

Hindmarsh Shire

Municipal Emergency Management Plan

2022–2025

Version 3.0



Administered by the:

Wimmera Emergency Management Team



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1. Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Hindmarsh Shire Council, as Chair of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

1.2 Authority

In 2020, the [Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018](#) amended the [Emergency Management Act 2013 \(EM Act 2013\)](#) (Act) to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the state, regional and municipal levels. It created an obligation for a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria, including the alpine resorts which, for the purposes of the act, are taken to be a municipal district. Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to the task of emergency management planning for the municipal district.

This plan has been prepared in accordance, and complies, with the requirements of the [Act](#) including having regard to the guidelines issued under s77, [Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans](#).

1.3 Plan assurance and approval

1.3.1 Assurance

A Statement of Assurance (including a checklist and certificate) has been prepared by the Hindmarsh MEMPC and submitted to the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMP) pursuant to the [Act](#) (s60AG).

This planning template holds similar information as MEMPs developed for the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership municipalities of Horsham, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack. Plans have been administered by the Wimmera Emergency Management Team. Each plan is developed in collaboration with the four MEMPCs, however, are individualised to the specific MEMPC.

Meets assurance general: Plan has been prepared with regard to the following guidance in ministerial guidelines issued under the [Act](#) s77 ([Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans](#))

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1.3.2 Approval

This plan has been written and approved by the Hindmarsh MEMPC at its meeting held on 13 September 2022.

The plan has been through an assurance process overseen by the Grampians REMPC and is self-assured by the Hindmarsh MEMPC. This plan comes into effect when it is published on the Hindmarsh Shire Council website and remains in effect until superseded by an approved and published update.

1.4 Plan review

The Hindmarsh Shire MEMP will be reviewed and updated as required:

- Annually in full or in part at each MEMPC meeting
- After each major event where the plan has been activated
- Where the MEMP has been exercised.

To ensure the plan is effective and provides for a current integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management, it is to be fully reviewed at least every three years. An urgent update of this plan is permitted if there is a significant risk that life or property will be endangered if the plan is not updated ([Act s60AM](#)). Urgent updates come into effect when published on the Hindmarsh Shire Council website.

This plan will be reviewed no later than September 2025. This plan is current at the time of publication and remains in effect until modified, superseded or withdrawn.

[Appendix G: Amendment register](#)

1.5 Disclaimer

No reader should act based on any matter contained in this publication without appreciating that it may be the subject of amendment or revocation from time to time without notice. Members of the Hindmarsh MEMPC expressly disclaim all and any liability (including liability in negligence) to any person or body in respect of anything and of the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done by any such person or body in reliance, whether total or partial, upon the whole or any part of this publication.

1.6 Plan aim and objectives

This MEMP documents the agreed emergency management arrangements for mitigation, response and recovery, and defines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at the municipal level. It supports efficiency and effectiveness on a platform of shared responsibility and inter-operability to deliver community centred outcomes.

The plan seeks to build safer and more resilient communities through dynamic engagement and connectedness with the individuals, groups and broader society that makes up the Hindmarsh district. It ensures a coordinated and integrated approach with a focus on community involvement in planning in line with the 'all communities – all emergencies' approach to emergency management.

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2. Municipal district characteristics

2.1 Topography

Hindmarsh Shire Council is located in the Wimmera region of Western Victoria, covering an area of 7,527 square kilometres. The Shire is situated on the Western Highway, 375 kilometres west of Melbourne and 350 kilometres east of Adelaide. The Shire is bordered by Mildura Rural City Council to the north, West Wimmera Shire Council to the west, Horsham Rural City Council to the south and Yarriambiack Shire Council to the east, and is bound by the Little Desert National Park in the south and Wyperfeld National Park in the north.

Hindmarsh Shire Council covers the four main towns of Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill and Rainbow. The Shire is divided into three wards: North, West and East. The North Ward includes the Big Desert, Wyperfeld National Park, Lake Albacutya, Lake Hindmarsh and the communities of Rainbow, Jeparit and Netherby. The West Ward includes the Nhill community, Kinimakatka Bushland Reserve, Nhill Swamp Wildlife Reserve and Mt Elgin Swamp. The East Ward includes the Dimboola community, Little Desert National Park, Pink Lake, Gerang and Kiata.

The topography includes relatively flat open plains between the two desert parks providing ideal conditions for broad-acre cropping. The Heritage Wimmera River, which rises in the Pyrenees, flows south to north through the Shire and terminates in Lake Albacutya.

Hindmarsh Shire is experiencing increased visitation, with people from outside the region and overseas increasingly attracted to its unique attributes and environment, central to both Melbourne and Adelaide. A focus on the many natural attractions, silo art, small-town streetscapes, unusual shops and inviting communities and facilities is translating into an attractive, relaxing and popular year-round tourist destination.

2.1.1 Land use

Rural land use comprises just 59.7% of the total land in the area with less than 1% being used for business, industrial or residential purposes. Approximately 2,458 households are present in the area¹. Little Desert National Park rests in the south of the Shire and the Big Desert in the North. Lake Hindmarsh is situated near the towns of Rainbow and Jeparit and is the largest freshwater lake in Victoria.

2.1.2 Water supply and management

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline has been implemented on the eastern side of the Wimmera River across the municipality. This system has replaced the earthen channel system which is being replaced over time. The major towns of Jeparit, Dimboola, Nhill and Rainbow are supplied through Supply System 1 - Yaapeet line. As part of the construction of the pipeline, a number of water tanks for firefighting purposes have been strategically placed along its length.

For further information, refer to [Appendix F: Maps](#) or the [Hindmarsh Shire Community Map](#)

¹ [2021 ABS Census Data \(Hindmarsh Shire\)](#)

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2.2 Climate

The climate in the area is dominated by warm dry summers and cool wet winters.

The climate is semi-arid to sub-humid, with annual rainfall ranging generally from 380 millimetres (15 inches) in the north to 580 millimetres (23 inches) in the south. Most rain falls in winter, though heavy summer falls can occur, the most famous of which was the thunderstorm that dumped 133.2 millimetres (5.24 inches) on Nhill in mid-January 1974.

Temperatures are hot in summer, ranging typically from a maximum of 30°C (86°F) to a minimum of 14°C (57°F), whilst extremes can be as high as 46°C (115°F). In the winter, maximums are 15°C (59 °F), but mornings can be cool.

2.3 Climate change²

Climate projections suggest that Victoria will continue to become warmer and drier in the future, however, natural year-to-year and decade-to-decade variability mean that relatively cooler periods and very wet years will still occur. Annual rainfall is projected to decrease across the state, due to declines in autumn, winter and spring. When extreme rainfall events do occur, they are likely to be more intense. Areas of the Victorian Alps are projected to see a greater reduction in rainfall than the surrounding areas. Victorian alpine areas are also projected to continue to experience declining snowfall (35–75% by the 2050s under high emissions). A comparison of observations and projections in Victoria suggests that temperature has been tracking towards the upper limit of projections while winter rainfall has been tracking towards the drier end of projections.

By the 2050s, if the current rate of global warming continues, Victorian towns could experience around double the number of very hot days each year compared to the 1986–2005 average. By the 2090s, Victoria is projected to warm on average by 2.8 to 4.3°C under a high emissions scenario compared to 1986–2005.

This would see Victoria frequently experiencing currently unprecedented high temperatures. Victoria is likely to have a significantly lengthened fire season with the number of very high fire danger days likely to continue to increase. Sea levels along the Victorian coast are also likely to continue to rise.

The State Government climate change projections predict that the municipality can expect:

- Increased temperatures with the greatest increases occurring in summer
- To be drier with greater decreases in rainfall expected in spring
- To have an increase in the intensity of rainfall but a decrease in the number of rainy days.

With increased temperatures and a decreased amount of rainfall, water will be a key issue in the future for the community, Council, primary producers and businesses.

² [Victoria's Climate Science Report 2019 \(DELWP\)](#)

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2.4 Demography³

The total population of the Hindmarsh Shire is 5,698 people. The four largest towns in the municipality are Nhill (2,401 residents), Dimboola (1,635), Rainbow (672) and Jeparit (476).

Over 50% of the population are aged 50 years or older, with 5% aged 85 or older (more than twice the State average).

More than 25% of the population were either born overseas, or at least one parent was born overseas. The top countries of birth are: Myanmar 9.8%, England 8.9%, New Zealand 1.8%, India 1.5%, Thailand 1.4% and Philippines 1%. Almost 5% of residents speak a language other than English at home, with the most common being Karen (3.7%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.6% of the total population.

The percentage of the population with a severe or profound disability or who require assistance with core activities is 7.7%, compared to the State average of 5.1%.

Volunteering in the Hindmarsh Shire is almost double the State average, with 28.7% of residents participating in one or more volunteer activities each year.

The median weekly household income is well below the State average but unemployment rates are low, rental properties are affordable and home ownership is high.

2.5 Vulnerable persons (community organisations and facilities)

The state-wide database for vulnerable people is regularly updated and available via Victoria Police for response agencies in the event or possible event of a major incident. Hindmarsh Shire Council provides a Vulnerable Person's Coordinator who assists other agencies with maintaining their entries in the state-wide database on an ongoing basis.

Facilities including schools, health services and aged care and disability services are listed in the Vulnerable Persons Register and need to be considered as vulnerable facilities, which would require extra care and attention when dealing with evacuation and emergency procedures.

2.6 Municipal location map

For further information about the Hindmarsh Shire location and boundary maps, refer to [Appendix F: Maps](#)

³ [2021 ABS Census Data \(Hindmarsh Shire\)](#)

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2.7 History of emergencies

2.7.1 Fires

The municipality has a history of lightning strikes, especially within the Little Desert and Wyperfeld National Parks. The addition of agricultural machinery and stubble burning are also factors that increase the likelihood of ignition in the broadacre cropping area across the Shire.

Table 1: Major fire summary

Year	Location	Size (ha)	Ignition source
2022	Little Desert National Park	256	Lightning
2020	Little Desert National Park	2,007	Lightning
2019	Netherby-Marshalls Road (grassfire)	120	Unknown
2016	Rainbow-Pullut East Road	117	Mechanical
2015	Little Desert National Park, Nhill-Harrow Road	13,100	Lightning
2015	Little Desert National Park, Wallaby Track	1,121	Lightning
2014	Mallee Fire Campaign	52,000	Lightning
2014	Antwerp-Warracknabeal Road	1,200	Escaped burnoff
2014	Antwerp-Tischler Road	297	Mechanical
2011	Hay Shed, Nhill-Netherby Road (structure fire) (\$1.5m)	n/a	Unknown
2008	Little Desert National Park	15,000	Lightning
2003	Dimboola Hotel, Wimmera Street (structure fire)	n/a	Unknown
2002	Big Desert	27,000	Prescribed burn
1998	Wyperfeld National Park	14,000	Lightning
1998	Cordner Motors, Dimboola (structure fire)	n/a	Unknown
1997	Rainbow	220	Escaped burnoff
1993	Photography Business, Nhill (structure fire)	n/a	Unknown
1980	Western Highway North, Dimboola	1,700	Vehicle

For further information, refer to: [Hindmarsh Shire Community Map Fire History](#)

2.7.2 Floods

Large floods along the Wimmera River through the Hindmarsh municipality generally occur as a result of moderate to heavy rainfall in the upper parts of the catchment to the south after a prolonged period of general rainfall. Large floods most recently occurred in 2010 and 2011, greatly affecting the towns of Jeparit and Dimboola as well as many of the roads, cutting off access in the municipality.

For further information, refer to: [VICSES Hindmarsh Shire Flood History](#)

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2.7.3 Blue-Green Algae

Blue-green algae (BGA) or cyanobacteria are photosynthetic bacteria. They are a natural part of most aquatic environments and are found in streams, lakes, estuaries and the sea. Significant levels of BGA in water bodies can affect the natural ecosystem and potentially impact human health.

Blooms are common in the warmer months in Victorian rivers and lakes and can be triggered by a combination of:

- Nutrients in the water
- Low water inflows and storage levels
- Warmer weather conditions.

Several of the water bodies in the Hindmarsh Shire area, particularly shallow lakes, have a history of regular BGA blooms. BGA blooms are managed by the relevant water body manager in line with the Victorian Blue Green Algae Circular.

For further information, refer to: [GWMWater Blue-Green Algae](#)

2.7.4 Biosecurity

The biosecurity threats assessed by Agriculture Victoria as being a high threat to Hindmarsh Shire include:

- Plant Biosecurity Threat – Khapra Beetle
- Animal Biosecurity Threat – Anthrax
- Animal Biosecurity Threat – Foot and Mouth Disease.

History of biosecurity emergencies in the Hindmarsh Shire: Late in 2010 and early in 2011 a plague of locusts ravaged Victoria impacting greatly on the agricultural industry of the municipality. The occurrence of high summer and autumn rainfall provided an ideal environment for extensive breeding and egg-laying. The Australian plague locust is a native Australian insect and is a significant agricultural pest. In recent years, crops in the Wimmera have also been affected by mouse plagues. In 2010, 2011 and 2014 particularly, numerous regions across Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia were subject to mouse plagues.

For further information, refer to: [Agriculture Victoria - Biosecurity](#)

2.7.5 Pandemic

Hindmarsh Shire has been affected, like all Councils in Victoria, by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). The Hindmarsh Shire Pandemic Plan guides the Hindmarsh Shire Council and other pandemic influenza stakeholders in the municipality to appropriately plan for and effectively respond to pandemic influenza conditions. The pandemic plan is supported by a set of operational documents, including Council Pandemic Influenza Response Procedures and Council's Business Continuity Plan.

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2.7.6 Transport

The Hindmarsh Shire has a number of major road networks intersecting or adjacent to the district. These include the Borung Highway, and Western Highway along with the east west rail corridor between Melbourne and Adelaide. From 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2022, there have been 18 fatalities recorded by the [Transport Accident Commission](#) in the Hindmarsh Shire Council area.

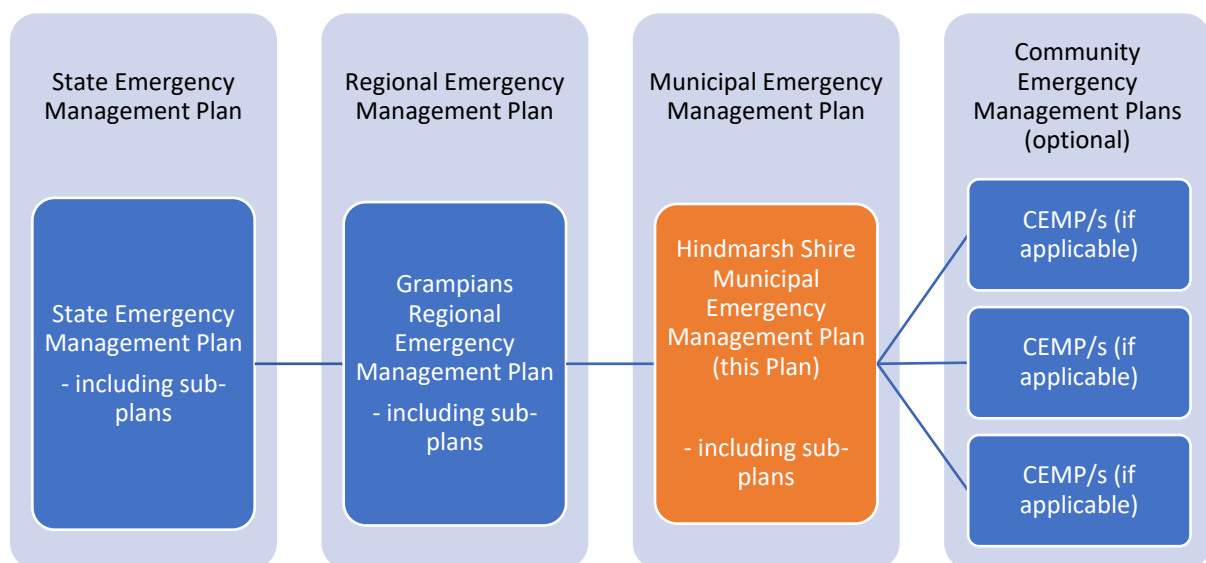
3. Planning arrangements

3.1 Victoria’s emergency management planning framework

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

Figure 1 outlines this plan’s hierarchy. This plan should be read in conjunction with the SEMP and the REMP.

Figure 1: Plan hierarchy



3.2 The MEMPC, sub-committees and working groups

The Hindmarsh Shire MEMPC’s main purpose is to develop the MEMP for Council’s consideration regarding the prevention, response and recovery arrangements in relation to emergencies that may impact the Hindmarsh Shire municipality.

[Hindmarsh Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee Terms of Reference](#)

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It is not the role of the MEMPC to manage emergencies. This is the responsibility of agencies allocated the role due to their expertise and resourcing to manage emergency events as the Control Agency or aspects of them in support of the Control Agency.

Multi-agency collaboration is paramount to good municipal emergency management planning and implementation. Emergency services and recovery agencies work together at the municipal level to plan, prepare, respond and recover for all emergencies, taking a broad risk approach.

Control agencies responsible for each risk area will involve other agencies (including local government) in a support capacity. These relationships work because of:

- Annual exercising
- Identification of trigger points and level of activation
- Communications to stakeholders and the community
- Working together as one culture.

[Appendix B: Contact Directory](#) contains a list of agency 24-hour contact details for the MEMP.

3.3 Sub-plans and complementary plans

The Hindmarsh Shire MEMPC emergency services sub-plans may be consistent or have some similarity in wording with other MEMP's as these agencies cross over MEMPC boundaries. Local government plans and those plans from support agencies, where included, may also be consistent or have some similarity in wording. As far as is practically understood there is no conflict of national, state or local legislation within this MEMP.

3.3.1 Sub-plans

The MEMPC will determine if a sub-plan is required to detail more specific or complex arrangements that either enhance or contextualise this plan. All sub-plans are multi-agency plans and maybe hazard-specific where the consequences are likely to be significant, for example, a Municipal Flood Response Sub-plan.

All sub-plans to this plan are subject to the same preparation, consultation, assurance, approval and publication requirements as this Plan, as outlined in the [Act](#) Part 6A.

Agencies with roles or responsibilities in a sub-plan must act in accordance with the plan ([Act](#) s60AK).

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complimentary plans](#) provides a list of sub-plans detailing more specific or complex arrangements.

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3.3.2 Complementary plans

Complementary plans are prepared by industries/sectors or agencies for emergencies that do not fall within the [Act](#) Part 6A. They are often prepared under other legislation, governance or statutory requirements for a specific purpose.

Complementary plans do not form part of this plan and are not subject to approval, consultation and other requirements under the [Act](#).

A list of complementary plans that have significance to the comprehensive, coordinated and integrated emergency management arrangements in the municipal district is included.

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complimentary plans](#) provides a list of complementary plans that have significance to the comprehensive, coordinated integrated emergency management arrangements in the Hindmarsh Shire.

4. Mitigation arrangements

4.1 Introduction

Government and non-government organisations, commercial enterprises and community members are all expected to undertake mitigation measures within their areas of responsibility, for example:

- Private businesses prepare business continuity plans
- Aged care and health facilities have emergency management plans
- Farmers have appropriate fire control measures at harvest
- Fire agencies will conduct strategic controlled burn programs
- Council implements relevant planning, prevention and mitigation measures within its authority, responsibility and policies
- Community members have personal emergency plans
- Organisations and individuals have appropriate levels of insurance.

4.2 Hazard, exposure, vulnerability and resilience

Future vulnerabilities will include larger landholdings managed by consortiums and serviced by contractors leading to declining populations across the Shire.

This demographic, combined with an ageing population, has seen previously robust rural communities replaced by smaller, older more vulnerable communities isolated from services. The shift in the population may reduce emergency services volunteer capacity and resources potentially leading to delayed suppression activities in rural areas.

Changes in farming practices have led to increased fuel content (crop residue) being left on the ground throughout the year potentially increasing fire spread due to continuity of fuel load. Hay production is widespread throughout the Shire and there is potential for spontaneous combustion in stored product.

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An increase in individuals purchasing property for investment purposes has resulted in more absentee landowners. These landowners traditionally have less understanding of fuel and fire management requirements, little engagement with the community and live externally to the municipality. This limits their capacity and ability to undertake regular fuel management works and participate in local community networks.

As predicted by the Victorian Government’s climate change projections, an increase in temperature can be expected in the future. This escalation in temperature will potentially increase the likelihood and frequency of heatwaves across the municipality. Increased heatwaves in conjunction with an ageing population could be a cause for concern.

4.3 Risk assessment process and results

Emergency risk management is a systematic process that produces a range of measures that contribute to the community and environmental wellbeing. ‘Unexpected’ emergencies can affect the community differently as they generally happen without warning or predictability. These may include transport accidents, flash floods, terrorism and structure fires. Due to the “unexpected factor” of these events, it is difficult to plan all suitable countermeasures at the municipal level.

The Hindmarsh Shire MEMPC recognises it has a key role in prevention and mitigation activities to reduce the risk or minimize the effects of emergencies that may occur in the Hindmarsh municipality.

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complimentary plans](#) provides details of the Hindmarsh Shire Risk Plan

4.4 Treatment plans

Treatment plans are developed at the Council and agency levels to mitigate the risk of hazards that impact the municipality. The hazards and the associated risks are recorded in a risk register. Where the risk is of sufficient magnitude, hazard-specific sub plans are developed, which may contain mitigation arrangements.

Other sub-plans and arrangements may be developed that:

- Manage specific hazards of a technical nature such as biosecurity risks or pandemics
- Support Control Agencies and their arrangements e.g. resource support arrangements
- Contribute to the overall management of an emergency, for example, Emergency Animal Welfare Support Sub-plan.

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complimentary plans](#) provides a list of treatment plans

4.5 Monitoring and review

The MEMP and sub-plans are constantly monitored and reviewed after emergency incidents across the Shire. A snapshot of plans that have been exercised since 2020 is included in Table 2.

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Table 2: Exercised Plans

Date	Event	Plan exercised
2020-21	COVID-19	Pandemic Plan
2022	Aerodrome exercise at Warracknabeal	TBC
Annually	Truck rollover	Emergency Animal Welfare Support Sub-plan
Annually	Single incident house fires Grass fires Scrub fires Vehicle fires	Municipal Fire Management Plan

5. Response (including relief)

5.1 Introduction

Emergency response focuses on organising, coordinating and directing available resources to respond to emergencies and the provision of rescue and immediate relief services for people affected by emergencies. This includes the provision for requests for physical assistance from regional, state and commonwealth levels of government when municipal resources are exhausted.

The following section outlines the arrangements in place for the activation and implementation of response activities for emergency events impacting the Hindmarsh Shire municipality, including regional collaborative arrangements to facilitate an effective response to emergency events that impact an area larger than the municipality.

5.2 Strategic control priorities

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) provides key strategic priorities for the State Controller, Regional Controllers and Incident Controllers to consider during the management of any complex emergency. The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery.

The priorities include:

- Protection and preservation of life are paramount, this includes:
 - Safety of emergency services personnel
 - Safety of community members, including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area
- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members to make informed decisions about their safety
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that support community resilience
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that supports individual and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, biodiversity and social values of the environment.

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5.3 Event categorisation

Emergency events are categorised using three parameters:

- Operational tier
- Class of emergency
- Classification.

5.3.1 Operational tier

The operational tier defines the level of management required for the emergency event:

- Incident - managed at the local level by the Control Agency
- Regional – managed at the regional level by the Control Agency
- State Incident – managed at the state level by EMV.

Emergency events are managed at the appropriate operational tier until the event may require escalation to a higher level.

5.3.2 Classes of emergency

Classes of emergency as defined in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* relate to the type of emergency and are defined in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Classes of emergency

Class	Definition
Class 1 emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major fire; or • Any other major emergency for which the Fire Rescue Victoria, the Country Fire Authority or the Victoria State Emergency Service is the Control Agency under the State Emergency Response Plan (<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>, section 3).
Class 2 emergency	A major emergency that is not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Class 1 emergency; or • A warlike act or act of terrorism, whether directed at Victoria or a part of Victoria or any other state or territory of the Commonwealth; or (c) a hijack, siege or riot (<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>, section 3).
Class 3 emergency	A class 3 emergency means a warlike act or act of terrorism, whether directed at Victoria or a part of Victoria or any other state or territory of the Commonwealth or a hijack, siege or riot. Class 3 emergencies may also be referred to as security emergencies.

5.3.3 Classification of emergencies

There are three classifications of emergency response:

- **Level one – small scale emergency (less than 24-hour impact)**
A level one incident normally requires the use of local or initial response resources.
- **Level two – medium-scale emergency (more than 24 hours)**

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A level two incident is more complex in size, resources or risk than a level one. It is characterised by the need for:

- Deployment of resources beyond initial response
- Sectorisation of the emergency
- The establishment of functional sections due to the levels of complexity
- A combination of the above

The Incident Control Centre (ICC) may be activated to coordinate the multi-agency response to the event. The Incident Controller will establish an Emergency Management Team as required.

• **Level three – large scale emergency (multiple days impact)**

A level three incident is a large scale emergency and is characterised by the levels of complexity that will require the activation and establishment of an ICC. This level of emergency will require forward planning as the emergency continues and will specifically require recovery planning during the early stages of the response phase of the emergency.

5.4 Phases of activation

Response arrangements should be implemented at the earliest possible opportunity if the consequences of emergencies are to be minimised. The phases of activation are as follows.

5.4.1 Alert

Upon receipt of warning or information that an emergency may occur or affect the relevant area of responsibility, the organisation and staff must be alerted to ensure their readiness to act if called upon. Some of the activities that should be considered in this phase are:

- Warning for key personnel
- Testing of communications arrangements
- Establish the flow of information between the municipality and Control/Support Agencies.
- Staff ready to deploy if required to respective emergency centres
- Muster resources and prepare equipment and personnel for immediate action
- Identify assembly areas.

5.4.2 Action

This is the operational phase of the emergency when Control and Support Agencies are committed to contain or control the emergency. Some operations may necessitate moving to the “Action” phase immediately without the "Alert" phase being implemented. For this reason, it is mandatory that all organisations having a role in this plan be in a state of preparedness at all times.

Some of the activities that should be considered in this phase are:

- Mobilise personnel/equipment as requested
- Produce situation reports on a regular basis for higher authorities
- Deploy additional resources as required
- Ensure casual emergency workers are registered.

5.4.3 Stand down

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Once "Alert" or "Action" has been implemented, the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) must declare a "Stand Down". The MERC will advise all participating agencies of Stand Down after consultation with the Control Authority and any other relevant agency, and when satisfied that the response to the emergency has been completed.

5.5 Incident Control Centre (ICC)

Incident management and control will be set up and activated by the controlling agency at a pre-determined ICC. In some cases, it may be initially set up from a police station or predetermined municipal facility.

An Emergency Management Team (EMT) communicates through the ICC when an Alert is issued. The team comprises the MERC, Control Agencies and the MEMO. Its role and function are to assess agency readiness, which includes their capacity for deployment and determine the extent of resources available locally.

The ICC operates using the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). AIIMS provides a management system that facilitates the coordination of all activities, by all parties involved, in the resolution of any emergency. The nearest ICC (level three) for Hindmarsh Shire is located in Horsham at the offices of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), also referred to as the Grains Innovation Park, and is run and managed by DELWP Forest Fire Management Victoria.

The main ICC is located in Horsham but other ICCs may be established that impact the Hindmarsh municipality such as Mildura in the north or Heywood in the south.

ICC address details are as follows:

- Horsham: Grains Innovation Park, 110 Natimuk Road, Horsham 3400
- Mildura: 308-390 Koorlong Avenue, Irymple 3498
- Heywood: 12 Murray Street, Heywood 3304
- Ballarat: 27 Vickers Street, Sebastapol 3356

Note: The ICC is not open to the public.

5.6 Command, control, coordination

Victoria bases its emergency response arrangement on the management functions of Control, Command and Coordination.

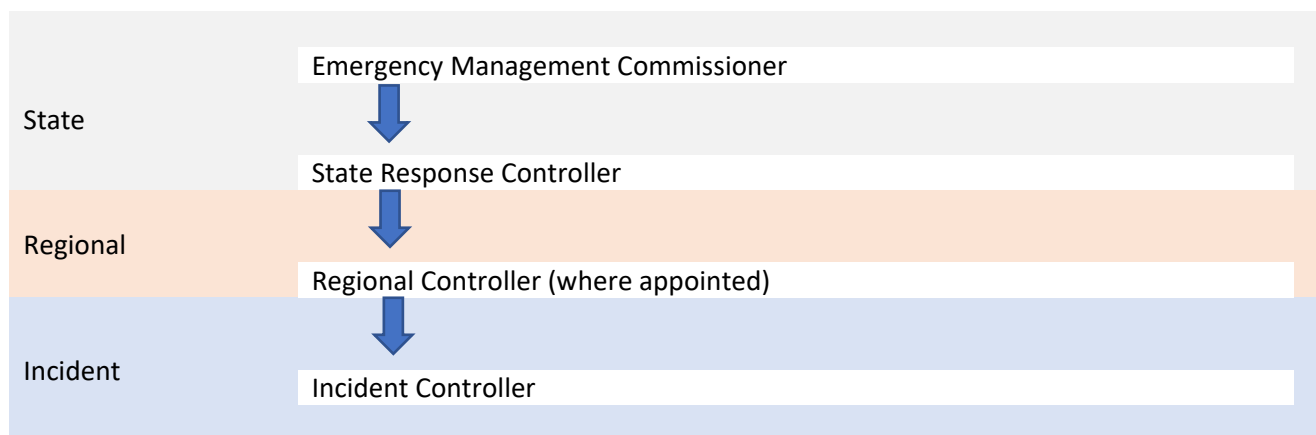
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5.6.1 Control

Control is the overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies. Authority for control is established in legislation or an emergency response plan and carries with it the responsibility for tasking other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation.

The “line of control” refers to the line of supervision for those appointed to perform the control function. For the emergencies covered by the scope of this document, the line of control is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Line of control



5.6.2 Command

Command is the internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency, operating vertically within the agency. Each agency appoints agency commanders to supervise their personnel and ensure they are working safely.

The “chain of command” refers to an agency’s organisational hierarchy that defines the accountability of people or positions and identifies the link between individuals and their supervisor. An agency might formally agree for a person from another agency to supervise their personnel for a fixed period during emergencies, however, this does not replace the home agency’s responsibility to their personnel.

5.6.3 Coordination

Coordination is the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure an effective response to and recovery from emergencies.

The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for response coordination at the state tier supported by the Senior Police Liaison Officer, while Victoria Police is responsible for the coordination function at the regional and municipal tiers.

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5.7 Local response arrangements and responsible agencies

The SEMP provides arrangements for an integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management at the state level. The *Emergency Management Act 2013* requires the SEMP to contain provisions for the mitigation of, response to and recovery from emergencies, and to specify the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management.

This section details emergency management agency roles and responsibilities for mitigation, response (including relief), and recovery. It also maps agency roles for core capabilities and critical tasks under the Victorian Preparedness Framework (VPF) for the management of major emergencies. The VPF identifies 21 core capabilities, and subsequent critical tasks for each that Victoria requires to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from major emergencies. To be effective, the core capabilities are interdependent, coordinated and overlap across mitigation, response and recovery.

The organisations listed in this document are those with either broad or state-wide presence, government organisations, those with a statutory emergency management involvement and some private corporations with specific roles. The Victorian community receives significant benefit from the emergency management contributions of a wide range of volunteer groups and organisations whose operations are either quite specialised and/or available mainly in a specific locality. These groups should be identified in relevant municipal and/or regional emergency management plans, as appropriate.

The tables for the roles and responsibilities commence at [Table 8](#) (tables 1 to 7 are found in the [SEMP](#)) and provide a reference for agency roles and responsibilities for specific emergencies, functions or activities, and indicate the VPF's core capability alignment. See section: Agency roles and responsibilities alignment to the VPF for more information.

5.8 Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS)

As the nationally recognised incident management structure, AIIMS provides a common management framework for organisations working in emergency management roles and/or responding to non-emergency situations. As such, the system enables multiple agencies engaged in incident planning, response and recovery to seamlessly integrate their resources and activities. The Hindmarsh MEMPC encourages all agencies to adopt AIIMS so that seamless integration of all relevant agencies in emergency management planning, operations and recovery can be achieved.

5.9 Financial considerations

Control Agencies are responsible for all costs involved in that agency responding to an emergency. Government Agencies supporting the Control Agency are expected to defray all costs from their normal budgets. When a Control Agency requests services and supplies (for example, food and water) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the Control Agency will be responsible for costs incurred.

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A requesting agency will be responsible for all associated costs for the provision of resources to support the response to an emergency event. Council is able to keep track of resources distributed by recording their provision in Council's emergency operating system Crisisworks.

Municipal Councils are responsible for the cost of Municipal Emergency Operating Centre (MEOC) setup costs and emergency relief services and provisions, however, depending on the magnitude of the emergency, some financial assistance may be available for prevention, response or recovery activities. All expenditure is to be authorised by the MEMO or MRM in accordance with the normal Council financial arrangements and recorded and logged for potential cost recovery.

Municipal employees from other Councils who are asked and authorised to assist during a municipal emergency are to claim staff costs through their Council finance systems which in turn may claim against the Council requesting assistance.

Depending on the magnitude of the emergency, some government financial assistance may be available for prevention, response and recovery activities through The [Victorian Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Program](#) (NDFA) and/or [Australian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements](#) (DRFA), both of which, are accessed through the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance by contacting The Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Team (ndfa@emv.vic.gov.au). NDFA should be contacted as soon as practicable after an event to register a potential application. Further, for biosecurity events, there is funding available under the [Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement](#) for listed animal health emergencies and [Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed](#) for listed plant emergencies.

5.10 Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Place of Last Resort (NSP-BPLR) and Community Fire Refuges

A NSP-BPLR is a place of last resort when all other bushfire plans have failed.

Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans – Hindmarsh Shire Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort) includes a list of sites

There are no community fire refuges in the Hindmarsh Shire.

5.11 Planning for cross-boundary events

Hindmarsh Shire shares a border with Yarriambiack Shire Council, Horsham Rural City Council, West Wimmera Shire Council, and Mildura Rural City. Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shire Councils, together with Horsham Rural City Council, operate under the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership and currently have well-prepared plans and protocols in place for capability and capacity.

Industries, notably agriculture and utility services, operate across the border. Planning and engagement recognising this in risk assessment provide for a more thorough assessment. Emergency response, including firefighting aircraft, operates across the border. Collaboration at state, regional and incident tiers benefits border communities. Mutual arrangements between

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Victoria and South Australia are in place for fire agency response. Firefighting aircraft arrangements are governed by the National Aviation Firefighting Centre (NAFC). On a day-to-day basis, this is done operationally between the state air-desks in the State Control Centre equivalents in each state and approved by the Class 1 State Response Controller in consultation with the EMC. Deployment of resources over and above first response is also informed by the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC), and interstate deployments must have the approval of the EMC.

Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police, Victoria State Emergency Service and the Country Fire Authority have current cross-border response protocols in place with South Australian Emergency Services. DELWP have a Communications Plan with the South Australian Country Fire Service.

Note: Please contact the individual agencies for more information on their specific cross-border arrangements

5.12 Resource sharing protocols

The Hindmarsh Shire Council subscribes to the Municipal Association of Victoria Shared Resource Protocol and has completed stages one and two of the three-stage Council capability and capacity program. Stage three of the program is being worked on at present, primarily under the coordination of the Wimmera Emergency Management Resources Sharing Partnership, which has an established Memorandum of Understanding in relation to resource sharing.

5.13 Debriefing arrangements

Lessons management involves the identification and learning of lessons captured through assurance activities (including debriefing, monitoring and reviews) occurring before, during and after emergencies.

The learning from the emergency management experience helps the MEMPC to improve both its emergency management practice and community outcomes. The agencies use review and evaluation as tools to extract understanding from experience and assist the agencies to validate and improve operational policy, processes and practices. Reviews and evaluations will vary in scope, according to the size, complexity and outcomes of the emergency.

An After Action Review should follow all emergencies and include all representatives of the MEMPC. This local debriefing process allows groups to learn from an event and address issues as soon as possible, leading to improved performance and communication.

Hindmarsh MEMPC encourages all partner agencies to conduct debriefs and make the debrief minutes available via the [EM SHARE](#) online platform.

6. Transition to recovery

The activation process for emergency relief and recovery staff, facilities and services is guided by the Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Plan (WIRRP).

For further information, refer to [Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans](#) and the following references:

- Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMPC)
- Grampians Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan

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- State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan (SEMP).

Generally, activation will begin when an emergency event occurs and a Control Agency responds. Initial awareness will develop of the need for emergency relief services. The MRM in consultation with the Incident Controller and MERC will assess information to further determine the recovery needs of the affected community.

7. Recovery arrangements

The WIRRP complements each partner Council’s MEMP. This plan records the municipal level emergency relief and recovery management arrangements that may be utilised in supporting a community impacted by an emergency event. As defined in the [SEMP](#), Local Government (Council) is the lead agency for local emergency relief and recovery.

This plan illustrates how emergency relief and recovery services are coordinated and delivered at the local level by the partner Councils. The plan also describes how emergency relief and recovery service support is escalated to the regional and/or state level when local resources are exhausted.

8. Evaluation and continuous improvement

The Hindmarsh Shire MEMPC supports the region’s commitment to a culture of continuous improvement that is outlined in the [2015 EM-LEARN](#) lessons management framework by:

- Utilising the EM-LEARN Framework and the Lessons Management Life Cycle to support the identifying and learning of lessons
- Providing the opportunity to share experiences and learn from others
- Encouraging the sector to share learnings about examples of good practice or areas for improvement
- Utilising assurance activities (monitoring, debriefing and reviewing) to identify learnings
- Focusing on systems of work, rather than the performance of individuals
- Focusing on identifying trends, rather than actioning issues
- Recognising that identifying and implementing sustainable solutions takes time, resources and opportunity.

Lessons management involves the identification and learning of lessons captured through assurance and learning activities (including debriefing, monitoring and reviews) occurring before, during and after emergencies. This process of moving from identifying lessons to learning lessons is guided by the lessons management life cycle within the EM-LEARN Framework, which aims to provide a state-wide shared understanding of what lessons management means for the Victorian emergency management sector.

For the Hindmarsh Shire MEMPC, lessons management takes the form of the following arrangements:

- After Action Reviews
- Debriefs of officers, teams and agencies
- Review systems of work rather than on the performance of individuals
- Reviews of the effectiveness of the coordination, control, consequence management and communications functions
- Public forums include representatives from the relevant community, business and industry groups.

The purpose of debriefing is to identify key observations, learning opportunities and good practice to ensure learning and improvement occurs within the emergency management sector. Debriefing

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allows participants to, as an individual or group walk through a series of questions enabling reflection on an experience to uncover learnings in a non-punitive environment. The outcomes of debriefs and other review activities will inform the ongoing cycle of learning and improvement within the sector by validating and evaluating existing doctrine, arrangements, policy, procedure, and incident/emergency management application. The outcomes will provide evidence to inform a range of activities including training, exercising and briefings.

The purpose of reviewing is to identify key observations, learning opportunities and good practice to ensure learning and improvement occurs within the emergency management sector. A review is a formal assessment of a specific topic generally at the conclusion of an event with the intent of instituting change. The outcomes from reviews will inform the ongoing cycle of learning and improvement within the sector by validating and evaluating existing doctrine, arrangements, policy, procedure, and incident/emergency management application. The outcomes will provide evidence to inform a range of activities including training, exercising and briefings.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Introduction

An agency that has a role or responsibility under this plan must act in accordance with the plan. The SEMP and REMP outline agreed agency roles and responsibilities, noting that existing duties, functions, power, responsibility or obligation conferred on an agency by law, licence, agreement or arrangement prevail to the extent of its inconsistency with this plan ([Act s60AK](#)).

The roles and responsibilities outlined in this plan are specific to the region and are in addition to, or variations on, what is outlined in the SEMP and REMP. In the case of municipal-specific modifications, these are clearly identified as modifications.

All agencies with responsibilities under the MEMP should provide written confirmation of their capability and commitment to meet their obligations. This can be evidenced by their endorsement of the draft MEMP, including revisions before it is presented to the Grampians REMPC for consideration.

This plan details emergency management agency roles and responsibilities for: Mitigation, Response, Relief and Recovery. It also maps agency roles for core capabilities and critical tasks under the [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#) (VPF) for the management of major emergencies.

9.2 Emergency management agency roles and responsibilities

The VPF identifies the core capabilities and critical tasks Victoria requires to effectively manage major emergencies. To be effective, the 21 core capabilities are interdependent, coordinated and overlap across emergency management phases.

These agency activities have been discussed with participating emergency organisations for inclusion in this document. While these activities are believed to be current at the date of publication, readers are advised to contact the required agency to ensure that functions can still be carried out as expected. In response to an emergency, an agency may be requested to provide support to response activities other than what is listed in the agency role statement. In these cases,

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the determination of support to these activities will be made by the EMC or relevant emergency response coordinator.

For further information, refer to:

[SEMP - Agency Roles and Responsibilities alignment to Victorian Preparedness Framework](#)

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10. Appendices

Appendix A: Acronyms

This section contains acronyms that are used throughout this plan.

Acronym	Description
AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
CERA	Community Emergency Risk Assessment
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
EM Act	<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
FFMV	Forest Fire Management Victoria
ICC	Incident Control Centre
LGA	Local Government Authority
MEMO	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MEOC	Municipal Emergency Operating Centre
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
NAFC	National Aerial Firefighting Centre
NERAG	National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines
NRSC	National Resource Sharing Centre
RCC	Regional Control Centre
REMPC	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMT	Regional Emergency Management Team
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SES	Victoria State Emergency Service
TOR	Terms of Reference
VPF	Victorian Preparedness Framework
WEMRSP	Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership
WEMT	Wimmera Emergency Management Team

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Appendix B: Contact directory

Restricted information

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Appendix C: Restricted information

A short summary of the restricted information is included here, including who the contact point is should the user of this plan seek access to this information.

Summary of the restricted information (including location within the MEMP, for example, page or section number)	Reason for restriction	Agency/ies that hold this information in full	Contact point/s
Contact directory (public copy only)	Personal information	Hindmarsh Shire Council	MEMPC Chairperson Phone 03 5391 4444

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Appendix D: Distribution

The most up to date amended versions of this plan will be distributed by the MEMP Executive Officer by:

- Loading onto the Hindmarsh Shire Council website
- Storing in the Hindmarsh Shire Council document management system
- Distributing electronically by email with a link to the website
- Legal Deposit with the Victorian State Library in electronic format
- Storing in the Emergency Management Victoria document library
- Sending by Australia Post when requested
- Loading into Crisisworks.

Organisation	Recipient Officer	Distribution Method
MEMPC Members	Attending Officer	Hindmarsh Shire Council website link
EMV	Authorised Officer	Hindmarsh Shire Council website link
WEMT	Coordinator	Hindmarsh Shire Council website link (plus hard copy)

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Appendix E: Sub-plans and complimentary plans

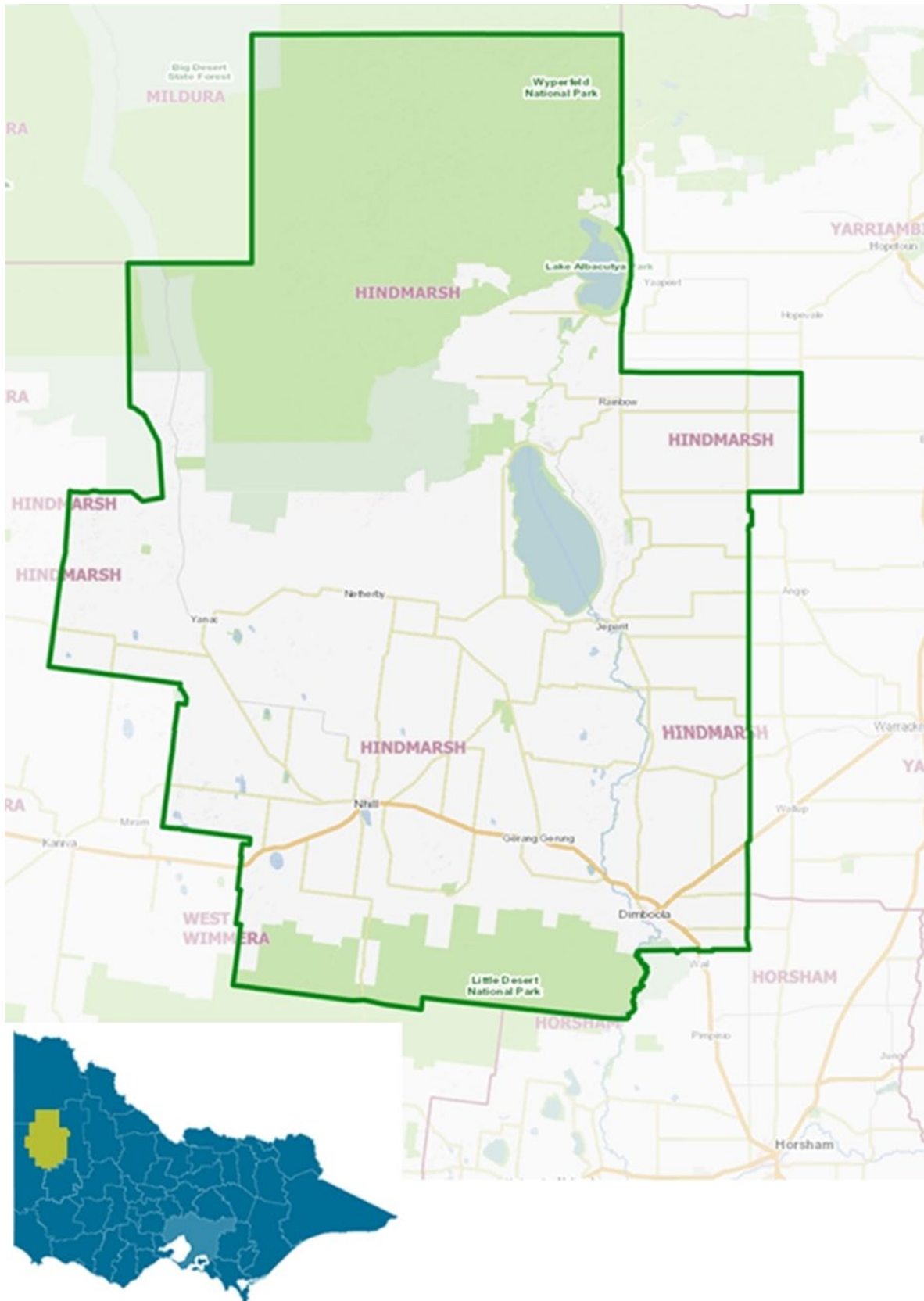
Sub Plan	Description
Hindmarsh Shire Risk Assessment Plan – CERA	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Municipal Fire Management Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Municipal Flood Management Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Wimmera Emergency Animal Welfare Support Sub-Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website

Complimentary Plans	Description
Hindmarsh Shire Council Pandemic Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Hindmarsh Shire Council Heat Management Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Hindmarsh Shire Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort)	Reassessed by CFA annually https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places
Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre Plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website

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Appendix F: Maps

Hindmarsh Shire Council Boundary Map



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Appendix G: Amendment history

Version	Author	Update Details	MEMPC Approval Date
1.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Adoption of Version 1.0	July 2013
1.1	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Recommendations from 2014 audit and legislation changes – adoption of Version 1.1	November 2015
1.1	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	VICSES audit review – passed	November 2016
2.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Full review and endorsement, inclusive of 2016 audit recommendations	November 2017
2.1	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Administrative amendments: Update contacts and crisisworks links in Appendix C	November 2019
3.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	New plan – adoption of Version 3.0	January 2023

- End of Document -

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