

HEATWAVE PLAN

Approved by Council: 17 May 2010

Approved by Emergency Management Committee:

Acknowledgements

Moir Shire Council acknowledges the contribution to this document by members of the Moira Shire Heatwave Plan Sub-committee, namely:

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Robyn Bonaddio	Business Support Officer	Moir Shire Council
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Dave Darby	Member Moira Municipal Emergency Management Committee	Goulburn Murray Water
Ron Batley	Member Moira Municipal Emergency Management Committee	Goulburn Valley Water
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Catherine Kelly	Member Moira Municipal Emergency Management Committee	Cobram District Hospital
Steve Allan	Member Moira Municipal Emergency Management Committee	Country Fire Authority Region 22
Mark Goldsworthy	Member Moira Municipal Emergency Management Committee	North East Water

Their time and expertise is greatly appreciated as we work towards protecting our community from the debilitating effects of heatwave.

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Section A: Introduction

Executive Summary

Moira Shire has been given the task to produce a heatwave plan that will provide a process for stakeholders to follow when a local heat wave alert is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology and Department of Human Services (DHS). Prolonged periods of extremely hot weather have been found, through international and Australian experiences, to be associated with marked short term increases in morbidity in vulnerable population groups.

The Moira Shire Heatwave Plan aims to reduce the harmful effects of heatwave by:

- Ensuring health information and support is readily available to the community, vulnerable groups and their carers;
- Increasing general understanding of heatwave planning and management across council and key external stakeholders; and
- Developing partnerships and collaborative arrangements to better respond to heatwaves.

Actions will include:

- A public awareness process, including media releases;
- Implementation of a communication strategy;
- Management and activation of vulnerable people registers;
- Coordination of an interagency response to heatwaves; and
- Integration of heatwave response into the existing Moira Shire Emergency Management Plan.

A Heatwave Plan can only be successful with the cooperation of many stakeholders. Implementation will occur with the combined support and efforts of health and well being and emergency services agencies across Moira Shire.

Moira Shire Heatwave Plan will be based on the promotion of the six steps to beat the heat:

- Keep out of the heat - look for shade and wear a hat;
- Drink plenty of water;
- Naturally cool your home - close windows/blinds in daytime;
- Talk to your health service;
- Check on people who may struggle in the heat; and
- Help people who are feeling unwell.

Background

Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of heatwaves in Victoria. Evidence shows that heatwaves cause illness and death, particularly in vulnerable population groups.

In January 2009, Victoria experienced a prolonged state-wide heatwave, with temperatures among the highest ever recorded in the state. The Office of the Chief Health Officer report concluded there were 374 additional deaths during the heatwave period, in comparison to the previous five years.

The Heatwave Planning Guide is designed to assist local councils in addressing heatwaves at a community level. Internationally, heatwave plans are commonly used to minimise the health impact of heatwaves.

It supports the development and implementation of heatwave plans and emergency responses at a community and Local Government level in accordance with the human health action and climate change (3.4) action in the whole-of-Victorian-Government policy: Our Environment Our Future Sustainability Action Statement 2006.

The plan draws on the experience of 13 pilot projects, funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in 2008 and involving 22 local councils, to undertake the development of a heatwave plan that could be implemented into existing municipal plans. It is further supported by the experience of the January 2009 heatwave, as well as international and national experience in heatwave planning.

Heatwave planning includes:

- Identifying vulnerable population groups and the risks they face;
- Identifying and agreeing on effective strategies, agency coordination and response planning to address those risks;
- Implementing and activating the plan; and
- Evaluating and updating the plan regularly.

Heatwave planning has a great deal in common with planning for other emergencies, and with planning for health and wellbeing.

The benefit of activating a heatwave plan during an extreme heat event is to reduce illness and death in the community by:

- Ensuring the health information and support is readily available to the community, vulnerable population groups and their carers;
- Increasing understanding of heatwave planning and management across council and key external stakeholders;
- Developing partnerships and collaborative arrangement to better respond to heatwave;
- Increasing understanding of heatwaves in communities and increasing their capacity to respond during heatwaves;
- Managing emergencies during heatwaves more effectively; and
- Developing long-term and sustainable behavioural change to minimise the impacts of heatwaves on health and wellbeing.

Section B: Understanding Heatwaves

Defining Heatwaves

Clearly defining heatwaves is difficult; factors such as humidity, demographics, urban or rural design issues and acclimatisation mean that similar temperatures might have a different impact in different environments or communities. As a result, there is no single internationally accepted definition of a heatwave.

Heatwaves are typically described as a minimum temperature over a prescribed duration that is likely to impact on the health of a community.

Heat Threshold

In Victoria, heatwave plans are normally activated when temperatures are forecast that are likely to impact on the health of the community. These activation levels are also called 'thresholds'. The relationship between temperature and health is established using epidemiological studies and can vary between different population areas.

To date, DHS has established a heatwave threshold for metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victorian areas. In these conditions, mortality rates in people aged 65 years and older might increase by 19-20%.

There is no minimum duration for heatwaves in Victoria; they can be as short as a single day.

For example, the January 2009 heatwave in Victoria was of unprecedented intensity and duration, with Melbourne experiencing three consecutive days of temperatures above 43 degrees Celsius and little overnight relief.

Heat Alert System

During the summer season, the DHS monitors the BoM website and notifies departmental staff and local councils of impending heatwaves. The BoM provides seven-day maximum and minimum temperature forecasts, along with detailed descriptions for 29 areas in Victoria and seven-day maximum and minimum temperatures and brief descriptions for a further 51 areas.

This means that heatwaves can be predicted between one and seven days before the event. However, the heatwave may not occur if the forecast temperature changes and no longer reaches the threshold.

Vulnerable Population Groups

Heat waves are known to increase the incidence of illness and death, particularly among vulnerable population groups.

Vulnerable population groups include people with the following characteristics:

- Older people (65 years and older);
- Children younger than five years old;
- Pregnant or nursing mothers;
- People with a pre-existing medical condition, such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease or mental illness;
- People with a condition that impairs the body's abilities to regulate its own temperature like Multiple Sclerosis;
- Those living alone with little social contact;
- People taking certain medications, such as those for depression or insomnia; and
- People with a disability.

They also include people in the following circumstances:

- People without air-conditioning or who decide not to use it;
- Homeless people;
- Low income earners;
- Those with limited access to transport;
- People who are outdoors for any reason, especially doing strenuous activity like working or playing sports;
- Residents in the upper floors of multi-storey buildings; and
- Some people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who cannot access health services or information.

Key finding of the Chief Health Officer's report on the January 2009 Victorian heatwave were:

- A 25% increase in metropolitan Ambulance Victoria total emergency cases and a 46% increase over the three hottest days;
- A 34-fold increase in metropolitan Ambulance Victoria cases, with direct heat-related conditions 96.1% in those 75 years and older;
- A 12% overall increase in emergency department presentations, with a greater proportion of acutely ill patients and a 37% increase in those 75 years and older;
- An eightfold increase in direct heat-related emergency department presentations, 94.6% in those aged 75 years and older;
- An almost threefold increase in patients dead on arrival at emergency departments, 96.9% being 75 years and older; and
- There were 374 additional deaths over what would be expected - a 62% increase in total all-cause mortality.

The Impact of Extreme Heat

The 'heat island effect' is a compounding factor in urban and suburban areas because many common construction materials absorb and retain more of the sun's heat. The temperature difference is normally more pronounced at night than during the day.

Heatwaves rarely occur in isolation. Infrastructure stress and failure and other natural emergencies can compound stress on the community, economy and service. Power outages, for example, will impair people's ability to run air conditioners and refrigerate food. Likewise, councils may be unable to access information stored electronically. This situation only compounds the stress of the community.

Heat Related Illness

Heat-related illness can occur when the body is unable to adequately cool itself. It can range from mild conditions such as a rash or cramps to very serious conditions such as heat stroke, which can kill people (see Better Health Channel information sheet in appendices).

Section C: Preplanning

Mandate

Moira Shire is committed to being prepared for all emergency situations, including heatwave.

Leadership

A Moira Shire Heatwave Steering Committee was established in August 2009. The committee meets regularly to process the Heatwave Plan and raise public awareness of this important public health issue.

A heatwave survey was undertaken in September 2009 and this plan reflects the community issues raised by that survey.

Coordination

The Moira Shire Heatwave Plan was developed in conjunction with the internal steering committee, Moira Shire Municipal Emergency Management Committee, Moira Healthcare Alliance and interested stakeholders.

The Heatwave Plan will sit as an appendix to the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Moira Shire Emergency Management Plan.

Section D: Municipal Scanning

Moir Shire Profile

Location

Moir Shire covers 4,057 square kilometres and is located 2.5 hours from Melbourne in the Goulburn Murray region. Moir Shire is bordered by the municipalities of Benalla, Campaspe, Indigo, Wangaratta and Shepparton. Council's northern border is the Murray River. The Shire encompasses the major centres of Cobram, Nathalia, Numurkah and Yarrowonga and 18 smaller towns and communities. Moir Shire is based on the alluvial floodplains of the Murray and Goulburn Rivers.



Strong Culture

There are 26,553 people who live in Moir Shire (2006 Census). Of those people 22,715 were born in Australia, 1,169 migrated here from English speaking countries and 1,033 came from a non-English speaking country. The majority of Moir Shire residents speak English only. Most of the residents born overseas come from Europe and New Zealand. There is an Iraqi community in Cobram along with other parts of the Goulburn Valley. Italian and Arabic are the most widely spoken languages other than English. Dutch, German, Cantonese, Filipino, Croatian and Greek are also spoken within Moir Shire.

Moir Shire has a strong Indigenous community around Barmah. In the 2006 Census data, 307 residents stated they were Indigenous.

Agricultural Diversity

The west of the Shire has been developed around the Goulburn and Murray Irrigation Systems and the Barmah Forest. The south and east have been developed for intensive agricultural with dairy in the irrigated areas and sheep and cattle in the dry land areas. The northern irrigated areas are predominantly used for horticulture. Consequently, while the Moir community is unified in its dependence on natural assets, it is varied economically, socially and culturally according to various influences in different parts of the shire.

Although the exact impacts and time frame of climate change are uncertain, the Moir Shire is currently engaged in a Climate Change Risk Assessment Project. This will produce an Adaptation Action Plan for the shire, which will impact on Municipal Public Health and service delivery.

Appealing Lifestyle

The Murray River and other waterways, friendly and relaxed rural atmosphere and warm climate attract tens of thousands of visitors to the shire each year. The temperate climate, fertile soils and irrigation opportunities are also the key to Moir's strong agricultural sector. Residential activity is increasing substantially in Yarrowonga and a number of large residential estates have been built in Numurkah and Cobram recently. There is an increasing demand for a range of housing types, including town areas, semi-rural areas and traditional farming areas.

Industry

Moira Shire is well served with a strong primary production sector including beef, sheep, cropping, dairy, fruit and viticulture. In Moira Shire, agriculture comprises approximately 66 per cent of the total land use, it contributes 47% of the gross economic output and provides more than 20% of the employment. Value-added manufacturing, food processing and tourism industries are increasingly important activities based on the strengths of agricultural production, the climate, water, the Riverine topography and landscape..

Education

In 2006, there were 5,523 people in Moira Shire attending educational institutions, or 20.4% of the total population.

Population

The 2006 Census data shows Moira Shire's population was 26,553. The Moira Shire Community Profile data estimated Moira Shire, in 2009, as having a population of 29,127. In total, 71.8% of occupied private dwellings are fully owned or being purchased. Moira Shire has an increasingly aged population, with 24.6% of people aged 60 years or older.

Employment and Income

Moira Shire has an employment rate of 95.3% and a total labour force of 11,960. This compares favourably to the average employment rate for regional Victoria of 92.6%. According to Moira Shire's Annual Business Survey (2002), 84.6% of businesses in the Shire employ fewer than 10 people. When considering 2006 gross weekly income, 18% earned less than \$350 per week, 36.2% earned \$350 to \$999 and 34.4 % earned \$1,000.00 or more.

Housing

In 2006, household dwelling type was listed as follows:

- Fully owned 4,370;
- Being purchased 3,205; and
- Rented 2,279.

Needs Analysis

Statistics on Vulnerable Groups

Moira Shire has 6,523 people in the 60 years and older age bracket. There are 1,640 children under five years of age.

Moira Shire averages around 330 new babies per year. This means that there are approximately 27.5 per month born, which accounts for pregnant and nursing mothers.

The Burden of Disease data indicates that Moira Shire has an above the state average number of people suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and respiratory diseases.

Through the heatwave alert process, it is important to ensure these vulnerable groups are given notice of a heatwave and educated in the basic steps to prevent harmful effects of prolonged heat.

Asset Mapping

The steering committee considered the option of listing Moira Shire's assets as cooling centres, however, felt the logistics and risks of setting up such facilities far outweighed the potential for people to stay safe and cool in their own home.

These six steps to beat the heat form the basis of our health message:

- Keep out of the heat - look for shade and wear a hat;
- Drink plenty of water;
- Naturally cool your home - close windows/blinds in daytime;
- Talk to your health service;
- Check on people who may struggle in the heat; and
- Help people who are feeling unwell.

If Moira Shire residents are looking for a cool building they could attend Council public libraries and swimming pools or visit commercial building that are well air conditioned e.g. supermarkets and shopping precincts

Library hours:

Library	Days	Operating Hours
Cobram Library Cobram Secondary College Warkell Street, Cobram (03) 5872 2213	Monday	Closed
	Tuesday	9.30am-12.30pm 2pm-6pm
	Wednesday	2pm-6pm
	Thursday	9.30am-12.30pm 2pm-6pm
	Friday	9.30am-12.30pm 2pm-6pm
	Saturday	9am-12.30pm
Nathalia Library Blake Street, Nathalia (03) 5866 2738	Monday	Closed
	Tuesday	10.30am-2pm
	Wednesday	10.30am-2pm
	Thursday	2.30pm-5.30pm
	Friday	2.30pm-5.30pm
	Saturday	9.30am-11.30pm
Numurkah Library Corner Knox and McCaskill Streets, Numurkah (03) 58621161	Monday	Closed
	Tuesday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Wednesday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Thursday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-6pm
	Friday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Saturday	9am-11.30pm
Yarrowonga Library 26-30 Belmore Street, Yarrowonga (03) 5744 1380	Monday	Closed
	Tuesday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Wednesday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Thursday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Friday	10am-12.30pm 1.30pm-5pm
	Saturday	9am-12pm

Council pool hours:

Swimming Pool	Days Hours of Operation	Hours of Operation
Cobram Outdoor Swimming Pool Punt Road, Cobram (03) 5872 2196 (03) 5862 2068	School Term Weekdays (non-school holidays) Weekends School Holidays Public Holidays (except Christmas Day)	3pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm
Nathalia Outdoor Swimming Pool Park Street, Nathalia (03) 5866 2220 (03) 5862 2068	School Term Weekdays (non-school holidays) Weekends School Holidays Public Holidays (except Christmas Day)	3pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm
Numurkah Aquatic and Fitness Centre Melville Street, Numurkah (03) 5862 2068	Please phone for opening hours.	
Numurkah Outdoor Swimming Pool Madeline Street, Numurkah (03) 5862 1197 (03) 5862 2068	School Term Weekdays (non-school holidays) Weekends School Holidays Public Holidays (except Christmas Day)	3pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm
Strathmerton Outdoor Swimming Pool Findlay Street, Strathmerton (03) 5874 5367 (03) 5862 2068	School Term Weekdays (non-school holidays) Weekends School Holidays Public Holidays (except Christmas Day)	3pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 1pm-7pm
Yarrowonga Outdoor Swimming Pool Burley Road, Yarrowonga (03) 5743 1119 (03) 5862 2068	School Term Weekdays (non-school holidays) Weekends School Holidays Public Holidays (except Christmas Day)	3pm-7pm 1pm-7pm 10am-7pm 1pm-7pm
Yarrowonga Foreshore Waterslide, Splash Park and Kiosk Bank Street, Yarrowonga (03) 5743 1463 (03) 5862 2068	The Yarrowonga Foreshore Waterslide is open from 12pm-5pm daily during school holidays and 1pm-5pm weekends during February. The Yarrowonga Foreshore Kiosk and Splash Park is open from 11am-6pm during school holidays and 12pm-6pm weekends during February.	
Tungamah Swimming Pool* Tower Street, Tungamah (03) 5748 5556	Please phone for opening hours.	

Section E: Partnership Development

Stakeholders/Partnerships

Through the internal steering committee and Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), partnerships have been formed on the principle of getting out an appropriate health message during heatwaves and putting appropriate actions into place to ensure vulnerable people's health.

Section F: Implementation

This plan has a comprehensive action plan based on the six key steps to beat the heat (see Appendix 3: Staying Healthy in the Heat brochure/poster)

Stage 1: April to November each year

Pre-summer evaluation stage

- Maintain contact with all stakeholders
- Prepare resources for the upcoming summer season
- Update distribution lists
- Support any community initiatives that support the Heatwave Plan objectives

Stage 2: December to March each year

Health promotion and plan implementation stage

- Commence active promotion, as per action plan
- Implement heatwave alerts as directed
- Continue to support all stakeholders
- Support any community initiatives that support the Heatwave Plan objectives

Stage 3: March to April each year

Plan evaluation

- Assessment by MEMP Committee
- Make changes to the Heatwave Plan

Section G: Evaluation

Review Planning Process

This plan will be reviewed by the Moira Shire Emergency Management Planning committee prior to each summer. Distribution lists will be updated and tested prior to the first heatwave alert for the summer.

Any issues that arise during an event that requires change to the plan will be considered by the committee and updates made as seen to be necessary.

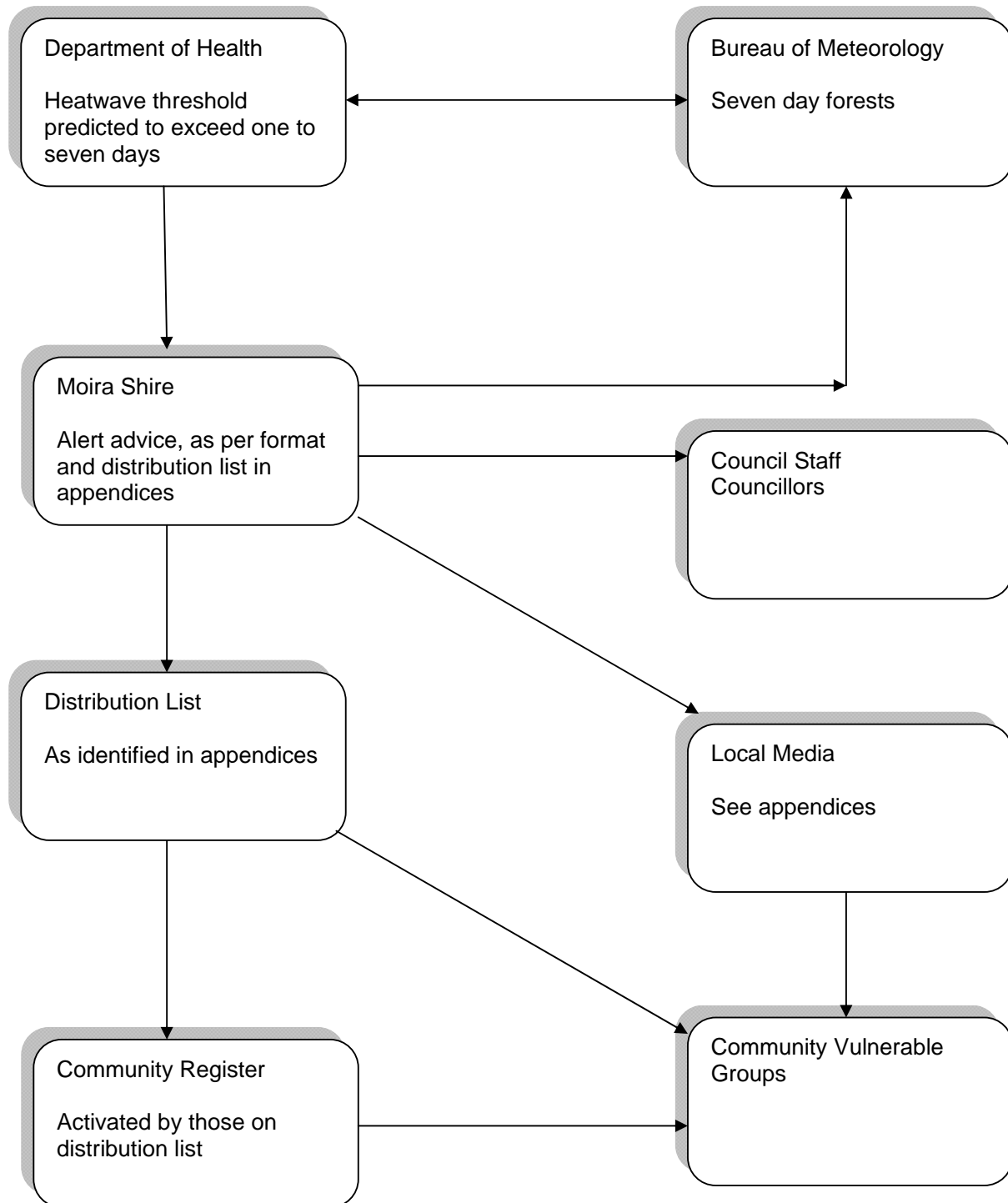
Section H: Other Issues

Business Continuity

During extended heatwave periods it may become necessary for Moira Shire and other business to activate their business continuity plans due to increased staff absences.

All businesses need to consider this as a possibility and be prepared for such circumstances.

Communications Plan



Reduction in Indoor/Outdoor Heat Exposure

- Keep out of the heat - look for shade and wear a hat
- Drink plenty of water
- Naturally cool your home - close windows/blinds in daytime
- Talk to your health service if you have a health issue
- Check on people who may struggle in the heat
- Help people who are feeling unwell

Care of Vulnerable Groups

Moira Shire has a large number of people who fit into the vulnerable groups. Through the partnership approach with key stakeholders the committee feels these vulnerable groups will get adequate warning of a heatwave event.

Media releases and appropriate use of posters will alert many others.

When does a Heatwave Become an Emergency?

- Extended periods of power failure
- Code Red predictions/extended periods
- Reported illness/deaths due to heat

In these circumstances, the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre would open and the standard emergency response would be implemented.

	Responsible Officer	Action	Timeframe
Heat-Related Health Information Plan			
Actively promote awareness of heatwaves as a health issue to council, health and social sectors, and in the community, particularly among vulnerable populations	Community Development Team Moir Healthcare Alliance Family Day Care Moir Shire Disability Advisory Committee	Develop standard media release Distribute posters Speak at gatherings that include vulnerable groups	January-February 2010 Ongoing
Develop, facilitate and promote education, information and awareness programs and materials	All stakeholders	Develop standard media release Distribute posters Speak at gatherings that include vulnerable groups	Ongoing
Notify service providers of vulnerable population groups of impending heatwaves, the information to disseminate and actions to undertake during heatwaves	Kaye Thomson Robyn Bonaddio	Send heat alert warning to email distribution list	On receipt of the heat alert warning
Translate and disseminate heatwave awareness materials for vulnerable population groups	Community Development Team Cultural Advisory Committee	Access to translated documents	Ongoing
Provide heatwave and heat-related illness information to general practitioners and chemists for distribution	Kaye Thomson Robyn Bonaddio	Initial survey Distribution and information sharing	January-February 2010
Establish a heatwave hotline to provide key health messages	Kaye Thomson Robyn Bonaddio	Advertise Council number to gain information	Activate during event
Promote Nurse-on-Call to the community for health information during heatwaves	Maternal & Child Health		Activate during an event
Brief Council staff and key agencies about actions and responsibilities identified in the heatwave plan	Kaye Thomson	Present at MEMP Committee Take plan to Council when complete	February 2010-April 2010 Each year as a reminder
Review policies, procedures and practices after each summer season and update heatwave plan accordingly	Kaye Thomson Moir Shire Council OH&S Committee	MEMP Committee	Annually through the MEMP Ongoing

	Responsible Officer	Action	Timeframe
Reduction in Indoor/Outdoor Heat Exposure			
Identify and promote safe, public places during heatwaves that are air conditioned, such as libraries or movie theatres		As listed in the plan	Ongoing
Promote the use of external shading and blinds to delay internal temperature rise	Media	As per media release	Ongoing
Provide shade and shaded seating in public areas during heatwaves	Council Capital Program		Ongoing
Care of Vulnerable Groups			
Increase outreach to vulnerable population groups during heatwaves	Through key stakeholders	Use of distribution list and media	During event
Encourage family and friends to contact vulnerable people	Media	Use of media release and distribution list	Ongoing
Preparedness of the Health and Social Care System			
Train workers with vulnerable population groups to recognise the signs of heat-related illness	Through media release	Moir Health Care Alliance HACC services Worker training/stakeholders	Ongoing
Partner with health providers	Continue existing partnership with four hospitals, Community Health Centres and General Practises and emergency services	Through the partnership and works associated with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan delivery of health strategies	During heatwave events and ongoing development

Appendix 1 – Media Release (example)

5 January 2010

HEATWAVE ALERT ISSUED

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast temperatures above heat health thresholds for the Moira Shire for three days from Saturday (9 January 2010) with extremely high temperatures forecast until Monday.

While this forecast may change during the next few days, Moira Shire Council has urged all residents to be aware of the possible effects of extreme temperature and take appropriate precautions against them.

The heatwave alert is the first for 2010 and the second for the summer, with the Bureau of Meteorology forecasting a top of 40 degrees Celsius (°C) for Saturday and Sunday and a top of 42°C for Monday.

In times of temperatures above heat health thresholds there are six simple rules people can comply with to stay healthy:

- keep out of the heat - look for shade and wear a hat;
- drink plenty of water;
- naturally cool your home - close windows/blinds in daytime;
- talk to your health service if you have a health issue;
- check on people who may struggle in the heat; and
- help people who are feeling unwell.

Those most at risk of heat-related illness are older people, particularly those living alone without air conditioning, infants, the overweight or obese, pregnant and nursing mothers and people with a chronic illness, conditions that impair sweating, limited or poor mobility or taking medications that may interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature.

Moira Shire Council Manager Community Development Kaye Thomson said people needed to ensure their air-conditioners were in good working order, they drank plenty of water and had an alternate place to go if their home was not adequately prepared to cope with the heatwave conditions.

“Can you go to a neighbour or relative’s place?” Mrs Thomson asked. “Can you assist a neighbour or family member if they need somewhere that is better equipped than their own home?”

“It’s important people are prepared, they have a plan and can do what’s necessary to make it through a heatwave and until cooler conditions arrive.”

For further information on how to better cope with heatwave conditions, contact Moira Shire Council Manager Community Development Kaye Thomson on (03) 5871 9222.

< END >

Appendix 2 - Distribution List - Organisations with ‘At Risk Registers’ to Activate Response

Name	Organisation	Email
John Parnell	Country Fire Authority	j.parnell@cfa.vic.gov.au
Gary Barton	Victoria Police, MERC	garry.barton@police.vic.gov.au
Millicent McNeil	Red Cross	millmcn@bigpond.com
John Newlands	Victoria State Emergency Service	northeast@ses.vic.gov.au
Bert Orr	Ambulance Victoria	bernard.orr@rav.vic.gov.au
Kerry Swan	Numurkah District Health	swannk@humehealth.org.au
Phil Savage	DSE	phillip.savage@dse.vic.gov.au
Dave Darby	Goulburn Murray Water	joanned@g-mwater.com.au
Ron Batley	Goulburn Valley Water	markp@gvwater.vic.gov.au
Scott Armstrong	Parks Victoria	sarmstrong@parks.vic.gov.au
Kate White	Department of Human Services	hume.em@dhs.vic.gov.au
Catherine Kelly	Cobram District Hospital	kellyc@humehealth.org.au
Steve Allan	Country Fire Authority Region 22	admin.r22@cfa.vic.gov.au
Mark Goldsworthy	North East Water	mgoldsworthy@nerwa.vic.gov.au
Robyn Trickey	Barmah kindergarten	barmah.outreach.kn@kindergaten.vic.gov.au
Robyn Taylor	Central Access Ltd	rtcobram@hotmail.com
Leah Willis	Cobram Special School	cobram.sds@edumail.vic.gov.au
Sheridan Hicks	Moir Shire Healthcare Alliance	shicks@moirahealthcare.org.au
Susan Maloney	Nathalia Community House	nathch@bigpond.com.au
Leigh Giffard	Nathalia District Hospital	giffardl@humehealth.org.au
Vicki McManus	Nathalia Primary School	nathalia.psedumail.vic.gov.au
Debbie Fowler	Numurkah Community Learning Centre Inc	nclc@bigpond.com
Betty Scott	Numurkah Multicultural Friendship Group	betty.scott@bigpond.com
Jeff Blackley	Numurkah Primary School	blackley.jeffrey.jm@edumail.vic.gov.au
Ian Price	Numurkah Senior Citizens Club Inc	numurkahsencitzclub@bigpond.com.au
Lew Nagle	Sacred Heart College	principal@shcyarrowonga.catholic.edu.au
Tony Hunter	Sacred Heart Primary	principal@shyarrowonga.catholic.edu.au
Christine Adkins	St Josephs Primary School	principal@sjcobram.catholic.edu.au
Rick Martin	Tungamah Primary School	tungamah.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
Max Beard	Yarrowonga Denis Medical Group	mbeard@denismed.com
Clyde Ronan	Yarrowonga Medical Clinic	ymc29@bigpond.net.au
Tony Andison	Yarrowonga Primary School	yarrowonga.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
Carol Lawless	Burramine Hall	boxland@bigpond.com
Sueanne Johns	Cobram Community House Inc	sueanne.johns@murraychannels.org.au

Name	Organisation	Email
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Brendan Kenna	Wunghnu Primary School	kenna.brendan.1@edumail.vic.gov.au
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Appendix 3 – Heatwave Poster

BEAT THE HEAT

: stay healthy in the heat :

- 1

Keep out of the heat – look for shade and wear a hat


- 2

Drink plenty of water


- 3

Naturally cool your home – close windows/blinds in daytime


- 4

Talk to your health service if you have a health issue


- 5

Check on people who may struggle in the heat


- 6

Help people who are feeling unwell



Appendix 4 - Health Channel Information Sheet



Heat stress and heat-related illness

Heat-related illness and heat stress occur when the body is unable to cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature. The body normally cools itself by sweating, but sometimes sweating isn't enough and the body temperature keeps rising.

Heat-related illness can range from mild conditions such as a rash or cramps to very serious conditions such as heat stroke, which can kill. Heat may worsen the condition of someone who already has a medical condition such as heart disease. Prevention is the best way to manage heat-related illness.

People most at risk of heat-related illness

Anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, but those most at risk are:

- Older people (over 65 years), particularly those living alone without air-conditioning
- Babies and young children
- People who are overweight or obese
- Pregnant and nursing mothers
- People with a chronic illness, such as heart disease or high blood pressure or diabetes, cancer or kidney disease
- People with health conditions that impair sweating such as scleroderma, cystic fibrosis and extensive scarring from burns
- People with limited or poor mobility
- People taking medications that may interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature.

Because elderly people have a reduced ability to adapt to summer heat, they are more prone to heat stress. They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition and to be taking medication that may interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature.

Types of heat-related illness

Some heat-related illnesses and common symptoms include:

- **Heat cramps** – these are muscle pains or spasms, usually in the abdomen, arms or legs. They may occur after strenuous activity in a hot environment, when the body gets depleted of salt and water. They may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.
- **Heat exhaustion** – this is a serious condition that can develop into heat stroke. Warning signs may include a pale complexion and sweating, rapid heart rate, muscle cramps and weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting or fainting.
- **Heat stroke** – this is a **life-threatening emergency** and requires urgent attention. Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to prevent the temperature rising rapidly. The symptoms may appear the same as for heat exhaustion, but the skin may be dry with no sweating and the person's mental condition worsens. They may stagger, appear confused, have a seizure, appear to have a stroke or collapse and become unconscious.

What you can do to prevent heat-related illness in yourself and others

Before the hot weather:

- See your doctor and make sure your medical condition is as well controlled as possible.
- Undertake regular moderate exercise in warmer weather prior to severe hot weather to enable the body to adapt and cope better with hot weather.

Once the weather is hot:

Moira Shire Council Heatwave Plan

- Drink plenty of water and non-alcoholic fluids. (If your doctor normally limits your fluids or you are on fluid tablets, you may need to check how much to drink while the weather is hot.)
- Avoid alcohol because of its dehydrating effects.
- Stay indoors, if possible with air-conditioning, or in the shade.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- Reduce physical activity.
- Check on older, sick and frail people who may need help coping with the heat.
- Never leave anyone in a closed parked car.
- Don't rely on fans to cool people unless they are well hydrated and there is adequate ventilation.
- Know the signs and symptoms of excessive heat exposure and know how to respond.

If you must be out in the heat:

- Limit outdoor activity to morning or evening hours.
- Protect yourself from the sun and Slip, Stop, Slap when outside by using sunscreen, wearing a hat and covering exposed skin.
- Rest regularly in the shade and drink fluids frequently.

What to do for heat cramps

- 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.

What to do for heat exhaustion

- Get the person to a cool area and lie them down.
- Remove outer clothing.
- Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths.
- Seek medical advice.

What to do for heat stroke

- Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- Get the person to a cool, shady area and lie them down.
- Remove clothing and wet skin with water, fanning continuously.
- Position an unconscious person on their side and clear their airway.

If you are concerned that someone may be suffering heat-related illness, encourage them to see their doctor.

Where to get help

- In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance
- Your doctor
- Your local community health service
- Nurse-on-Call Tel. 1300 606 024
- Victorian Bushfire Support - for multilingual information on protecting your general health during bushfire season

Things to remember

- Heat-related illness can be prevented.
- Keep cool, avoid vigorous physical activity in hot weather, and drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic fluids.
- Never leave children or pets unattended in a parked car.
- Seek medical assistance if a person shows any signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Department of Health - Environmental Health Unit

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