



2019 Municipal

Heatwave Plan

Easy English Version

Adopted 9 July 2019



This is the heatwave plan for Moira Shire Council.

It tells you what to do when it is very hot.

It also tells you what Council and other groups will do when it is hot.

In this booklet we will call it **the plan** or **this plan**.

This plan has some hard words.

The first time we use a word that some people might find hard, it will be written in **blue**.

We will write out what the hard word means for you at the bottom of the page. We do this because English is not an easy language to learn, and we want to make sure everyone can read this plan. If you think that this plan is still hard, please call Moira Shire Council for more help on 03 5871 9222.

There is also a State Heatwave Plan. The State Heatwave Plan is for all of Victoria. This plan works with the State Heatwave Plan.

In this plan there are five parts:

1. **Introduction**
2. Background and **context**
3. Heat **arrangements**
4. Understanding extreme heat
5. Heat health actions



Word Meanings:

Introduction. In-troh-duck-shion.

In this plan, an introduction is the start of the plan and it tells us why the plan has been written.

Context. *Con-text*.

The story behind a situation, and all the different factors that have gone into creating it.

Arrangements. *Ah-range-ments*.

In this plan, it means the things that people have planned to help people stay safe.

Introduction



Moira Shire Council will work with other **organisations** to make the community aware of the dangers that come with hot days.



This plan will be used to plan for a heatwave.

We have to plan for heatwaves because the weather has been getting hotter and more and more hot days have been coming one after the other.

This plan aims to:

- Make sure there is **information** about heatwaves
- Help the community respond to heatwaves
- Manage heatwaves better
- Change people's habits and **behaviours** to improve their health



We will look at this plan on a **regular** basis to make sure it is helping people.

Word Meanings:

Organisations. *Or-gan-eye-zay-shions*.

Groups of people who work toward a common goal or purpose.

Information. *In-for-may-shan*.

Lists and collections of words that help people to understand things. Information can come as words that are spoken or written down, as pictures, and in a number of different ways.

Information helps you feel like you have learned something and know things.

Behaviours. *Be-hay-v-yours*.

Ways that people act. Sometimes, like in this plan, behaviours can mean the habits that people have learned over their life.

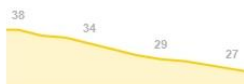
Section 2: Background and Context

What is a heatwave?



38 °C | °F

The Bureau of **Meteorology** says that a heatwave is ‘*three days or more of high maximum and minimum **temperatures** that are unusual for that location*’.



A ‘heat event’ can be one day of high temperature or very hot weather.

This hot weather might **interrupt** different things like power, working hours and events.



Moira Shire has had heatwaves in the **January 2009 and January 2014**. We also had a heatwave in **January 2019**.

Word Meanings:

Meteorology. *Me-tea-or-ol-oh-gee.*

Meteorology is a science that is all about the atmosphere (the thing that surrounds planet Earth and lets us breath and protects us from the sun), and it is the science that helps us predict (make an educated guess) what the weather will be.

Temperatures. *Tem-per-ah-chures.*

This is how hot or cold or just right you might feel from day to day.

Interrupt. *In-ter-up-t.*

Have you ever been talking with a friend and someone has started to talk also, even though you are? This is called being interrupted. In the context of this plan, it means something you didn’t think would happen, happening because of hot weather – for example, the power can be interrupted and sometimes your work day too if your boss sends you home because it is too hot.

Section 3: Heat Arrangements

When there is a heatwave different organisations have different roles.



VICTORIA POLICE

Victoria Police will help to manage things. They do this in a lot of different ways. They have computer systems that help people to learn things and to go to places where people need support, and sometimes more police officers will be called in to help out during times of concern.

Always listen to and **co-operate** with police officers during a heatwave or any other **situation**. It's their job to protect you and your loved ones.



The Department of Health and Human Services will put out **flyers** and information about how to stay safe and healthy in the heat. That information can be posted on social media like facebook, and might also be put on the radio. Often, you will see information about heatwaves and other weather events on television.

Because the heat can make people feel sick, hospitals, doctors and ambulances may be very busy. If you are worried about yourself or a loved one get help right away.

Word Meanings:

Co-operate. *Ko-op-er-ate*.

When we co-operate we come together to achieve (create or support) things that help each other. You co-operate with your family members every time you help them to cook dinner or clean the dishes, and you co-operate with your work friends every time you work on a problem together.

Situation. *Sit-you-ay-shion*.

A situation is a thing that is happening. Situations can be good or bad, but in the context of this plan the word situation means a problem that has happened because of hot weather.

Flyers. *Fly-ers*.

This one is a weird word. It doesn't mean birds, who fly (most of them), but instead means a piece of paper that has information printed on it. Flyers will sometimes be folded up, and sometimes will be just a flat sheet of paper with information and pictures on it.

Section 4: Understanding extreme heat and heatwaves

Heatwaves are known as a period of **abnormally** and **uncomfortably** hot weather that could impact on human health, community **infrastructure** and services. People can get very sick because of the heat.

Heat Threshold

In Victoria, heatwave plans are normally started when the weather is due to be very hot.

The act of starting a heatwave plan is called “activation.”

Heatwave plans are active when a “**threshold**” is reached.



The Shire of Moira (Moira Shire Council area) is located in the Northern Country forecast district for the Bureau of Meteorology, and the threshold for the Northern Country is 32°C.

So, when the Bureau of Meteorology thinks the temperature will reach or go higher than 32°C our heatwave plan is activated. This doesn't mean the temperature will get that high, but it most likely will.



Heat Health Alert system

The Department of Health and Human Services checks the Bureau of Meteorology's 7-day expected weather forecast. If the department sees a need for heatwave plans to be activated, it will send out a heat health alert.

Word Meanings:

Abnormally. *Ab-norm-ah-lee.*
Something which is out of the norm (unusual).

Uncomfortably. *Un-come-fort-ab-lee.*
Something that makes you feel bad or unwell.

Infrastructure. *In-fra-struct-yer.*
In this plan, this refers to buildings, electricity grids, water supply and roads.

Threshold. *Thresh-hold.*
In this plan, threshold refers to the upper limit of heat that is comfortable for people to put up with.

The Effects of Extreme Heat

Extreme heat can make more people feel sick.

Extreme heat can also affect things like phones, power and water. One or all of these things might not work for a little while because of the extreme heat.



Human Health

When there are a lot of very hot days (above 32°C) one after the other, people can start to feel sick and unwell.

Who is most at risk?

The following people are more likely to be affected by the heat:

- People over 65 years' old
- People who have a medical condition or are already not well
- People taking certain **medications**
- People who have poor mental health
- People with a disability
- People who are overweight
- Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers
- Babies and young children
- People who live alone or who are socially **isolated**
- People who do not speak English



Word Meanings:

Extreme. *Ex-tree-mm.*

In this plan, extreme means something hotter than people thought it would be.

Medications. *Med-ee-kay-shions.*

These are things your doctor gives you or a family member or friend, to help them feel better or to treat a health concern you or they have.

Isolated. *Eye-so-late-ed.*

Being alone and without anyone nearby to help you.

Section 5: Heat Health Actions

We will use this plan all-year-round as we prepare for very hot summers. Our actions can be broken up into four stages.

The actions listed below are things you can and should do.



Stage One - Before Summer

Speak with your doctor about how to best take care of yourself when it's very hot.

Make a plan for you and your loved one that will help you to stay cool during the heat.

If you cannot stay cool at home, pick another place you can go to like a neighbour's or family member's home, or the public library.

For tips for coping during extreme heat ask for an information sheet from your doctor or visit : www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Other things to think about include checking to make sure that your fan or air-conditioner works well.

Stock up on food, water and medicines.

Plan how to cope if the electricity goes out and you can't get to public transport.

Talk with family or friends about what to do and how everyone can work together to make sure everybody is okay.

If you are at risk of heat-related illness, talk with your family and friends about how they can help you and ask them to check in on you.



Stage Two - Immediately Before an Extreme Heat Forecast

Check what the local weather is meant to be. If it looks like it's going to be an extreme heat day and you have appointments, think about changing your appointment to a cooler part of the day or a different day.

Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged.

If you have a computer or tablet, make sure it is fully charged too.

If you have a battery-operated radio, make sure you have batteries that work. In case the heat continues into the night, and in case the power goes out, find a torch and make sure it works. Put the torch somewhere easy to find in the dark.

Make sure you have bottles of water filled up and ready to use.

If the power does go out, don't use candles. Even though their flame is very small, they still generate heat and if you knock one over it could cause a serious fire threatening your life and the lives of other people.



Stage Three – During Extreme Heat

Listen for messages on the radio in case of a bushfire.

Watch and listen for news reports about the extreme heat and for heat health messages.

Check the VicEmergency website for heat health alerts and community heat health messages.



Keep in touch with friends, neighbours and relatives and if you are able to, go and check on them.

Drink plenty of water. Don't wait until you feel unwell. Most people don't realise they are feeling the effects of heatstroke until it is too late. To try and avoid heatstroke drink lots of water throughout the day and night.

Spend as much time as possible in cool or air conditioned buildings.



Never leave children, adults or animals in parked cars.

Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.

If outside, stay in the shade and drink plenty of water.

Avoid going outdoors and don't let your children go outside and play. Find things for them to do inside.



Wear a hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing when outside.

Reschedule any **non-essential appointments** to another day.

Seek medical help if you feel sick.

Word Meanings:

Reschedule. *Re-shed-yule.*

Change a meeting or appointment to a new time or different day.

Non-Essential. *Non-E-sen-tule.*

In this plan, it means things that are not very important for you or your family.

Appointments. *Ap-poy-t-ments.*

A meeting that has been set up, often with a doctor.

What is heatstroke?

Heatstroke is something that happens to people and animals when their bodies over heat. This usually happens if someone is in the heat for too long, or if they are being too active on a hot day. Before a person gets heatstroke they usually get heat exhaustion, which is often caused by not drinking enough water. For more information on both visit www2.health.vic.gov.au and search for heat or heatwaves.

Stage Four - After Extreme Heat

Everyone is usually pleased when an extreme heat event passes.

When an extreme heat event passes, it is a very good time to stop that think about what you, your family, your friends and your pets felt and went through.

The first thing you might want to do is **restock** your food, water and any medicines that were used during the extreme heat event.

If you have family who are elderly, visit them and help them to restock too.

If the power went out and you had to use your battery operated radio or torch, make sure you don't forget to stock up on batteries.

After you have restocked, spend some time thinking about what worked well and what you might be able to do next time to help yourself and your family, friends and pets get through a serious heat event safely and in comfort.

If your neighbours or family or friends checked in on you during a serious heat event, make sure to thank them for their help.

Word Meanings:

Restock. *Re-stock*.

In this plan, it means replace all of the things that you or your family might have used to help you get through a major heat event.

Appendix 1

Communication Resources and Activity

Heat health information is available as factsheets and posters. These can be downloaded from:



www2.health.vic.gov.au/publichealth/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-publichealth/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat

Communication Channels

Information will be available through:

- Pharmacies
- Home and Community Care (HACC) providers
- Websites
- Personal Alert Victoria
- Radio ads
- Social media
- Outdoor advertising
- Community service announcements
- Media stories

For information to plan for extreme heat and for information during an extreme heat event the following websites might be helpful:

- The Better Health Channel;
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>
- The Department of Health and Human Service's Environmental Health website:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat>
- Specific heat health information for older Victorians, their relatives, friends or carers can be found on the Seniors Online website at:
www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au;

Appendix 2

Air Conditioned Public Places

A few hours in a cooler place when it is very hot weather can make you feel better.

If you do not have air conditioning, try to go to a friends, family members or neighbours.



Other cool places to think about include local hotels and clubs including those in New South Wales. Some of the New South Wales towns bordering our Shire (Moira Shire Council) include:

- Moama, in the west (close to Barmah and Lower Moira)
- Tocumwal (north of Koonoomoo)
- Barooga (north of Cobram)
- Mulwala (north of Yarrawonga)

Local libraries and swimming pools are also options, but the times that they are open vary.



If you're going to visit a swimming pool, make sure the pool is open and remember even though being in the water might feel good, you could still be exposed to heatstroke because you're in the sun and you might also be affected by the glare off the water.