%
Total	42,986	100.00%

11.5%

Percentage of the population born overseas



Percentage of families headed by one parent



Percentage of population who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



Italian, Dutch, German, Mandarin, Polish

Most common language other than English spoken at home

Need for Assistance

32.7% People receiving disability services (per 1,000 population)

15.9% People with core need for assistance

373 Number of residential aged care places

Transport



2.9%*

Of households do not own a vehicle

Housing



18,124
Number of households

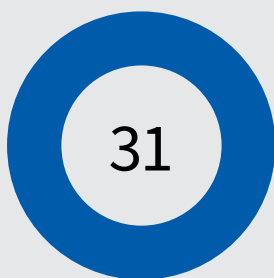
32%
People over 75 years
who live alone

20,103
Number of dwellings

20.2%
Households not
connected to the internet

Median weekly rent for 3-bedroom home	\$270.00
Median household income	\$905
Percentage of people in renting households who are living in rent-related financial stress	59%
Percentage of sole renters aged 65+ who are living in rent-related financial stress	86%
Percentage of persons with an individual income less than \$400 per week	30.3%
Homeless people (including extreme overcrowding)	0.16%

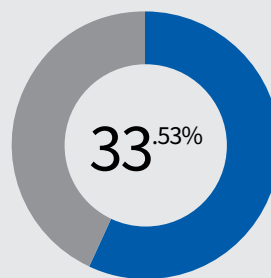
Education



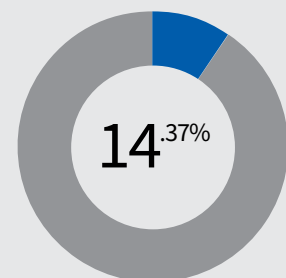
Number of
Primary Schools



Number of
Secondary Schools



Percentage of persons
who completed Year 12
or equivalent



Percentage of persons
who have a Bachelor
degree or higher

Wellington Statistics

Labour Force



24.24%

Percentage of employed persons aged 15 years and over working full time

14.58%

Percentage of employed persons aged 15 years and over working part time

2.7%

Percentage of employed persons aged 15 years and over unemployed, looking for work

31.35%

Percentage of persons not in the labour force

Top 5 industries of employment

% of population employed by industry

1	Health care and social assistance	13.7%
2	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	13.5%
3	Retail trade	10.2%
4	Construction	9.8%
5	Education and Training	8.5%

Top 5 Job Roles

% of population employed by occupation

1	Managers	16.9%
2	Technicians and Trades Workers	16.5%
3	Professionals	15.9%
4	Labourers	12.9%
5	Community and Personal Services	11.6%

Tourism

1,200,000

Annual visitors to Wellington



\$86

Contribution per visit
day trip

674,000

Domestic day trip visitors

357,000

Domestic overnight visitors

9,000

International visitors to Wellington

\$243

Contribution per visit
overnight

\$69m

Contribution per
visit day trip

\$716

Contribution per night
international overnight



Extreme Heat and Health Risks

Extreme heat events

Since 1950 the number of extreme heat days each year in Australia has been increasing. The nature of heatwaves in Australia is also changing; they are becoming hotter, lasting longer, starting earlier, and occurring more frequently (Perkins and Alexander 2013; Climate Council of Australia 2014) .

During summer 2013/2014 Victoria experienced its hottest four days on record from 14-17 January, and Melbourne set a record for four consecutive days at 41°C and above (14-17 January) and two nights in a row at 27°C or above (15-16 January) (BOM 2014).

The future climate of West Gippsland is expected to be hotter and drier than it is today, according to climate change projections published by the Victorian Government based on research by CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology. By 2070, both temperature and annual rainfall in Sale would resemble those of present day Junee in New South Wales. Warming is likely to be greatest in the summer, while the greatest reductions in rainfall are likely to occur in spring.

Although average changes in temperature,

rainfall and evaporation will have long term consequences for the region, the impacts of climate change are more likely to be felt through extreme events such as the number of hot days which are projected to double by 2070. Bushfire risk is also expected to increase. In Sale, the number of 'extreme' fire danger days is expected to increase between 5% and 45% by 2020, and by between 5% and 215% by 2050.

Although average annual and seasonal rainfall is expected to decline slightly, the intensity of heavy daily rainfall is likely to increase in most seasons by 5 to 10%. However, fewer rain days are anticipated with more droughts.

How heatwaves affect our health

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

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

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

Source - Department of Health and Human Services.

Extreme Heat and Health Risks

Heat illnesses are preventable

To help prevent the onset of a heat related illness, people in the Wellington Shire are advised to:

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

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



Who is most at risk?

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

- People aged over 65 years, especially those living alone
- People who have a medical condition such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer or kidney disease
- People taking medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat such as allergy medicines (antihistamines), some blood pressure and heart medicines (beta-blockers and vasoconstrictors), seizure medicines (anticonvulsants), thyroid medications (thyroxine), water pills (diuretics)
- People who have a mental illness, particularly those on medication (antidepressants or antipsychotics)
- People with problematic alcohol or other drug use such as amphetamines
- People with an illness or infection that causes dehydration or fever
- People with a disability who may not be able to identify or communicate their discomfort or need for water
- People who have trouble moving around (such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs)
- People who are overweight or obese
- Pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies and young children
- People who work in hot environments or are physically active outdoors (such as gardeners and labourers)
- People with health conditions that impair sweating including people with heart disease, dehydration, extremes of age, skin disorders (including sunburn, prickly heat and extensive scarring from burns), congenital impairment of sweating, cystic fibrosis, quadriplegia and scleroderma
- People who are unable to acclimatise
- Homeless people
- People who are dehydrated
- People of low socioeconomic status
- People who live alone or are socially isolated
- People with low cardiovascular fitness
- Non-English speaking people who may not be able to understand heatwave announcements or who have reduced access to appropriate health or support services.

Source - Department of Health 2011.

Extreme Heat and Health Risks

Our visitors

During heat events, heat stress can also be a risk for non acclimatised visitors.

Wellington Shire attracts over 61,000 international visitors per annum, the majority transiting between Melbourne and Sydney via the “Coastal Drive” through Gippsland.

These individuals are not influenced by traditional messaging as they are not necessarily traditional domestic radio listeners or television viewers.

They primarily gain their information whilst in transit from Visitor Information Centres, however provision of messaging and materials in relation to UV exposure, ensuring that they carry adequate water, wearing loose cool clothing and a hat as well as using sun screen and reducing exercise in the hottest parts of the day is very limited.

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

People who are homeless

People experience homelessness when they do not have accommodation that is safe, secure and appropriate.

Homelessness is much more complex than people ‘sleeping rough’ on the street. Whilst this might be seen as the most literal form of homelessness, the broader definition used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is a person can be considered homeless using the groupings below:

- People living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- People in support accommodation for the homeless
- People staying temporarily with other households
- People living in boarding houses
- People in other temporary lodgings, and
- People living in ‘severely’ crowded dwellings.

On the night of the 2016 census, 69 people were counted as being homeless in the Wellington LGA, down from 124 in 2011.

The true extent of homelessness in the Shire is difficult to measure as many are hard to reach and constantly changing in number and location.

During 2016-2017 agency records show over 250 people were assisted with housing support services across Wellington Shire.

People who are sleeping rough in extreme weather conditions are at increased risk due to exposure.

In particular, exposure to extreme heat impacts on their pre-existing health conditions such as heatstroke, dehydration, cardiovascular and respiratory conditions.

People with a disability

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

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

Babies and young children

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

In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census recorded that there were 4,592 children or 11.08% of the population aged 0-8 years of age living in the Wellington Shire.

People on medication

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

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

Older adults

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

The percentage of residents in the 65+ population in the Shire of Wellington is higher on average than other regional areas and Victoria as a whole. By 2022, Wellington Shire will see an increase of 64.3% of people aged 65+, while the state’s increase is forecast to be at 45.3%.

Extreme Heat and Health Risks

Our partners

The Heat Health Plan sits alongside other Council plans and strategies. It is a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan, has clear links with the Healthy Wellington Plan, the Council Plan and the Open Space Strategy.

It also falls under the State Heat Plan which details the different areas of response and action across government and the health and community sectors.

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

- Central Gippsland Health
- Yarram & District Health Service
- Wellington Primary Care Partnership
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Department of Education and Training
- Aged Care providers - public and private
- Maternal child and health services
- GippSport
- Emergency Services (SES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, VicPol)
- Emergency broadcasters
- Outreach volunteers
- Tourist Information Centres
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)
- Community service providers including Uniting Gippsland, Disability Service providers, Salvation Army and Churches
- Gippsland Primary Health Network
- Educational institutions
- Wellington childcare centres
- Wellington kindergartens
- Senior Citizens Clubs
- University of the Third Age (U3A)
- AusNet Services
- Wellington pharmacies
- Outer Gippsland Local Area Network Specialist Response Agencies
- Uniting Gippsland

Roles and Responsibilities

Extreme Heat Events are a Class 2 emergency under the *Emergency Management Act, 2013*. The Emergency Management Commissioner is the nominated control agency for managing the Response to heatwaves under Part 7 of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria.

Heatwaves can cause significant impact on infrastructure and essential services, especially power, water and transport, as well as human health impacts.

The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for coordination at State level, but effectively this is done by the State Relief and Recovery Manager.

Coordination in response to a Heatwave involves the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from Heatwave. This will include ensuring appropriate responses are being undertaken by responsible agencies such as health, infrastructure and transport.

During a heat health event, the Department of Health has a key function to coordinate the health response statewide. Following a local heat health alert issued by the Chief Health Officer, Council is responsible for activating this Municipal Heat Health Plan. The Wellington Shire Council (WSC) Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) or

Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) has authority to activate this Plan.

Almost all government agencies and a wide range of non-government agencies have designated responsibilities in disasters which reflect their legislated and/or technical capability and authority with respect to hazards, functions and/or activities of emergency management.

Each of our partners has an important role to play in the event of a declared heat health event. Their responsibilities are summarised in the action plan. Council has consulted widely and identified three areas of priority considered by partners as crucial to the development of an effective Heat Health Plan. They include:

1. The formulation of localised plans and interventions based upon sound research and results of community emergency management consultation.
2. The targeting of vulnerable groups and the building of networks within the community; and
3. Health promotion and community education

What are we going to do?

To be better prepared for heatwave conditions this summer, Wellington Shire Council is going to:

- Include heat health preparation, response and recovery into existing municipal plans;
- Promote the use of cool areas in key locations around the shire;
- Work with our community services and organisations to support vulnerable populations;
- Engage in a communication and media campaign using heat health messages consistent with Department of Health and Human Services materials; and
- Respond to state activated heat alert system in a planned and considered way.

Our Action Plan

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



Each stage is characterised by a set of key actions.

Summary of Heat Health Action Plan

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

What we do in Stage One

Prepare/revise pre-prepared key heat health messages

All stakeholders will prepare or revise standard heat health alert templates and FAQs for distribution prior to and during summer.

External Communication and Action Plans (Appendices 1 & 2) have been developed to ensure health information and support is readily available to our community and to provide timely and appropriate advice to targeted stakeholders.

Identify vulnerable groups and update community registers

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

Agencies responsible for assisting people on the Vulnerable Peoples Register will be encouraged to develop support plans for heatwave conditions.

Identify cool areas

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

Engage key stakeholders

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

What key stakeholders can do in Stage One

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

- Revisiting their actions from the previous summer and evaluate their levels of effectiveness;
- Meeting with other stakeholders to revise and amend key heat health messages and actions;
- Reviewing heat health protocols for workplace supervisors and staff;
- Updating their community or agency registers;
- Preparing or revising pre-prepared key heat health messages ;
- Identify cool areas within each groups control which could be promoted to the general public during the awareness campaign;
- Restocking heat health information in relevant places;
- Educating staff of key heat health messages;
- Assist vulnerable persons to include heat health planning in personal emergency management plans; and
- Auditing client homes (if appropriate)



What we do in Stage Two

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

Implement the Heat Health Communication Plan

The communication plan provides key heat health messages to the community during this time via media releases, website news, tourist information centres, community newsletters, agency newsletters, emergency broadcasters and the Wellington Matters quarterly newsletter. These will include:

Cool your home down	Stay out of the heat	Keep yourself cool and hydrated	What you can do for others
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and opened at night when the temperature has cooled• Turn off non essential lights and electrical equipment• Move to the coolest room to sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep out of the sun during the hottest part of the day• Avoid extreme physical exercise• Wear light, loose fitting clothes• Reschedule essential appointments to early morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of water; avoid caffeine/alcohol• Take a cool shower• Spray water over your skin or clothing• Keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone or visit elderly or sick family/ neighbours• Be aware of phone numbers you can ring to get help• Know where cool areas are in the Shire

Advise key stakeholders of roles and responsibilities

Council will contact key stakeholders to advise them on the implementation of Stage Two of their plans. Sporting bodies and summer event organisers will also be informed of safe heat thresholds.

Organise cool areas for possible use

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

Monitor Bureau of Meteorology thresholds for Wellington Shire

Council will monitor Bureau of Meteorology reports regularly for weather updates.

What key stakeholders can do in Stage Two

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

- Distributing Department of Health and Human Services heat health information posters to cool areas
- Promoting heat health messages through agency newsletters and media
- Identifying and organising cool areas;
- Keeping in regular contact with vulnerable clients;
- Modifying client programs;
- Providing staff with access to extra water and cool clothing; and
- Rescheduling staff work hours

What we do in Stage Three

Stage Three is triggered when imminent heatwave temperatures for the Wellington Shire are predicted by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). Council will know to move to this stage when it is notified by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Two staff members at Wellington Shire Council, Coordinator Emergency Management and Coordinator Environmental Services, will receive an email alert on the day when forecasted temperatures first exceed threshold levels. It will then be up to Council to monitor forecast temperatures in our area and notify the relevant stakeholders to activate Stage Three of the Heat Health Plan.



Alert key stakeholders to enact Heat Health Plan

Council will inform all key stakeholders of their responsibilities to enact Stage Three of the Heat Health Plan via email or telephone. The communication plan (Appendix 1) will be followed to ensure this process is carried out smoothly and effectively.

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

- Alert key stakeholders to enact their heat health plans;
- Promote community awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect
- Provide information to the community about cool areas (including swimming pool and library opening and closing times) and how to beat the heat
- Monitor DHHS, BOM reports daily;
- Alter staff scheduling (particularly outdoor workers);
- Cancel any Council outdoor events; and
- Inform Council's Emergency Management Team of actions taken

Aspects of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan would be activated by Wellington Shire Council only in response to declared emergencies resulting from heatwave conditions. In this case, the Municipal Emergency Management Plan would be activated.

What we do in Stage Three

What key stakeholders can do in Stage Three

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

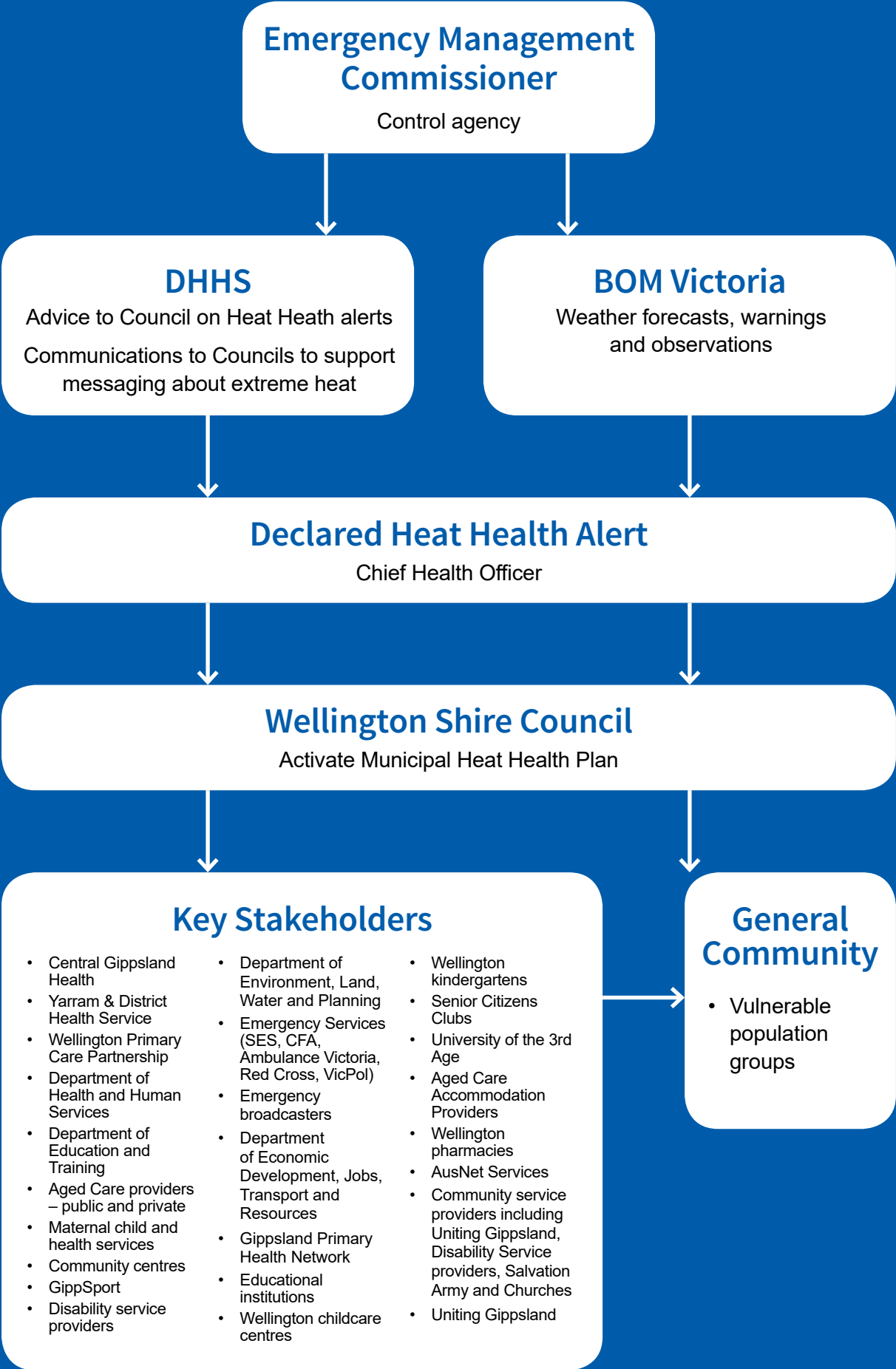
All key stakeholders will be advised by Council to consider:

- Contacting those listed on the Vulnerable People Register or community registers by telephone or visit
- Develop support plans for heatwave conditions for vulnerable clients
- Prioritising tasks especially for those involving physical exertion;
- Assessing risk for clients and staff;
- Rescheduling staff work times and hours;
- Providing additional fluids and cool places to rest for clients and staff;
- Modifying client programs
- Transporting clients in cooler parts of the day; and
- Altering children's outdoor activities and play times

How we evaluate the plan's effectiveness

To ensure Wellington's Heat Health Plan remains relevant and meets the changing needs of our community, Council will review it annually after each summer and use any amendments to inform and update the Heat Health Plan. All relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate in the evaluation. The following questions will be addressed.

- Were the actions in Stage Three appropriate and timely?
- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- Was information communicated effectively to stakeholders?
- Was information communicated effectively to the general community?
- What could we do differently next summer?



Resources and Reference Material

Resources

The Department of Health has developed a suite of heat health resources, in a range of formats, to encourage and educate individuals and the community to be aware of the impact of extreme heat on human health.

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

These community resources include:

- Heat health plan for Victoria
- How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat - brochure
- How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat - printable fact sheet
- Survive the heat - poster
- Extreme heat: supporting people by telephone
- Extreme heat: Fact sheet for clinicians
- Extreme heat preparedness checklist for emergency departments
- [Beat the Heat: How to keep someone healthy during hot weather \(available in other languages\)](#)

Emergency preparedness in residential aged care services – Natural hazards

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/residential-aged-care/emergency-preparedness/natural-hazards>

Heat Stress and Older People - Better Health Channel

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/heat-stress-and-older-people>

Calls to emergency services for people with a hearing or speech impairment – National Relay Service

<https://www.communications.gov.au/documents/nrs--instruction-sheet-1-3--internet-relay--call-emergency-services>

Keep Cool in Wellington

<http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Living-in-Wellington/Public-Health/Heatwave>

Reference Material

Climate Council

[The Silent Killer: Climate Change and the Health Impacts of Extreme Heat 2016](#)

[2017 Another Record-breaking year for Heat and Extreme Weather – 2017](#)

[Climate Ready Victoria \(Gippsland\)](#)

[Better Health Channel - Heat Stress and the Elderly](#)

Gippsland Region Health Status - Summary Profile, Department of Health 2015

[State Heat Health Plan for Victoria](#)

[State Extreme Heat Sub-Plan 2017](#)

Too Hot to Handle: Assessing the Social Impacts of Extreme Heat

<http://web.science.mq.edu.au/downloads/sia/fiona-miller.pdf>

State of the Climate 2018 - Bureau of Meteorology

<http://www.bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/>

“The Working Group II report, Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability”: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) second working group report (part of the Fifth Assessment Report):

<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>

VCOSS report: Disaster and disadvantage: social vulnerability in emergency management

<https://apo.org.au/node/40069>

Appendix 1

External Communications Plan

Situational Analysis

Wellington Shire's Heat Health Plan determines how Council will support the local community to adapt and minimise the impact of heatwaves.

Objectives

The objectives of the Wellington Heat Health Plan are to:

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

The objectives of the External Communications Plan are to:

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

Stakeholders

- Wellington Shire community
- Councillors
- Council staff
- Local Health Services
- Government agencies (Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)
- Aged Care providers - public and private
- Community centres
- GippSport
- Local pharmacies
- Emergency Services (SES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, VicPol)
- Emergency broadcasters
- Uniting Care Gippsland
- Disability service providers
- Visitor Information Centres
- Gippsland Primary Health Network
- Educational institutions
- Wellington childcare providers
- Senior Citizens Clubs and groups

Key Messages

- Wellington Shire Council is encouraging residents to become familiar with ways to stay healthy in the heat. (Achieved by directing residents to Department of Health and Human Services resources).
- Wellington Shire Council maintains a list of cool areas. These are places to go when the thermostat climbs so that you can gain some respite from extended periods of hot weather.
- Key heat health messages include:

Cool your home down

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

Stay out of the heat

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

Keep yourself cool and hydrated

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

What you can do for others

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

Appendix 1

External Communications Plan

Collateral

Media Releases and Alerts

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

Media Distribution List

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

The majority of these channels manage secondary social media channels and we specifically request for emergency information to be shared via this as well as the traditional mediums.

In addition, Stage One and Two media releases will be distributed to local community newsletters. If additional stakeholders would like access to this material for their own publication, it can be made available upon request.

Wellington Matters/External Council Newsletter article

One brief article pointing to additional information will be included in the summer edition of the Wellington Matters (or Council external newsletter, should the newsletter format change).

Council's Emergency Management (EM) unit are responsible for providing information to Media and Public Relations (MPR).

Wellington Shire Council website

A Heat Health page is to be created and maintained under Living in Wellington – Emergency Management. EM are responsible for providing the content to Council's Media/ PR (MPR) unit. EM will review the content annually prior to each summer and ad hoc at each Stage Three implementation and inform the Graphic Design & Web Officer (GDWO) if any amendments are required.

At each Stage Three implementation the GDWO will include a heat health slide on the homepage.

FAQ Information Sheet

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

Paid advertising

One heat health main article will be produced early summer each year within the Wellington News paid advertisement, published in the Gippsland Times and Yarram Standard.

If Stage Three is predicted, an ad hoc advice notice may be included but must be confirmed with the Coordinator Media and Public Relations (CMPR) by 12.00noon Friday the week prior to publication. In the case of continued heatwave, a banner ad may be included in the Wellington News for the duration of the heatwave pointing to where additional information can be sourced.

Posters, brochures etc.

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

Customer Service

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

Appendix 1

External Communications Plan

Action	When	Responsible Officer(s)
Stage One - April 1 to November 30		
Prepare/revise standard heat health alert templates	October - November	CEM/CMPR
Prepare external newsletter article	September for December publication	CEM/CO
Prepare/revise FAQ Sheet	Each October	CEM/CMPR/GDWO
Prepare/revise website content	Each October	CEM/GDWO
Stage Two - December 1 to March 31		
Wellington News article	By mid December	CEM/CO
Media Release, including Community Newsletters	By mid December	CEM/CO
Distribute heat health information posters and easy read posters to cool areas (Department of Health and Human Services)	By mid December	CEM
All stakeholders		
Activate homepage slide on website	Immediately Stage Three called	GDWO
Issue heat health alert(s) to local media	Immediately Stage Three called	CMPR/CO
Issue banner ads in the Wellington News	Stage Three, ad hoc	GDWO
Monitor media activity and incoming calls, respond accordingly with information and/or alerts	Duration of heatwave	CMPR/CEM

NB. CEM must provide relevant information in note form to Media and Public Relations for all Stage One and Two items, no less than 3 weeks prior to the pre-allocated distribution dates for each year.

Stage 3 Media Alert Templates

Media Alert #1: Beating the coming heat

The Department of Health and Human Services has issued a heatwave health alert with the weather predicted to be unusually hot and uncomfortable over the next [insert number] days.

Wellington Shire Council is advising residents to become familiar with ways to stay healthy in the heat. These include:

Cool your home down

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

Stay out of the heat

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

Keep yourself cool and hydrated

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

What you can do for others

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

More information is available on Council's website www.wellington.vic.gov.au or in hard copy at Council's Customer Services Centre in Sale and Yarram, any branch of the Wellington Shire Library, [insert details of other locations].

If you feel unwell in the heat contact your GP or telephone Nurse on Call on 1300 60 60 24.

For life-threatening emergencies dial 000 or 106 for people with a hearing or speech impairment.

Media Alert #2: Cool areas to chill out

Don't get beaten by this heat; if you're getting too hot under the collar, visit one of Wellington Shire Council's cool areas:

Air conditioned public places list, with opening times [to be provided by CEM].

- List
-

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

Appendix 2

Heat Health Action Plan

Stage One	Actions	Who Will Do It
Pre-Summer Preparation April 1 to November 30	Develop a series of pre-prepared heat health alert templates/messages for distribution prior to and during summer promoting community awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect.	Coordinator Emergency Management/Coordinator Media and Public Relations, Wellington Shire Council
	Review/update Heat Health FAQs	Coordinator Emergency Management Wellington Shire Council/All Stakeholders
	Review heat health protocols for workplace supervisors, staff and clients	All stakeholders
	Prepare/revise Council website content re heat health information, including cool places where people can seek heat relief	Coordinator Emergency Management, Electronic Communications Officer, Wellington Shire Council
Stage Two	Actions	Who Will Do It
December 1 - March 31	Advise key stakeholders via email of roles and responsibilities	Coordinator Emergency Management, Wellington Shire Council
	Distribute Media Release, including Community Newsletters (by mid December)	Coordinator Emergency Management/ Communications Officer, Wellington Shire Council
	Review and promote cool areas for possible use in a heatwave	All stakeholders
	Erect Heat Health posters around workplaces and designated cool areas	All stakeholders
	Distribute Department of Health and Human Services Heatwave information to key stakeholders	Coordinator Emergency Management/Environmental Health Officer, Wellington Shire Council

Stage Three	Actions	Who Will Do It
Response Trigger: DHHS Heat Alert	Activate External Communications Plan - Stage Three	Coordinator Emergency Management/All Stakeholders
	Activate homepage slide on Council webpage with current heat health information	Coordinator Emergency Management/Graphic Design & Web Officer
	Issue heat health alert(s) to local media	Coordinator Media and Public Relations, Graphic Design & Web Officer Wellington Shire Council
	Phone high risk people, activate community phone trees and remind neighbours to check on each other every day during a heatwave	All stakeholders
	Continue to promote cool areas across the Shire for people.	All stakeholders
	Promote community awareness and education about the dangers of heat stress and the measures that can be adopted to mitigate the effect.	
	Enact heat health protocols for workplace supervisors and staff	All stakeholders
	Monitor BOM and Department of Health and Human Services reports	Coordinator Emergency Management/Environmental Health Officer, Wellington Shire Council
Monitor media activity and incoming calls. Respond accordingly with information and/or alerts	Coordinator Emergency Management/ Coordinator Media and Public Relations, Wellington Shire Council	

Appendix 3

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Heatwave?

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

The Department of Health and Human Services issues Heat Health alerts when temperature thresholds are likely to be reached/breached in specific weather forecast districts and conditions are likely to impact human health. A Heat Health alert could be issued for one day of extreme heat.

Heatwaves can make existing medical conditions worse and cause a heat related illness, which may be fatal.

Medical Advice

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) or 106 for people with a hearing or speech impairment

<https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub>

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

Tune into ABC radio for regular updates ABC 828AM and 100.7FM
<http://www.abc.net.au/gippsland>

Important Heat Related Advice from Department of Health and Human Services

The public are advised to take care during the hot weather and to take the following precautions:

Cool your home down

- Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and opened at night when the temperature has cooled
- Turn off non essential lights and electrical equipment
- Move to the coolest room to sleep

Stay Out of the Heat

- Keep out of the sun during the hottest part of the day
- Avoid extreme physical exercise
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes
- Reschedule essential appointments to early morning

Keep Yourself Cool and Hydrated

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

What You Can Do For Others

- Phone or visit elderly or sick family/neighbours
- Be aware of phone numbers you can ring to get help
- Know where cool areas are in the shire

Source - Department of Health.

Where Can I Find Information About

- Cool places in Wellington Shire where I can find some heat relief (see page 42)
- [Heat stress and Older People](#)
- [Heatwave precautions for babies and young children](#)
- [Child Safety - Hot weather](#)
- [Heat and Pets](#)

Weather

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

Transport

Extreme heat conditions can affect bus, train and tram services. People using public transport are encouraged to check with local transport operators for up-to date information.

The V/Line website provides a list of bus and rail services and timetables or phone 1800 800 007.

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

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

Guide to Power Outages

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

For information about possible supply interruptions contact AusNet Services on 131 719 or visit their website <http://ausnetservices.com.au>

Have a backup plan in case electricity fails

[Your guide to power outages](#)

Appendix 4

Air-conditioned Public Places

If you do not have air conditioning during Heat Alert/Extreme Heat Alerts, you can go to air-conditioned or cool places such as shopping centres, community centres, libraries or a friend's place.

A few hours in a cooler environment during extremely hot weather lowers the core body temperature and helps saves lives.

Following is a selection of air-conditioned facilities across the Shire.

Community Centres

Facility	Address	Phone	Opening Hours
Briarolong Community Centre	Mechanics Institute Hall 9-11 Avon Street, Briarolong	5145 5424	Monday 9.00am - 12.00pm Tuesday 9.00am - 4.00pm Wednesday 9.00am - 4.00pm Thursday 9.00am - 1.00pm Friday 9.00am - 4.00pm Closed school holidays
Dargo Bush Nursing Centre	72 Lind Avenue, Dargo	5140 1246	Tuesday 9am - 5.30pm Wednesday 1.30 - 5.30pm Thursday 9am - 5.30pm Friday 9am - 5.30pm Saturday 9am - 3pm
Dargo Community House		5140 1333	Tuesday - Thursday 10am - 2pm School Terms Only
Gormandale Community House	32-34 Main Road, Gormandale	5197 7264	Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 3.00pm Friday 9.00am - 12.30pm Closed School Holidays
Heyfield Community Resource Centre	5 George Street Heyfield	5148 2100	Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm School terms only
Loch Sport Community House	Loch Sport Public Hall National Park Road (Halfway between entrance of Loch Sport and National Park)	5146 0145	Monday 9.30am - 3.00pm Tuesday 9.30am - 3.00pm Friday 9.30am - 3.00pm Closed school holidays

Community Centres (Cont.)

Facility	Address	Phone	Opening Hours
Maffra Community House	Part of the Maffra Hospital Complex, 48 Kent Street, Maffra	5147 1484	Tuesday - Friday 9.30am - 2.30pm Closed School Holidays
Rosedale Neighbourhood House	Rosedale Community Centre 2-8 Cansick Street, Rosedale	5199 2595	Monday-Friday 7.30am - 6pm Saturday 10am - 12.00noon
Sale Neighbourhood House	19-21 Leslie Street, Sale	5144 5747	Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 4.30pm Closed school holidays
Wurruk Community House	6 White Court, Wurruk	5143 2292	10am - 3pm weekdays
Yarram Community Learning Centre	292 Commercial Road, Yarram	5182 6294	Tuesday - Fridays 10am - 4pm

Appendix 4

Air-conditioned Public Places

Public Libraries

Facility	Address	Phone	Opening Hours
Heyfield Library	42 Macfarlane Street, Heyfield	5148 2644	Monday 10am - 12noon and 2pm - 6pm Wednesday 10am-12noon and 2pm - 6pm Friday 10am - 12noon and 2pm - 6pm Saturday 10am - 12noon
Maffra Library	150 Johnson Street, Maffra	5147 1052	Monday 10am - 6pm Wednesday 10am - 6pm Thursday 10am - 6pm Friday 10am - 6pm Saturday 10am - 12noon
Rosedale Library	Cansick Street, Rosedale	5199 2547	Tuesday 10am - 12noon and 1pm - 6pm Thursday 1pm - 6pm Friday 10am -12noon and 1pm - 6pm Saturday 10am - 12noon
Sale Library	70 Foster Street, Sale	5142 3575	Monday 9.00am - 5.30pm Tuesday 9.00am - 5.30pm Wednesday 9.00am - 5.30pm Thursday 9.00am - 5.30pm Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday 10am - 4pm
Stratford Library	70 Tyers Street, Stratford	5145 6403	Monday 10am - 1.30pm and 3pm - 6pm Wednesday 10am -1.30pm and 3pm - 6pm Friday 10am - 1.30pm and 3pm - 6pm Saturday 10am - 12noon
Yarram Library	156 Grant Street, Yarram	5182 5135	Monday 10am - 6pm Tuesday 2pm - 6pm Wednesday 2pm - 6pm Thursday 10am - 6pm Friday 10am - 6pm Saturday 10am - 12noon

Appendix 5

Swimming Pools

Swimming Pools

Facility	Address	Phone	Opening Hours
Sale Outdoor Pool	Brayakoloong Close, Sale	5142 3700	Refer Wellington Shire Council website
Aqua Energy Indoor Pools	Brayakoloong Close, Sale	5142 3700	Open all year. Refer Aqua Energy website
Heyfield Memorial Pool	Mary Street, Heyfield	5148 2330	Refer Wellington Shire Council website
Maffra Memorial Pool	Duke Street, Maffra	5147 1191	Refer Wellington Shire Council website
Rosedale Swimming Pool	Cnr Hood and Albert Street, Rosedale	1300 366 244	Refer Wellington Shire Council website
Stratford Swimming Pool	McMillan Street, Stratford	5145 6494	Refer Wellington Shire Council website
Yarram Swimming Pool	Grant Street, Yarram	5182 5521	Refer Wellington Shire Council website



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

The Heart of Gippsland

Sale Service Centre

18 Desailly Street (PO Box 506), Sale Victoria 3850
Telephone 1300 366 244

Yarram Service Centre

156 Grant Street, Yarram Victoria 3971
Telephone (03) 5182 5100

Web www.wellington.vic.gov.au

Email enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au