

# MUNICIPAL HEAT HEALTH PLAN 2018 VERSION 4.0



# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>OUR HEAT HEALTH ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>14</b>
WHY HAVE A PLAN?	2	STAGE ONE	15
STATE CONTEXT AND GUIDELINES	2	STAGE TWO	16
HEAT HEALTH WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK	2	STAGE THREE	17
<b>HEATWAVE TERMINOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>18</b>
HEAT EVENT	3	APPENDIX 1 - COMMUNICATION PLAN	18
HEATWAVE	3	APPENDIX 2 – SURVIVE THE HEAT POSTER	21
EXTREME HEAT	3	APPENDIX 3 – SURVIVE THE HEAT FACT SHEET	22
HEAT HEALTH TEMPERATURE THRESHOLDS	3		
HEAT HEALTH ALERTS	3		
<b>OUR PARTNERS</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>BULOKE COMMUNITY PROFILE</b>	<b>9</b>		
TOPOGRAPHY	9		
DEMOGRAPHICS	9		
SNAPSHOT OF OUR POPULATION	9		
<b>EXTREME HEAT AND HEALTH RISKS</b>	<b>11</b>		
HEAT ILLNESSES ARE PREVENTABLE	11		
WHO IS MOST AT RISK?	12		
PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	12		
BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN	13		
PEOPLE ON MEDICATION	13		
OLDER ADULTS	13		
OUR VISITORS	13		

## INTRODUCTION

One of the critical roles Buloke Shire Council (Council) undertakes on behalf of its community is to strengthen community resilience with effective planning for, response to and relief/recovery from emergencies. This Municipal Heat Health Plan (Plan) has been developed as part of Council's emergency management planning process on the basis that it is expected that with climate change the community will be experiencing more frequent and intense heat health and heatwave events. The Buloke municipality (Buloke) has a number of at risk groups, specifically vulnerable groups that will be particularly susceptible to heat health event conditions. The impact of heat health events on these vulnerable groups could be quite substantial; subsequently this Plan outlines the operations and actions of the organisation before, during and after these heat health events.

The Plan is a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and will work in conjunction with the MEMP. The Plan is endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Management Committee (MEMPC) and will be reviewed annually.

## WHY HAVE A PLAN?

### STATE CONTEXT AND GUIDELINES

Planning for the impacts of extreme heat and heatwave has been underway in Victoria for at least ten years. The State Heat Plan outlines arrangements for an integrated and whole-of-government approach to the emergency management of extreme heat in Victoria. The Heat health plan for Victoria (DHHS 2015) outlines a coordinated approach to the prevention, preparation and management of extreme heat in Victoria, with a focus on health and community service providers and local and state government.

Each of these plans recognises the role of local government in working with local communities to prepare and plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies. They also acknowledge that each council should develop a multi-agency heat health plan as a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan. To support this, the then Department of Health developed a Heatwave Planning Guide (DHS 2009) to assist local government to develop heat health management plans.

### HEAT HEALTH WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Management of extreme heat and heatwave straddles a number of local government areas of responsibility including emergency management, home care services, social wellbeing, sustainability and environment and town planning.

Most councils throughout Victoria have developed heat health management plans as a sub-plan to their Municipal Emergency Management Plan, though they may also be developed as part of a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan or the council strategic plan. Consideration should also be given to other council plans and frameworks to which heat health plans can be linked.

# HEATWAVE TERMINOLOGY

There have been recent changes in the terminology defining heat and heatwaves and the following terms are currently in general usage.

## HEAT EVENT

The State Heat Plan uses the term heat event for periods of high temperatures regardless of duration as even one day of high temperature may result in impact and consequences on the community, Infrastructure and services, with these effects compounding over successive days of high temperature.

## HEATWAVE

The Bureau of Meteorology's Heatwave service for Australia defines heatwave as 'three days or more of high maximum and minimum temperatures that are unusual for that location'. Heatwave as an emergency requiring a control agency is defined as three or more days in excess of the heat health threshold for a particular weather district. Victoria Police would assume control on a forecast of three or more days to ensure readiness arrangements were in place prior to the event (see Section 5).

## EXTREME HEAT

The Heat health plan for Victoria defines extreme heat as the minimum mean temperature that is likely to impact on the health of a community. This is known as the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) heat health temperature threshold. Extreme heat does not have a prescribed duration and may last as little as 24 hours.

## HEAT HEALTH TEMPERATURE THRESHOLDS

DHHS has identified heat health temperature thresholds for each weather forecast district in Victoria (which align with the Victorian Country Fire Authority districts). Above these thresholds, heat-related illness and mortality increase substantially.

The heat health temperature threshold is based on the forecast average temperature for any given day; that is the average of the forecast daily maximum temperature and the forecast overnight temperature.

## HEAT HEALTH ALERTS

Heat health alerts are issued by the Chief Health Officer for a particular district once the forecast average temperatures reach or exceed the heat health threshold for that district (see Figure 2 & 3)

### Thermometer (°C)

**Extreme Heat: 36°+**

Take immediate action

- Cool yourself
- Call for help if needed
- Follow your Action Plan

**Too Hot: 28°- 35°**

Take action

- Turn on air con or fans
- Cool yourself & your home

**Comfortable: 22°- 27°**

Summer Guide

**Comfortable: 18°- 21°**

Winter Guide

**Too Cold: Less than 17°**

Increase heating



## OUR PARTNERS

This Heat Health Plan is a sub-plan to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and is subject to the endorsement of the Municipal Emergency Management Committee. This plan will be reviewed annually by the Heat Health and Pandemic Influenza Planning Committee.

The Heat Health and Pandemic Influenza Planning Committee is a sub-committee of the Municipal Emergency Management Committee and is made up of a range of key internal and external stakeholders from within the Buloke Community including:

### **Buloke Shire Council**

- Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management
- Immunisation Coordinator
- Manager Community Services
- Child and Youth Officer
- Manager Customer Engagement
- Compliance Administrative Support Officer

### **East Wimmera Health Service**

**Mallee Track Health and Community Service**

**Ambulance Victoria**

**Department of Health and Human Services**

**Goodwin Village Aged Care**

## HEATWAVE HELP PROJECT – ADAPTING TO CHANGE

The Heatwave Help Project, funded by the Adapting to Change – climate adaption project is a partnership coordinated by the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and 6 local councils comprising of Buloke Shire, City of Greater Bendigo, Central Goldfields Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire and Mount Alexander Shire.

**This project was developed over 4 stages:**

### **1. Training**

Council Homecare Assessors provided training in assessing residences for retro-fits

### **2. Retro-fitting homes**

'ecoMaster' engaged to carryout retro-fitting to identified residences

### **3. Develop/produce Heatwave Action Kits**

Heatwave Action Kits developed and distributed, including:

- A Guide including:
  - Keep yourself cool
  - Better manage your living space
  - Simple improvements to your home
- Information fan
- Heatwave Action Plan
- Heatwave thermometer

### **4. Communication**

Council website link to: <http://heathealth.cvga.org.au/>

The heatwave health website was developed to provide consistent messaging to the community on how to stay cool during the heat and how to keep your living space cool. The website also has case studies with videos and resources to download.

# OUR PARTNERS

## PROJECT: COLLABORATIVE REVIEW AND REVISION OF HEATWAVE MANAGEMENT PLANS

7 Local councils comprising of Buloke Shire, City of Greater Bendigo, Central Goldfields Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire and Mount Alexander Shire Councils funded by the Victorian Government, partnered with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance to undertake a collaborative review and revision of heatwave management plans – looking at how councils could share resources and deliver consistent heat health messaging to achieve positive outcomes for their communities, to become more resilient to climate change.

### Background

By the end of the century, global temperatures are likely to have risen by at least 2°C compared with pre-industrial times. No nation will be immune to the resulting changes in the world's weather patterns and as international negotiations aimed at reducing future carbon emissions continue to have limited success, it would be rash for any country to fail to plan to meet the consequent challenges to their infrastructure and citizens. For Australia, one of the most important concerns is the health of its people.

#### Key Findings in a report written for the Climate Council of Australia found:

- Climate change is already increasing the intensity and frequency of heatwaves in Australia. Heatwaves are becoming hotter, lasting longer and occurring more often;
- Climate change is making heatwaves worse in terms of their impacts on people, property, communities and the environment. Heatwaves have widespread impacts ranging from direct impacts on our health to damage to ecosystems, agriculture and infrastructure
- The climate system has shifted and is continuing to shift, increasing the likelihood of more extreme hot weather
- Record hot days and heatwaves are expected to increase in the future.

Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of heat health events in Victoria. Extreme heat causes increase in illness and mortality, particularly in vulnerable population groups that are more at risk than others. Extreme heat-related illness can range from mild conditions such as a rash to cramps, to very serious conditions such as heat stroke (can be fatal) and can exacerbate existing medical conditions including heart and kidney disease. Buloke Shire being situated in the Mallee district means Buloke residents are subjected to some of the higher temperatures experienced in Victoria.

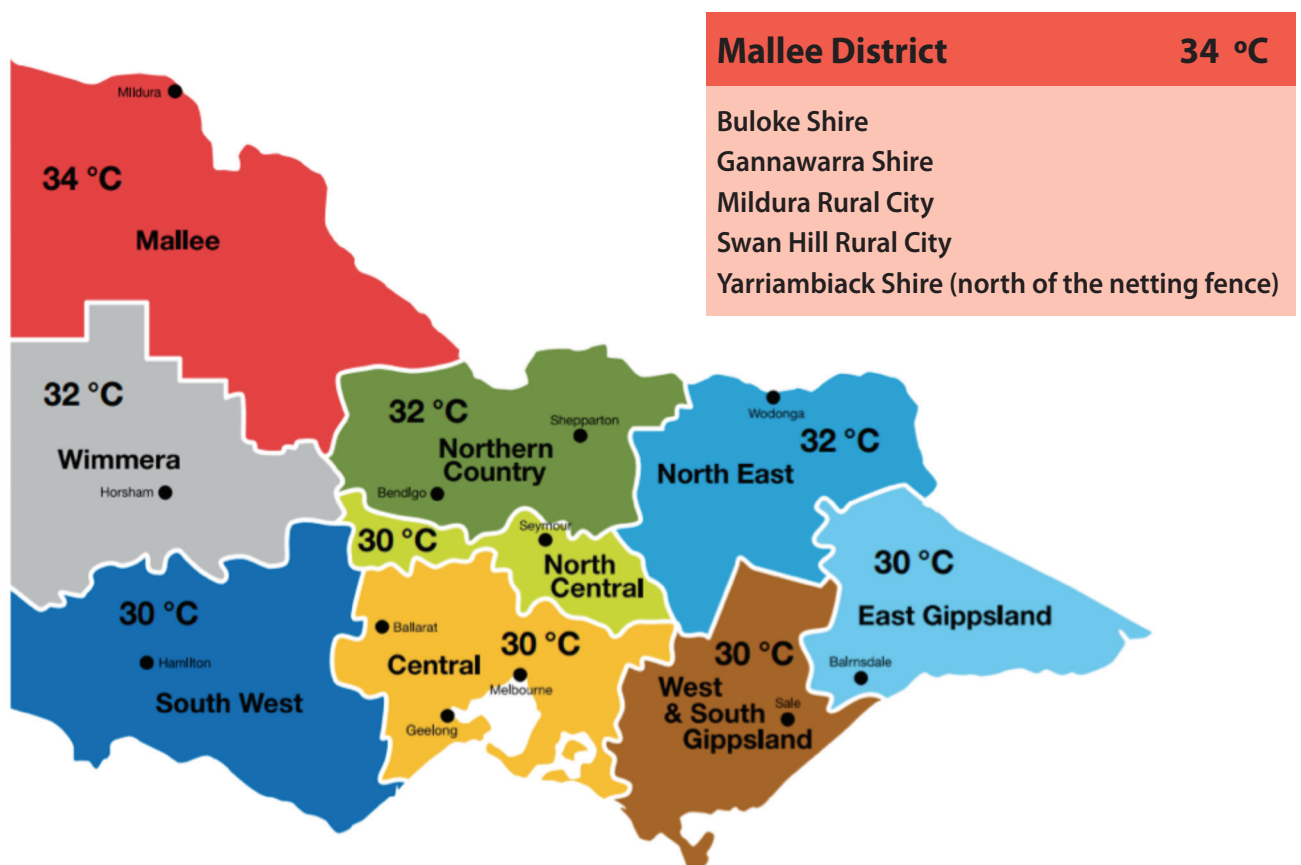
In January 2009 when Victoria experienced a prolonged state-wide heat health event with temperatures among the highest ever recorded which led to 3 consecutive days of maximum temperatures above 43°C (metropolitan Melbourne). Ambulance demand increased by 45% over the 3 consecutive days of extreme heat and an increased demand was sustained for a significant period of time after the heatwave had passed. Heat related cases increased 34-fold and a 2.8-fold increase in cardiac arrests occurred. 374 unexpected additional deaths were noted when compared with the same period for the previous 5 years. In 2014 there were 167 unexpected additional deaths during heat health event periods. These events reinforce that extreme heat is the single biggest environmental cause of death during emergencies in Victoria. Rising temperatures and more frequent intense periods of heat are forecast to be part of Victoria's climate.



# OUR PARTNERS

In Victoria, heat health temperature thresholds are aligned with the Victorian Country Fire Authority's (CFA) total fire ban and fire danger ratings districts and the Bureau of Meteorology's weather forecast districts (See figure 2).

**Figure 2: Heat health temperature thresholds and corresponding weather forecast districts**



## Key points

- One day of extreme heat can impact on human health
- The Heat Health Plan for Victoria defines extreme heat as the minimum mean temperature that is likely to impact on the health of a community
- The Bureau of Meteorology's Heatwave service for Australia defines heatwave as 'three days or more of high maximum and minimum temperatures that are unusual for that location'.
- Once forecast average temperatures are predicted to reach or exceed the heat health temperature threshold, The Department of Health and Human Services will issue a heat health alert.
- Heat health temperature thresholds differ by weather forecast district. To subscribe to receive heat health alerts, go to [www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwaves-alert](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwaves-alert)



## OUR PARTNERS

### HEAT HEALTH ALERTS

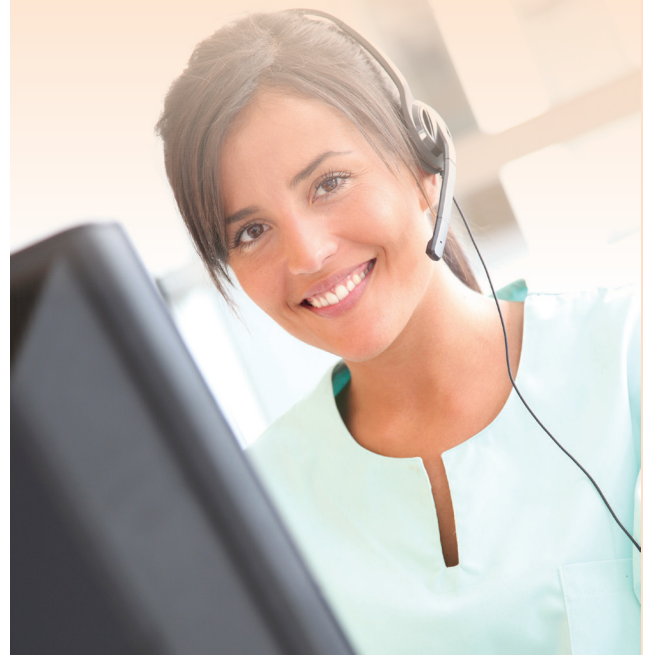
When the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) forecasts (ideally 3-4 days) extreme heat in Victoria, DHHS issues a heat health alert to notify other state departments and agencies, departmental program areas, hospitals, local government, agency partners and health and community service providers of forecast extreme heat conditions that are likely to impact on health. In 2015 the Department of Health and Human Services updated the Heat Health Alert System and introduced a subscription service for the distribution of alerts and other Chief Health Officer Advisories and emergency information.

#### Please note the following information:

- DHHS staff and service providers will now only receive a heat health alert through the subscription service
- Please subscribe at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/subscribe/>, follow the prompts and select which health alerts you would like to receive.
- Heat Health Alerts are sent from [HeatHealthAlert@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:HeatHealthAlert@health.vic.gov.au)
- Recipients of heat health alerts are advised to respond in accordance with their heat health plans and operational protocols

## NURSE ON CALL

# 1300 60 60 24



## 24 HOUR HEALTH ADVICE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

# BULOKE COMMUNITY PROFILE

## TOPOGRAPHY

The Buloke Shire covers an area of 8,020 square kilometres in the North-West of Victoria and is serviced by five main townships being Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Charlton, Donald and Birchip. Smaller townships within the municipality are Nandaly, Berrivillock, Culgoa, Nullawil and Watchem

The area is well known for its dry land farming including sheep grazing, wheat, barley, canola and chickpeas, set on relatively flat undulating plains, the majority of it having been cleared for primary production purposes.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Population within the Buloke Shire is approximately 6,200 and although there is no major urban centre, the townships of Donald and Charlton are the main commercial suppliers with each of the townships of Wycheproof, Birchip and Sea Lake playing significant ancillary roles.

Populations of the main townships are as follows:

Donald – 1,498

Charlton – 1,050

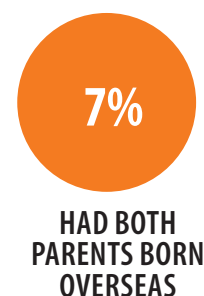
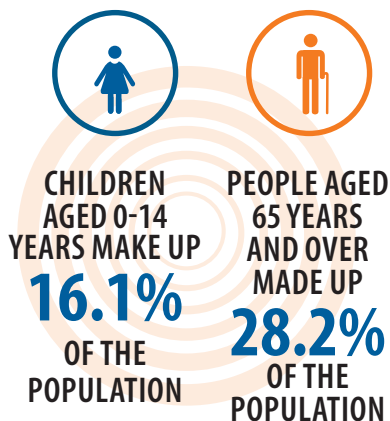
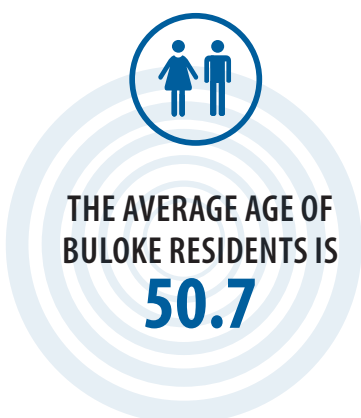
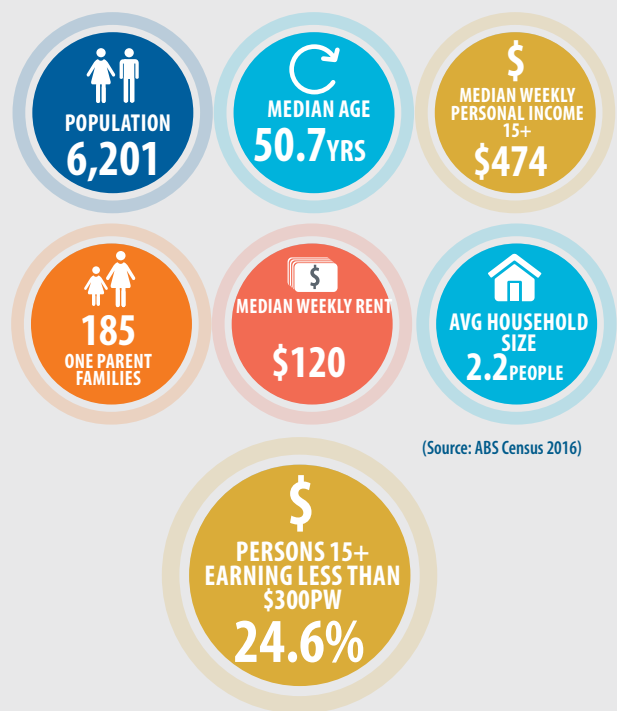
Birchip – 702

Sea Lake – 640

Wycheproof – 635

According to the 2016 ABS Census, the median age of Buloke Shire residents is 51. More than one half of the population is age 40 and above (63.7%), while 16% are less than 15 years of age. People aged 65 years and over made up 28.2% of the population.

## SNAPSHOT OF OUR POPULATION



# MUNICIPAL HEALTH PLAN 2018

## BULOKE

### GOVERNMENT PENSIONS & ALLOWANCES (NO.) - 2017

AGE PENSION	1083
PENSIONER CONCESSION CARD	1649
HEALTH CARE CARD	486
DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION	318
CARER PAYMENT	107
CARER ALLOWANCE	220
NEWSTART ALLOWANCE	201
PARENTING PAYMENT - SINGLE	31
PARENTING PAYMENT - PARTNERED	22

### OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS:

<b>62.9%</b>	WERE FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS
<b>34.3%</b>	WERE SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS
<b>2.8%</b>	WERE GROUP HOUSEHOLDS

IN BULOKE (S) (LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA), 84% OF PEOPLE WERE BORN IN AUSTRALIA. THE MOST COMMON COUNTRIES OF BIRTH WERE ENGLAND 1.4%, NEW ZEALAND 0.6%, PHILIPPINES 0.5% AND NETHERLANDS 0.3%

### OF EMPLOYED PEOPLE IN BULOKE:

<b>12.7%</b>	WORKED 1 TO 15 HOURS;
<b>10.9%</b>	WORKED 16 TO 24 HOURS
<b>46.6%</b>	WORKED 40 HOURS OR MORE

88.4% OF PEOPLE ONLY SPOKE ENGLISH AT HOME

### OTHER LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME INCLUDED:

MALAYALAM 0.5%,  
MANDARIN 0.2%,  
TAGALOG 0.2%,  
FILIPINO 0.2%  
ITALIAN 0.1%



### BULOKE

PERSONS WHO PROVIDE UNPAID CARE FOR A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

**16.4%**

### VICTORIA

PERSONS WHO PROVIDE UNPAID CARE FOR A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY




**12.7%**

PERSONS WHO NEED ASSISTANCE WITH CORE ACTIVITIES  
**7.4%**



**881** HOUSEHOLDS IN BULOKE ARE LONE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS. OF THESE, 754 RESIDE IN A SEPARATE HOUSE, AND 44 IN A FLAT OR APARTMENT

### OF ALL THE FAMILIES IN BULOKE:

	<b>35.9%</b>	WERE COUPLE FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN
	<b>50.9%</b>	WERE COUPLE FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN AND
	<b>11.9%</b>	WERE ONE PARENT FAMILIES

# EXTREME HEAT AND HEALTH RISKS

As temperatures rise, so do the risks of suffering from 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 and can result in death.

Heat related illness creates excess stress on the body to keep the inner body temperature close to 37°C. The body responds to this stress progressively through three stages.

ILLNESS	SYMPTOMS	WHAT TO DO
<b>HEAT CRAMPS</b>	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
<b>HEAT EXHAUSTION</b>	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 clothes, seek medical advice
<b>HEAT STROKE (LIFE THREATENING)</b>	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.

## HEAT ILLNESSES ARE PREVENTABLE

To help prevent the onset of heat related illness, people 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 yourself 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

## EXTREME HEAT AND HEALTH RISKS

### WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Although anyone can suffer from the effects of prolonged periods of heat at any time, the following population groups are most vulnerable.

- 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 cognitive impairment who may not be able to identify or communicate their discomfort or need for water
- People with a disability or 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 and babies
- Children under five years old
- 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 with a condition that impairs the body's abilities to regulate its own temperature like Multiple Sclerosis
- People who are unable to acclimatize
- People who are dehydrated
- People who live alone or socially isolated
- People with low cardiovascular fitness

#### **They also include people in the following circumstances:**

- People without air-conditioning or those who decide not to use it
- Homeless people
- People who work in hot environments or are physically active outdoors (such as gardeners and labourers, playing sports)
- People of low socioeconomic status
  - low income earners
  - those with limited access to transport
  - residents in the upper floors of multi-storey buildings
  - non-English speaking people who may not be able to understand heat health announcements or have reduced access to appropriate health or support services

### 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.



# EXTREME HEAT AND HEALTH RISKS

## BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

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

## PEOPLE ON MEDICATION

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.

According to the 2016 ABS Census people aged 65 years and over made up 28.2% of the population of Buloke Shire

## OUR VISITORS

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

Recent tourism statistics have indicated that Buloke Shire attracts thousands of people each week to Lake Tyrell in Sea Lake and over 16,000 visitors to our recreational lakes during the spring and summer seasons.

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

## OUR HEAT HEALTH ACTION PLAN

To be better prepared for heatwave conditions this summer, Buloke 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 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.

### STAGE ONE - PRE SUMMER PREPARATION

### STAGE TWO - DURING SUMMER PREVENTION

### STAGE THREE - HEATWAVE RESPONSE

STAGE	ACTIONS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
<b>STAGE ONE</b> <b>PRE SUMMER PREPARATION</b> <b>1 SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 30</b>	Implement Heat Health Action Plan (September 1 to November 30)	Coordinator Emergency Management
	Coordinate pre prepared media releases	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
	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, health services, libraries and swimming pools	All stakeholders
	Engage key stakeholders	Coordinator Emergency Management
<b>STAGE TWO</b> <b>DURING SUMMER PREVENTION</b> <b>DECEMBER 1 – MARCH 31</b>	Implement Heat Health Action Plan (December 1 to March 31)	Coordinator Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
	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 Buloke Shire	Coordinator Emergency Management
<b>STAGE THREE</b> <b>HEAT HEALTH RESPONSE</b>	Implement heat health action plan following heat health alert trigger	MRM and Manager Customer Engagement
	Alert key stakeholders to enact specific actions	All stakeholders
	Promote cool areas	All stakeholders
<b>TRIGGER: DHHS HEAT HEALTH ALERT</b>	Monitor BOM and DHHS reports	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management

# OUR HEAT HEALTH ACTION PLAN

## 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 heat health events and heatwave conditions.

Agencies responsible for assisting people on the Vulnerable Peoples Register will be encouraged to develop support plans for heat health events and 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.

### Key stakeholders – 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 group's 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)

## OUR HEAT HEALTH ACTION PLAN

### STAGE TWO

#### Prepare/revise pre-prepared key heat health messages

Stage Two includes a range of actions to further build resilience amongst Buloke 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, newsletters and emergency broadcasters.

Messages will be consistent with information through the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance Heatwave Help website: <http://heathealth.cvga.org.au/> and information from the Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/heat>

#### 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 Buloke Shire

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

#### Key stakeholders - 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

#### Survive the heat this summer with these five simple tips:



Drink more water



Never leave anyone in a car



Stay somewhere cool



Plan ahead



Check in on others

Source: Better Health Channel

# OUR HEAT HEALTH ACTION PLAN

## STAGE THREE

Stage Three is triggered when imminent heatwave temperatures for the Buloke 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.

Buloke Shire Council's, Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management 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 Buloke Shire Council only in response to declared emergencies resulting from heatwave conditions. In this case, the Municipal Emergency Management Plan would be activated.

### Key stakeholders – 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

### Evaluate the plan's effectiveness

To ensure Buloke'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?



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 - COMMUNICATION PLAN

#### Situational analysis:

Buloke Shire's Heat Health Plan determines how Council will support the local community to adapt and minimize the impact of heat health events and heatwaves

The objectives of this communication plan are to:

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

#### Stakeholders:

- Buloke Shire Community
- Councillors
- Council Staff
- Local health Services
- Government agencies
- Aged Care Providers
- Local pharmacies
- Emergency Services (SES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross, VicPol)
- Emergency broadcasters
- Local schools
- Child care providers
- Senior Citizens Clubs and groups
- Local sporting clubs

#### Key Messages

Promote the key messages of the Heatwave Health website, the Department of Health and Human Services and Better Health Channel.

Key messages include:

##### Keep yourself cool

- Have a plan
- Have a cool drink
- Stay in the shade
- Take a break from the heat
- Dress for the weather
- If you have symptoms, make a call to Nurse on Call, your doctor or 000

##### Keep your living space cool

- Zone off main living space
- Use a fan
- Use the air conditioner
- Close the curtains
- Have a plan

##### Improve your home

- External shading
- Draught proofing
- Internal curtains and blinds
- Insulation
- Other improvements

##### Heat illness: Know the signs.

Heat can cause illnesses such as heat cramps and heat exhaustion which can lead to the life-threatening condition, heatstroke. Heatstroke is fatal in up to 80% of cases.

Heat can also worsen the condition of someone who already has a health problem, such as heart disease or diabetes. Most reported illness and death is due to the effect of heat on those who are already ill.

If you or someone you know is unwell call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24 for 24-hour health advice or see your doctor

In an Emergency, call 000

# APPENDICES

## **How/Where/When**

The following methods will be used to broadcast emergency information relating to heat health

## **Media Releases and Alerts**

Media releases and public notices with details relating to heat health alerts will be distributed to all local media, including local community newsletters and across Council's social media channels during all stages

## **FAQ Information Sheet**

An FAQ information sheet will be produced, information supplied by Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management for Manager Customer Engagement to format. The FAQ information sheet will be available via Council's website, social media and printed copies provided to Customer Service Officers at Council's Wycheproof office and at any other Council facilities.

## **Buloke Shire Council website**

A heat health page will be created on the Council website to be maintained with relevant information. The Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management is responsible for providing the content to the Manager Customer Engagement and will be updated as required. A home page slide may be added to the site and a custom URL has been created for the page that will permanently show information relating to heat health. [www.buloke.vic.gov.au/heathealth](http://www.buloke.vic.gov.au/heathealth)

## **Paid advertising**

Should deadlines allow, messaging may be included within Council's weekly paid advertisement which is printed in the Buloke Times on a Tuesday, the North Central News on a Wednesday and the Sea Lake Wycheproof times Ensign on each Thursday. Advertisements must be formatted and sent to the newspaper by close of business Friday the week before print and should be made available to the Manager Customer Engagement as early as possible.

## **Internal Communication (Council)**

Key messages and communication is to be shared via internal email to all staff. Key messages will also appear in the Weekly Staff Bulletin and Weekly Councillor Bulletin. Copies of the key messages are to be printed and displayed in staff areas at all depots and offices. The Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management is responsible for requesting supervisors to print and display this information.

## **Additional Support**

Customer Service must be provided with regular updates and current information, including the most up to date FAQs in order to assist in responding to incoming calls. If this information is already available online, they may be provided with a link to this content.

# MUNICIPAL HEAT HEALTH PLAN 2018

## Communication Plan

ACTION	WHEN	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
<b>STAGE ONE – 1 SEPTEMBER – 30 NOVEMBER</b>		
PREPARE/REVISE STANDARD HEAT HEALTH ALERT TEMPLATES	October-November	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
PREPARE INFORMATION FOR DISTRIBUTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA, BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL WEBSITE AND LOCAL NEWSPAPERS	September for December publication	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
PREPARE/REVISE FAQ SHEET	Each October	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management
PREPARE/REVISE WEBSITE CONTENT	Each October	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
<b>STAGE TWO – 1 DECEMBER – 31 MARCH</b>		
MEDIA RELEASE FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS	By mid-December	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
MEDIA RELEASE FOR ALL FORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND COUNCIL WEBSITE	By mid-December	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement
DISTRIBUTE HEAT HEALTH INFORMATION POSTERS TO PUBLIC SPACES	By mid-December	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management
<b>STAGE THREE</b>		
ISSUE HEAT HEALTH ALERTS TO STAFF AND TO THE COMMUNITY VIA ALL FORMS OF MEDIA	When alerted by DHHS and throughout duration of event	Coordinator Public Health and Emergency Management and Manager Customer Engagement

## APPENDIX 2 - SURVIVE THE HEAT POSTER

# SURVIVE THE HEAT

Heat kills more Australians than any other natural disaster



### DRINK WATER

Even if you don't feel thirsty, drink water. Take a bottle with you always.



### HOT CARS KILL

Never leave kids, older people or pets in cars. The temperature inside a parked car can double within minutes.



### KEEP COOL

Seek out air-conditioned buildings, draw your blinds, use a fan, take cool showers and dress in light and loose clothing made from natural fabrics.



### PLAN AHEAD

Schedule activities in the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat. If you must go out, wear a hat and sunscreen and take a bottle of water with you.



### CHECK IN ON OTHERS

Look after those most at risk in the heat – your neighbour living alone, older people, the young, people with a medical condition and don't forget your pets.

**SURVIVE THE HEAT**  
Visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

For more information visit the Better Health Channel.  
Call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24  
or see your doctor if you are unwell.  
In an emergency, call 000.



Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place Melbourne.  
© State of Victoria, January 2016. (1511011)

## APPENDIX 3 – SURVIVE THE HEAT FACT SHEET

# SURVIVE THE HEAT

### Know the effects of extreme heat, who is at risk and how you can prepare yourself and others.

During extreme heat it is easy to become dehydrated or for your body to overheat. If this happens, you may develop heat cramps, heat exhaustion or even heatstroke. Heatstroke is a medical emergency which can result in permanent damage to your vital organs, or even death, if not treated immediately. Extreme heat can also make existing medical conditions worse.

### Could you or someone you know be at risk?

Extreme heat can affect anybody however the people most at risk:

- are aged over 65 years, especially those living alone
- have a medical condition such as diabetes, kidney disease or mental illness
- are taking medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat such as:
  - allergy medicines (antihistamines)
  - blood pressure and heart medicines (beta-blockers)
  - seizure medicines (anticonvulsants)
  - water pills (diuretics)
  - antidepressants or antipsychotics
- have problematic alcohol or drug use
- have a disability
- have trouble moving around such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs
- pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers
- babies and young children
- are overweight or obese
- work or exercise outdoors
- have recently arrived from cooler climates.

### Hot cars kill

- Never leave kids, adults or pets in hot cars. The temperature inside parked cars can double within minutes.

### Coping with the heat

- Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty (if your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather).
- Keep yourself cool by using wet towels, putting your feet in cool water and taking cool (not cold) showers.
- Spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries, cinemas or community centres).
- Block out the sun at home during the day by closing curtains and blinds.
- Open the windows when there is a cool breeze.
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.
- Cancel or postpone outings. If you absolutely must go out, stay in the shade and take plenty of water with you.
- Wear a hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing made from natural fibres like cotton and linen.
- Eat smaller meals more often and cold meals such as salads.
- Make sure food that needs refrigeration is properly stored.
- Avoid heavy activity like sport, renovating and gardening.
- Watch or listen to news reports to find out more information during extreme heat.



