

HINDMARSH SHIRE

MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2029

Enhancing our emergency management functions through collaboration,
leadership and governance in the Wimmera region

VERSION 4.0

MEMPC

Wimmera Municipal Emergency
Management Planning Committee

Acknowledgement of Country

The Wimmera MEMPC covers the municipalities of Hindmarsh Shire Council, Horsham Rural City Council, West Wimmera Shire Council and Yarriambiack Shire Council.

The Wimmera MEMPC acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the 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.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Authority	5
1.2 Plan assurance and approval	5
1.2.1 Assurance	5
1.2.2 Assurance and approval	6
1.3 Plan review	6
1.4 Planning context	6
1.5 Plan aims and objectives	7
2. Municipal district characteristics	7
2.1 Topography	7
2.1.1 Land use	8
2.1.2 Water supply and management	8
2.2 Demography	8
2.3 Climate	9
2.4 Traditional owners	10
2.5 Most at-risk persons (community organisations and facilities)	10
2.5.1 Vulnerable persons register (VPR)	10
2.5.2 At-risk facilities	11
2.6 Municipal map	11
2.7 History of emergencies	11
2.7.1 Fire	11
2.7.2 Flood and storm	12
2.7.3 Heat	13
2.7.4 Pandemic	14
2.7.5 Transport	15
2.7.6 Aerodrome	15
2.7.7 Biosecurity	16
2.7.8 Blue-green algae	16
2.7.9 Hazardous materials	17
3. Planning arrangements	17
3.1 Victoria’s emergency management planning framework	17
3.2 The MEMPC and its sub-committees and working groups	18

3.3	Sub-plans and complementary plans	19
3.3.1	Sub-plans	19
3.3.2	Complementary plans	19
4.	Mitigation arrangements	20
4.1	Introduction	20
4.2	Hazard, exposure, vulnerability and resilience	20
4.2.1	Hazard	20
4.2.2	Exposure	21
4.2.3	Vulnerability	21
4.2.4	Resilience	21
4.3	Risk assessment process and results	21
4.4	Treatment plans	22
4.5	Community education and awareness	23
4.6	Monitoring and review	23
5.	Response arrangements (including relief)	24
5.1	Introduction	24
5.2	Command, Control and Coordination arrangements	24
5.3	Local response arrangements and responsible agencies	25
5.4	Council Emergency Operations Centre (CEOC)	26
5.5	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS)	26
5.6	Financial considerations	26
5.7	Neighbourhood Safer Places – Bushfire Places of Last Resort (NSP-BPLR) and Community Fire Refuges (CFR)	27
5.8	Planning for cross boundary events	28
5.9	Resource sharing protocols	28
5.10	Debriefing arrangements	29
6.	Recovery arrangements	29
6.1	Introduction	29
6.2	Recovery principles	29
6.3	Management structure	30
6.4	Transition to recovery	30
7.	Roles and responsibilities	30

8. Appendices 32

Appendix A – Document administration 32

Amendment register 32

Document approval 32

Appendix B – Acronyms 34

Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements 35

Appendix D – Maps and Hindmarsh Shire Council community map 36

1. Introduction

1.1 Authority

In 2020, the [Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018](#) (EMLA Act 2018) amended the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#) (EM Act 2013) and various other acts to establish a new integrated and coordinated framework for emergency management planning at state, regional and municipal levels.

At the municipal level, the EM Act 2013, as amended, creates an obligation for a reformed Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to be established in each of Victoria's municipal districts, including Alpine Resorts which, for the purposes of the Act, are considered as municipal Districts.

Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group, whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to the task of developing a comprehensive emergency management plan for the municipality.

In line with section 59D of the EM Act 2013, the MEMPC is responsible for the preparation and review of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and ensuring that it is consistent with the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP).

This plan has been prepared in accordance, and complies, with the requirements of the [EM Act 2013](#) including having regard to the guidelines issued under s77, [Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans](#).

1.2 Plan assurance and approval

1.2.1 Assurance

A Statement of Assurance (including a checklist and certificate) has been prepared by the Wimmera MEMPC and submitted to the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMP) in accordance with the requirements of the [EM Act 2013](#) (s60AG).

This template has been used to develop MEMPs for the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership (WEMRSP) and Wimmera MEMPC municipalities of Hindmarsh, Horsham, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack. This plan has been developed by the Wimmera MEMPC and coordinated by the Wimmera Emergency Management Team (WEMT), on behalf of the four municipalities. Whilst a standardised template has been used, information has been individualised for each municipality where relevant.

1.2.2 Assurance and approval

This plan has been written and approved by the Wimmera MEMPC at its meeting held on 12 March 2026.

This plan has been through an assurance process overseen by the Grampians REMPC and is self-assured by the Wimmera MEMPC.

This plan comes into effect when it is published and remains in effect until superseded by an approved and published update.

For more information, refer to [Appendix A – Document administration](#).

1.3 Plan review

The MEMP will be reviewed and updated as required:

- Annually in full or in part
- At each Wimmera MEMPC meeting where requested by a member (either in full or in part)
- After each major event where the plan has been activated
- Where the plan has been exercised.

To ensure the plan provides for a current integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management and is effective, 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 Council website and remain in force for a maximum period of three months.

This plan will be reviewed no later than 2029.

This plan is current at the time of publication and remains in effect until modified, superseded or withdrawn.

For further information, please refer to [Appendix A – Document administration](#).

1.4 Planning context

The MEMP is the overarching document for the management of emergencies in the municipal area. It reflects the shared responsibilities of government, emergency management agencies and communities for the actions they will take to prepare, respond to, provide relief for and recover from emergencies. It is important for enhancing resilience that community, emergency services and relief and recovery agencies work together.

1.5 Plan aims and objectives

This plan covers arrangements for planning, mitigation, response and recovery, and identifies the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management at the municipal level. It supports efficiency and effectiveness on a platform of shared responsibility and interoperability 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 Wimmera MEMPC municipalities.

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.

2. Municipal district characteristics

2.1 Topography

Hindmarsh Shire is located in the Wimmera region of western Victoria and covers approximately 7,527 square kilometres. The municipality lies along the Western Highway, around 375 km west of Melbourne and 350 km east of Adelaide. It is bordered by Mildura Rural City to the north, West Wimmera Shire to the west, Horsham Rural City to the south and Yarriambiack Shire to the east. The Shire is framed by the major national parks, Wyperfeld National Park to the north and the Little Desert National Park to the south.

The Shire includes the main towns of Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill and Rainbow, supported by a number of smaller rural communities. Hindmarsh is divided into three wards, North, West and East – each characterised by distinctive environmental features. 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 contains Nhill, Kinimakatka Bushland Reserve, Nhill Swamp Wildlife Reserve and Mt Elgin Swamp. The East Ward includes Dimboola, Little Desert National Park, Pink Lake, Gerang and Kiata.

The municipality’s topography is dominated by flat, open plains between the two desert landscapes, providing ideal conditions for broadacre cropping. The Heritage-listed Wimmera River flows south to north through the Shire, terminating in Lake Albacutya, and forms an important environmental, cultural and recreational asset.

Hindmarsh Shire continues to experience increasing visitation, with tourists attracted to its national parks, silo art installations, lakes, small-town streetscapes and unique natural environments. Its central location between Melbourne and Adelaide contributes to its appeal as a year-round destination for outdoor recreation and cultural tourism.

For further information, refer to [Appendix D – Maps and Hindmarsh Shire Council Community Map](#).

2.1.1 Land use

Land use within Hindmarsh Shire is predominantly rural, with broadacre agriculture comprising around 59.7 percent of all land use. Less than 1 percent of land is used for residential, industrial or business purposes, reflecting the Shire's dispersed settlement pattern and strong agricultural focus. The municipality contains approximately 2,458 households across its towns and rural communities.

Significant natural features shape land use patterns, including Little Desert National Park in the south, the Big Desert Wilderness Area and Wyperfeld National Park in the north, and the presence of Lake Hindmarsh – Victoria's largest freshwater lake – near Jeparit and Rainbow. Conservation reserves, farming areas and small townships collectively form a diverse land-use profile relevant to emergency planning and environmental management.

2.1.2 Water supply and management

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline services the eastern side of the Wimmera River across the Hindmarsh municipality, gradually replacing the former earthen channel system. The major towns of Jeparit, Dimboola, Nhill and Rainbow are supplied through Supply System 1 (Yaapeet line).

As part of the pipeline installation, strategically located firefighting water tanks were established along key sections of the pipeline network. These provide additional water access for CFA brigades and support emergency response operations, particularly in remote rural areas with limited natural water sources.

2.2 Demography

According to the latest available [ABS Census data](#)¹, the population of Hindmarsh Shire is 5,698 people. The municipality's four largest towns are Nhill (2,401 residents), Dimboola (1,635), Rainbow (672) and Jeparit (476), supported by a number of smaller rural settlements. Hindmarsh has an older population profile, with over 50% of residents aged 50 years or older and 5% aged 85 years or above, more than twice the Victorian average.

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

The Shire has a higher proportion of residents living with disability compared with the state average, with 7.7% of the population requiring assistance with core activities, compared with 5.1% statewide. Volunteering rates are notably strong, with 28.7% of residents participating in volunteer activities each year – almost double the Victorian average.

¹ 2021 Census, Australian Bureau of Statistics

OFFICIAL

Median weekly household income in Hindmarsh is well below the state average, reflecting the municipality's rural profile, but unemployment rates remain low and housing affordability is high, with a substantial proportion of residents owning their homes or renting at comparatively low cost.

These demographic characteristics – including an older age profile, strong cultural diversity, higher rates of disability, and dispersed rural communities – are important considerations for emergency preparedness, tailored communication, identification of vulnerable groups and planning for relief and recovery across Hindmarsh Shire.

2.3 Climate

The climate in Hindmarsh Shire is characterised by warm to hot, dry summers and cool, relatively dry winters. The municipality experiences strong seasonal variability, with most rainfall occurring in winter and early spring and long dry periods common during summer and autumn. Conditions are influenced by its location between the Little Desert and Big Desert ecosystems, which create hotter summer temperatures and lower annual rainfall than some other parts of the Wimmera. The bushfire season typically extends from November to April and is driven by hot north-westerly winds, low humidity and rapidly changing conditions associated with weather fronts. Recent years have seen a reduction in spring rainfall and an increase in elevated fire danger, in line with broader climatic trends across the region.

2.3.1 Climate Change

As outlined in [Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024](#)², climate change projections for the northern and western Wimmera indicate that Hindmarsh Shire can expect a gradual shift toward warmer and drier conditions.

Average temperatures are projected to rise across all seasons, with the most pronounced warming in summer. The number of very hot days above 35°C is expected to increase significantly, and extended periods of extreme heat are likely to occur more often. Rainfall is projected to decrease overall, particularly in winter and spring, although occasional intense rainfall events may still occur and can result in localised flash-flooding. These changes are expected to lengthen the fire season, with more frequent days of high and extreme fire danger ratings across the Shire's agricultural areas and desert-edge landscapes. Extreme heat is also expected to present increasing challenges for communities, health services, infrastructure and primary producers.

By the 2050s, the region is projected to experience noticeably warmer average conditions and more frequent extreme heat events, with these trends becoming more pronounced by the 2090s under high-emissions scenarios.

² Victoria's Science Climate Report 2024, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change

2.4 Traditional owners

In the Hindmarsh Shire area, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.6% of the total population. This equates to 91 individuals out of a total population of 5,698 people, as outlined in the most recent [ABS Census data](#)³.

Wherever possible, municipal response, relief and recovery planning and coordination will seek to involve and consider representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including Traditional Owners where appropriate.

[Barengi Gadjin Land Council](#) is the Registered Aboriginal Party⁴ for the Wimmera MEMPC municipalities. They represent the Traditional Owners from the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Japagulk peoples, and are responsible for cultural heritage protection, land management and community advocacy. The Wimmera MEMPC will consult with Barengi Gadjin Land Council on relevant emergency management issues as required and requested.

The [Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register](#) records significant sites, including sacred places and historical objects, which must be safeguarded in emergency response and recovery efforts. Cultural plans and land use agreements and requirements are also in place that emergency management providers will respect and refer to as required.

2.5 Most at-risk persons (community organisations and facilities)

2.5.1 Vulnerable persons register (VPR)

The Vulnerable Person Register (VPR) is a statewide online database designed to assist individuals who may need additional support during emergencies. The VPR is considered as a last resort option, once all other existing processes and mechanisms to support people at risk in emergencies have been exhausted, to identify people in the local community that need support to be evacuated in emergency situations.

The VPR is accessible to authorised Victoria Police representatives, for consideration in planning and exercising, and for responding to emergencies. The VPR records the location of the vulnerable person as well as any special requirements to support Victoria Police facilitating the safe evacuation of that person. Records are revalidated twice a year in April and October.

³ 2021 Census, Australian Bureau of Statistics

⁴ Registered Aboriginal Parties are appointed by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*

2.5.2 At-risk facilities

Councils are required to maintain an At-Risk Facility List which is a list of local facilities where people most at risk may be located, for example, aged care facilities, hospitals, disability group homes, schools, and childcare centres. This list is updated annually by Council and is designed to support local emergency management planning.

The Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy and guidance documents provide further information on planning for the needs of vulnerable people and the eligibility criteria. A copy of the policy and guidance documents are available at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing website: [Emergency management - DFFH Service Providers](#).

These lists are available to authorised Victoria Police representatives for planning, exercising and in emergencies. This information can be accessed by authorised officers on Crisisworks and EM COP, or by contacting the Wimmera MEMPC Secretariat via email wemt@hrcc.vic.gov.au.

2.6 Municipal map

For further information about the municipal location and boundaries, please refer to [Appendix D – Maps and Hindmarsh Shire Council community map](#).

2.7 History of emergencies

2.7.1 Fire

Hindmarsh Shire has a long history of significant fire events, influenced by a combination of lightning activity, broadacre cropping, stubble burning and the extensive fire-prone landscapes of the Little Desert National Park, Big Desert and Wyperfeld National Park. Lightning strikes within these parks frequently ignite fast-moving bush and grass fires, while agricultural machinery and harvest-time conditions also contribute to ignition risk across the municipality.

In addition to historical fire activity, Hindmarsh has experienced several large and complex bushfires over the past two decades, many of which have required multi-agency response, road closures, community warnings and prolonged suppression efforts. These fires have impacted farmland, conservation areas, transport corridors and rural communities, highlighting the Shire's ongoing exposure to bushfire risk.

Most recently, in January 2025, the municipality was significantly affected by the Little Desert fire, which prompted the evacuation of Dimboola and nearby rural communities. This event demonstrated the potential for rapid fire escalation under extreme weather conditions, the challenges posed by fire behaviour in remote desert-forest environments, and the importance of coordinated public information, relief planning and local preparedness.

Hindmarsh Shire continues to work closely with CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria to mitigate local bushfire risk, conduct fuel reduction programs, and support preparedness activities across the region.

OFFICIAL

A summary of major historical fire events within Hindmarsh Shire is provided in Table 1: Major Fire Summary.

Table 1: Major fire summary

Year	Location	Size (ha)	Ignition Source
2025	Little Desert Fire	93,124	Lightning
2023	Lake Albacutya – Freeway Track	688	Lightning
2022	Little Desert National Park	526	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	2014 Mallee Fire Campaign	52,000	Lightning
2014	2014 Antwerp-Warracknabeal Road	1,200	Burn off
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 burn off
1993	Photography Business, Nhill (structure fire)	n/a	Unknown
1980	Western Highway North, Dimboola	1,700	Vehicle

2.7.2 Flood and storm

Hindmarsh Shire is exposed to flooding and severe storm events, primarily influenced by the Wimmera River system, widespread agricultural landscapes and the surrounding desert-edge environment. Large floods occur when prolonged periods of moderate to heavy rainfall in the upper catchment cause river levels to rise, resulting in inundation of low-lying areas, waterlogging of farmland and disruption across the road network. Major floods in 2010 and 2011 significantly affected the towns of Jeparit and Dimboola

OFFICIAL

and cut access to numerous rural roads, highlighting the Shire's vulnerability to riverine flooding and the importance of timely warnings and coordinated response. Lake Hindmarsh and Lake Albacutya are at the mouth of the Wimmera River Catchment and is one of the largest inland terminating rivers in Australia.

Severe storms also present an ongoing hazard for the municipality. Thunderstorms, strong winds, heavy rainfall and lightning strikes frequently impact communities. Victoria experiences approximately 80% of its storm events between September to March with many regional examples of large hail and moderate to large scale flash flooding occurring as a result. Other consequences are trees down, damaged powerlines-This event type can cause significant transport disruptions, widespread economic impacts (crop damage, facility and equipment damage), damage to private property or residence, and in some cases injury or death. Lightning strikes within the Little Desert and Wyperfeld National Parks are a common source of fire ignition, often occurring alongside hot, dry conditions.

The combination of flood-prone river corridors, open cropping country, extensive natural reserves and dispersed rural settlements means that both flooding and severe storms remain key hazards for Hindmarsh Shire. Preparedness, community information and inter-agency coordination are essential to minimising the impacts of these events across the municipality.

For further information, refer to:

[Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#)

[Hindmarsh Shire Council Website](#)

[Victoria State Emergency Service Website – Plan and Stay Safe](#)

2.7.3 Heat

Extreme heat and heatwaves are a significant and increasing hazard for Hindmarsh Shire. Extended periods of high temperatures can lead to heat-related illness, worsen existing medical conditions and place pressure on local health services, aged care providers and community organisations. Older residents, outdoor workers, infants, people with chronic illnesses, socially isolated individuals and those without adequate cooling are particularly vulnerable during severe heat events.

Hindmarsh has an older population profile, dispersed rural communities and a strong reliance on agricultural labour, all of which heighten exposure to heat impacts. Many farming operations involve outdoor work during peak summer periods, increasing the risk of heat stress for workers and volunteers. Older housing stock, limited shading and variable access to cooling in remote areas further contribute to vulnerability across the municipality.

Heat events are not specific to a single municipality and have widespread diffuse community consequences. In Victorian these events are class 2 emergencies and lead at a State level as outlined under the [SEMP Extreme Heat Sub-plan](#). Individual agencies who have coordination responsibilities to manage specific community consequences will use their relevant SEMP sub-plan arrangements, including at the local tier.

Municipal arrangements focus on preparedness, community information, identifying at-risk individuals and coordinating with health, aged care and community service providers to ensure appropriate support.

OFFICIAL

Continued monitoring, community engagement and proactive planning remain essential to managing heat impacts within Hindmarsh Shire. Preparedness for heat events is a shared responsibility and community members are encouraged to have individual heatwave plan and follow the advice of their local health care providers and communication warnings issued by authorities.

Extreme heat places additional strain on critical infrastructure, including electricity networks, water supply systems and local health services. Heatwaves can significantly affect agriculture, reducing crop yields, impacting livestock welfare and placing stress on water resources, especially in areas surrounding Lake Hindmarsh, Lake Albacutya and high-use farming districts. Natural environments, particularly the desert-edge ecosystems and riverine areas, can also experience ecological stress during prolonged heat.

Visitors travelling to national parks, lakes and camping areas, especially within the Little Desert and Wyperfeld National Parks, may be unfamiliar with local heat conditions or distances between services, creating additional challenges during extreme heat periods.

2.7.4 Pandemic

Influenza is a viral illness that attacks the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs) in humans. Worldwide pandemics of influenza occur when a novel virus capable of person-to-person transmission, emerges to which the population has little or no immunity. Pandemics are unpredictable. When the next pandemic will occur, how rapidly it will emerge and how severe the illness will be are all unknown. What we do know is that even when the clinical severity of the disease is low, such as experienced in 2009, a pandemic can cause significant morbidity and mortality. It can overwhelm our health systems and in more severe scenarios, cause significant disruption to our economy and to society.

Hindmarsh shire, like all Victorian municipalities, has been significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic reinforced the need for clear, adaptable and coordinated arrangements to protect community health, maintain essential services, and support vulnerable people during widespread public health emergencies. Council's Pandemic Plan provides the primary framework for preparedness, response and recovery for pandemic influenza and other communicable disease outbreaks. This plan guides Hindmarsh Shire and key stakeholders in prevention activities, surveillance, communication, and continuity of services during a public health emergency.

The Pandemic Plan is supported by operational procedures including Council's Pandemic Influenza Response Procedures, Business Continuity Plan, and associated health and welfare arrangements. This is supported by the State Health Emergencies and pandemic sub plan to the SEMP. These documents outline how essential services are maintained, how staff health and safety is protected, and how vulnerable members of the community are supported. Coordination with local health services, emergency services, regional public health units, and community organisations remains central to effective pandemic management.

OFFICIAL

While COVID-19 remains the most significant recent example, the municipal planning arrangements recognise that future pandemics or large-scale outbreaks of communicable disease are possible. Ongoing review, monitoring of public health intelligence, and alignment with state and national health frameworks ensure Hindmarsh Shire is prepared to respond to emerging public health threats.

2.7.5 Transport

Hindmarsh Shire is intersected by several major transport routes, including the Western Highway, Borough / Borung Highway, and key east–west rail corridors linking Melbourne and Adelaide. These routes carry a mix of local traffic, interstate freight, agricultural machinery and long-distance travellers, contributing to an elevated risk of transport incidents across the municipality.

Road trauma continues to be a concern for the region. Since January 2000, there have been 22 fatalities recorded by the [Transport Accident Commission](#)⁵ within the Hindmarsh Shire area. The combination of high-speed rural highways, heavy-vehicle movements, machinery transport during sowing and harvest periods, wildlife activity and long-distance driving patterns increases the likelihood and severity of crashes.

Transport incidents may result in road closures, isolation of rural communities, hazardous materials risks, and increased pressure on emergency services. The dispersed nature of the municipality, coupled with reliance on road transport for essential goods, agricultural operations and emergency access, reinforces the importance of coordinated multi-agency response, ongoing road-safety initiatives and effective community communication.

Transport incidents remain a key hazard for Hindmarsh Shire, requiring continued planning, monitoring and collaboration between Council, Victoria Police, CFA, VICSES, Department of Transport and Planning, and community stakeholders to minimise the impacts on residents, visitors and critical infrastructure.

2.7.6 Aerodrome

Hindmarsh Shire contains two aviation facilities: the Nhill Aerodrome and Rainbow Airstrip, each providing varying levels of support for local and regional emergency management operations. Nhill Aerodrome is the primary facility and is a registered aerodrome managed in accordance with Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requirements. It services general aviation activity and provides an important capability for supporting emergency response and recovery across the municipality and the broader Wimmera region.

During major emergencies, Nhill Aerodrome may be used for aerial firefighting operations, including staging and refuelling of water-bombing aircraft. It can also support medical evacuations and urgent patient transfers in coordination with Ambulance Victoria and regional health services. The aerodrome's location along the Western Highway corridor enables efficient movement of emergency personnel, aircraft and specialist resources when required.

⁵ Online Crash Database, Transport Accident Commission

OFFICIAL

The Rainbow Airstrip provides an additional landing option for light aircraft and may offer supplementary capability under suitable conditions. While unregistered and not maintained to CASA aerodrome standards, it may be used for small-scale aviation or emergency access when coordinated through the appropriate control agency.

Hindmarsh Shire Council is responsible for maintaining Nhill Aerodrome and ensuring operational safety and availability. Emergency services have priority access during declared emergencies, with coordination occurring through the Incident Control Centre (ICC) or Regional Control Centre (RCC) when activated.

Detailed operational procedures and safety requirements are set out in the Nhill Aerodrome Masterplan, listed as a complementary document in [Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#).

2.7.7 Biosecurity

The biosecurity threats assessed by Agriculture Victoria as being a high threat to the Wimmera MEMPC municipalities are:

- Plant Biosecurity Threat – Khapra Beetle
- Animal Biosecurity Threat – Anthrax
- Animal Biosecurity Threat - Foot and Mouth Disease
- Animal Biosecurity Threat – Lumpy Skin Disease
- Animal Biosecurity Threat – Avian Influenza Virus.

History of biosecurity emergencies in the Hindmarsh municipality: Pest plague late in 2010 and early in 2011. A plague of locusts ravaged the state of 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.

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

2.7.8 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.

OFFICIAL

Several of the water bodies in the Wimmera MEMPC municipalities, 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](#).

2.7.9 Hazardous materials

Hindmarsh Shire is exposed to hazardous materials risks through the movement, storage and use of chemicals, fuels and other dangerous goods across the municipality. Major transport corridors, including the Western Highway, Borung Highway, and the Melbourne–Adelaide rail corridor, carry significant volumes of hazardous substances such as fuel, agricultural chemicals and industrial products. Transport incidents involving heavy vehicles or rail freight have the potential to result in spills, fires or hazardous atmospheres requiring specialised response.

Within the municipality, hazardous materials are used and stored across a range of agricultural, commercial and industrial settings. These include fuel depots, rural supply businesses, workshops, manufacturing and processing sites, grain-handling facilities and on-farm chemical stores. Chemical spills, structural fires or accidental releases can pose risks to workers, nearby residents, critical infrastructure and the environment. Agricultural chemical handling and storage, particularly during sowing, spraying and harvest periods, also present localised risks throughout the Shire.

Hazardous materials incidents are managed primarily by CFA, supported by Victoria Police, DEECA, EPA Victoria, VICSES and other emergency management partners as required. Planning for these events focuses on coordinated response arrangements, responder and community safety, protection of critical infrastructure, containment of environmental impacts and timely public information.

Hindmarsh Shire's combination of major freight routes, extensive agricultural activity, dispersed rural communities and reliance on fuel and chemical storage means that hazardous materials remain an important and ongoing hazard to be considered in municipal emergency management planning.

3. Planning arrangements

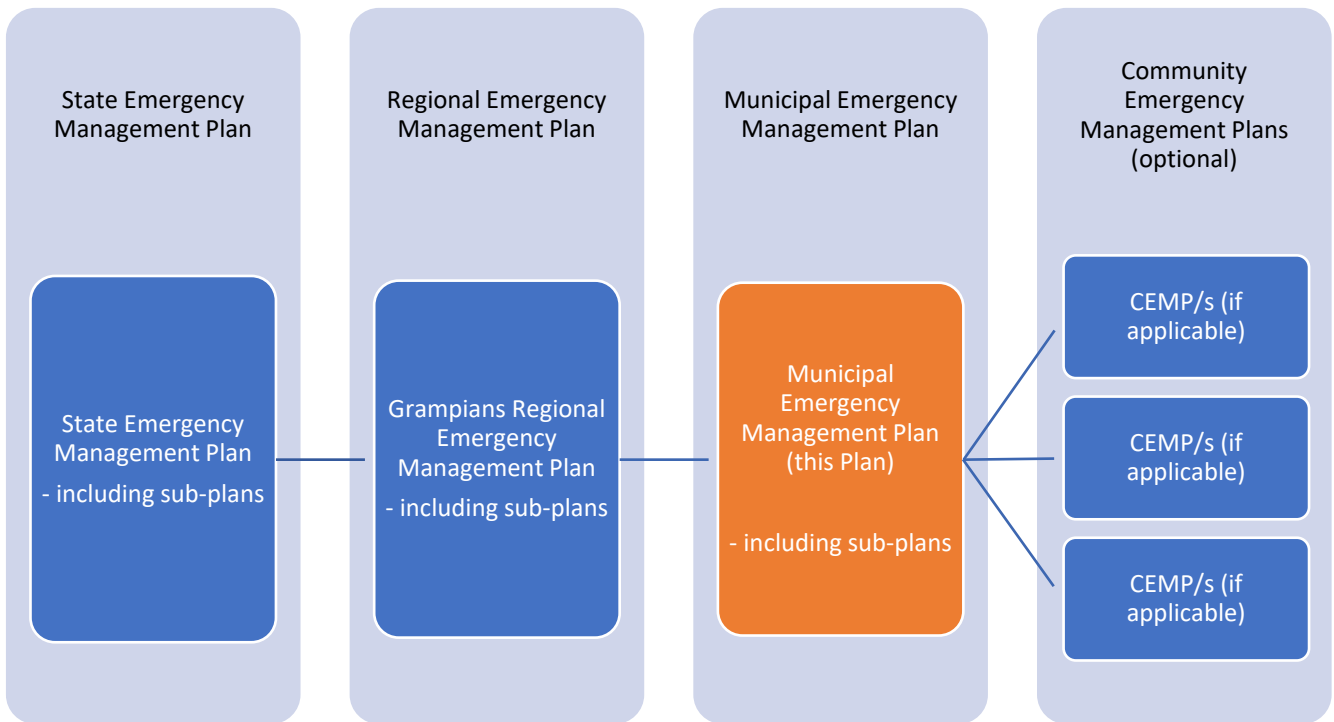
3.1 Victoria's emergency management planning framework

This plan supports holistic and coordinated emergency management arrangements within the Grampians. It is consistent with and contextualises the SEMP and the Grampians 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.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the SEMP and the REMP.

Figure 1: Plan hierarchy



3.2 The MEMPC and its sub-committees and working groups

The Wimmera MEMPC is the peak planning body for emergency management within the Hindmarsh, Horsham, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack municipal districts. It is the forum for government and non-government agencies to develop policies, procedures, strategies and frameworks to support coordinated emergency management planning for the four municipalities.

The MEMPC’s main purpose is to develop the MEMPC in relation to the prevention, response and recovery arrangements in relation to emergencies that may impact the municipality.

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.

OFFICIAL

The membership of the Wimmera MEMPC is determined in accordance with Part 59A of the [Act](#) and associated guidelines. A current register of members and delegates is maintained as a controlled document within the Wimmera MEMPC Microsoft Teams environment. Membership is reviewed and updated as required to reflect agency appointments.

For more information, please refer to the [Wimmera MEMPC Terms of Reference](#).

3.3 Sub-plans and complementary plans

3.3.1 Sub-plans

The Wimmera 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 may be hazard-specific where the consequences are likely to be significant, for example, a Municipal Flood Emergency Sub-plan.

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

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

[Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#) provides a list of sub-plans detailing more specific or complex arrangements.

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](#).

[Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#) provides a list of complementary plans that have significance to the comprehensive, coordinated and integrated emergency management arrangements in the municipal district.

4. Mitigation arrangements

4.1 Introduction

The SEMP defines mitigation as “*the elimination or reduction of the incidence or severity of emergencies, and the minimisation of their effects*”.

The MEMP recognises that all Victorians, not just the emergency management sector, have a shared responsibility to build safer and more resilient communities. No single person or agency can be responsible for all aspects of emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Individuals, communities, business, government and the not-for-profit sector all have a role to play and responsibility to take certain actions and make certain decisions, for example:

- Private businesses prepare business continuity plans
- Aged care and health facilities have emergency management plans
- Farmers have appropriate fire control measures for harvest and other activities
- Fire agencies 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.

[Table 8 of the SEMP](#) outlines the mitigation activities and agencies responsible for managing Victoria’s significant emergency risks.

4.2 Hazard, exposure, vulnerability and resilience

4.2.1 Hazard

A hazard can be defined as a dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption or environmental damage.

The hazards of concern to disaster risk reduction arise from a variety of geological, meteorological, hydrological, oceanic, biological and technological sources, sometimes acting in combination. In technical settings, hazards are described quantitatively by the likely frequency of occurrence of different intensities for different areas, as determined from historical data or scientific analysis.

This MEMP includes identified hazards that would lead to sources of risks in the Hindmarsh municipality.

4.2.2 Exposure

Exposure refers to people, property, systems or other elements present in hazardous zones that may be subject to potential losses.

While the literature and common usage often mistakenly combine exposure and vulnerability, they are distinct. Exposure is a necessary, but not sufficient, determinant of risk. It is possible to be exposed but not vulnerable (for example, by living in a flood plain but having sufficient means to modify building structure and behaviour to mitigate potential loss). However, to be vulnerable to an extreme event, it is necessary to also be exposed.

4.2.3 Vulnerability

Vulnerability refers to the characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that makes it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

There are many aspects of vulnerability, arising from various physical, social, economic and environmental factors. Examples may include poor design and construction of buildings, inadequate protection of assets, lack of public information and awareness, limited official recognition of risks and preparedness measures, and disregard for wise environmental management. Vulnerability varies significantly within a community and over time.

4.2.4 Resilience

Resilience can be defined as the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

Resilient communities promote individual and community wellbeing, the use of available resources and cohesiveness to strengthen their communities for every day, as well as extreme challenges. Through shared responsibility, resilient communities recover more quickly and can better respond to and recover more quickly from subsequent emergencies.

4.3 Risk assessment process and results

The Wimmera MEMPC applies the [Community Emergency Risk Assessment \(CERA\)](#) methodology, managed by Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES), to identify and prioritise emergency risks within Hindmarsh Shire.

CERA is based on [ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines](#) and provides a structured, all-hazards approach to assessing risk. The process involves:

- Identifying hazards relevant to the municipality (e.g., bushfire, flood, heat, pandemic, transport incidents, hazardous materials, biosecurity threats)
- Assessing exposure and vulnerability of people, property, infrastructure, environment, and economic activities

OFFICIAL

- Evaluating consequences and likelihood using agreed criteria to determine risk ratings
- Documenting existing controls and identifying gaps
- Developing treatment options to reduce risk through prevention, preparedness, and mitigation strategies.

The MEMPC conducts risk assessments collaboratively with agencies, Council, and community representatives of the MEMPC. Outcomes inform this MEMP and associated sub-plans.

Current High-Priority Risks for Hindmarsh Shire include:

- Bushfire/grassfire – driven by extensive grasslands, agricultural stubble, lightning activity within the Little Desert, Big Desert and Wyperfeld National Park, and seasonal climatic conditions
- Structural and commercial fire – due to general factors leading to heightened danger
- Flood and Storm – associated with the Wimmera River system, wetlands, desert-edge weather patterns and severe storm activity
- Extreme temperatures (heat and cold) – exacerbated by climate change, an ageing population profile and extensive outdoor agricultural workforces
- Transport Incidents (road and rail) – due to major highways, the Melbourne–Adelaide rail corridor, agricultural machinery movement and long-distance travel patterns
- Essential services disruption – linked to service disruptions due to high-risk weather conditions
- Hazardous Materials – linked to agricultural chemicals, freight movement along the Western and Borung Highways, and on-farm storage
- Animal disease – due to animal disease outbreaks affecting broadacre farming, livestock and local ecosystems
- Human disease (pandemic) – associated with the impacts of social and economic disruption and increased strain on emergency and health services.

A summary of risk ratings and treatment priorities is provided in the [VICSES CERA portal](#). This register is reviewed quarterly and after significant events to ensure currency and effectiveness.

For more information, refer to [Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#).

4.4 Treatment plans

Treatment plans are developed collaboratively by Council and MEMPC agencies to address hazards identified through the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process. These plans aim to reduce the likelihood and/or consequences of emergencies impacting the municipality.

All hazards and associated risks are recorded in a Risk Register, which is maintained by the MEMPC and reviewed annually or after significant events. Where a risk is assessed as high or extreme, hazard-specific sub-plans may be developed to provide detailed mitigation and preparedness arrangements.

Each treatment plan specifies the risk being addressed, the responsible agency or agencies, actions and timeframes and any monitoring and review requirements.

A consolidated list of sub-plans and complementary plans is provided in [Appendix C](#), along with the Risk Register and treatment priorities.

For more information, refer to [Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#)

4.5 Community education and awareness

Resilient communities can plan for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of an emergency. The [Wimmera MEMPC Strategic Plan](#) includes priorities and actions aimed at building community awareness and resilience across the Hindmarsh, Horsham, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack municipalities.

The Wimmera Emergency Management Team (WEMT) and other Wimmera MEMPC agencies undertake collaborative community engagement activities throughout the Wimmera MEMPC municipalities on a regular and ongoing basis.

The Wimmera 72 program provides people with the tools to take care of themselves and their families for a minimum of 72 hours during an emergency. The program includes a [website](#), brochures and online links to help people plan and prepare for emergencies. Fire Ready Guides for extreme bushfire risk areas across the Wimmera MEMPC municipalities have also been developed. Wimmera 72 is an initiative of the WEMT and was developed in consultation with Wimmera MEMPC agencies.

For more information, refer to [Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#).

4.6 Monitoring and review

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

Table 2: Exercised plans

Date	Event	Plan/s exercised
2020-21	COVID-19	Pandemic Plan
23 November 2022	Exercise Track – power outage (local government)	SEMP, REMP, MEMP
11 May 2023	Exercise Field – Warracknabeal Airport (multi-agency)	SEMP, REMP, MEMP
23 November 2023	Emergency Relief Centre Training and Exercise	SEMP, REMP, MEMP, Regional Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan
7 November 2024	Horsham Incident Control Centre multi-agency exercise	SEMP, REMP, MEMP
27 January 2025	Little Desert fire multi-agency incident – response, relief (ERC) and recovery phases	SEMP, REMP, MEMP, Regional Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan, Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan
6 May 2025	Grampians Region Multi-Agency Fires Debrief/Reflection Exercise	SEMP, REMP, MEMP
30 July 2025	EMERGO-Train – large scale mass casualty (multi-agency)	SEMP, REMP, MEMP, Wimmera Emergency Animal Welfare Sub-plan

OFFICIAL

Date	Event	Plan/s exercised
November/ December 2025 TBC	Horsham Incident Control Centre multi-agency exercise	SEMP, REMP, MEMP
Annually	Truck rollover	Wimmera Emergency Animal Welfare Sub-plan
Annually	Single incident house fires Grass fires Scrub fires Vehicle fires	Municipal Fire Management Sub-plan

5. Response arrangements (including relief)

5.1 Introduction

Emergency response at the municipal level focuses on organising, coordinating, and directing available resources to support people affected by emergencies. This includes facilitating requests for additional assistance from regional, state, or commonwealth agencies when local resources are exceeded.

For definitions and broader context, see the [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\)](#).

Emergency management tiers: In Victoria, emergency response operates across three tiers: Incident, Regional, and State. Each emergency is managed at the tier appropriate to its scale and complexity. Typically, incidents begin at the incident level, and escalation to higher tiers occurs as required. Equally, as emergencies are resolved, management responsibilities are de-escalated to lower tiers.

Further information on Victoria's emergency management tiers can be found on page 8 of the [SEMP](#).

Classes of Emergency: The [Emergency Management Act 2013](#) and the [SEMP](#) define three classes of emergency, which guide the assignment of control agencies:

- **Class 1:** Major fire or other significant emergency managed by Fire Rescue Victoria, Country Fire Authority, or Victoria State Emergency Service.
- **Class 2:** Major emergency not classified as Class 1 or 3.
- **Class 3:** Warlike acts, terrorism, hijacks, sieges, or riots.

For full details on classes of emergency, refer to page 41 of the [SEMP](#).

5.2 Command, Control and Coordination arrangements

The Wimmera MEMPC municipalities follow established Command, Control, and Coordination arrangements to ensure an effective and timely emergency response. These arrangements also support regional collaboration when emergencies extend beyond a single municipality.

Core Functions

- **Command:** Directing an agency’s personnel and resources internally.
- **Control:** Overseeing and directing response activities across agencies.
- **Coordination:** Aligning agencies and resources to enable a cohesive response and recovery effort.

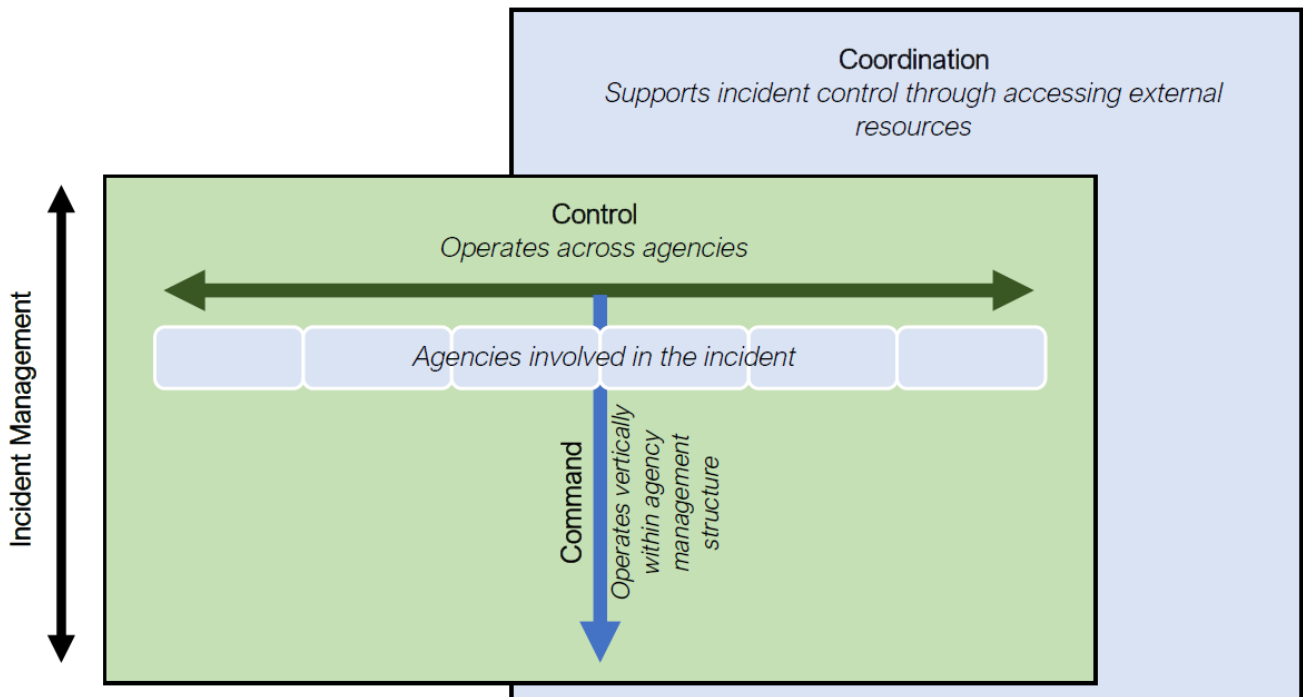
Community-Centric Approach

Consistent with Victorian emergency management objectives, C3 functions are complemented by a focus on:

- **Consequences:** Monitoring and managing the effects of emergencies on people, infrastructure, and the environment.
- **Communication:** Sharing timely information across agencies and with the community to support preparedness, response, and recovery.
- **Community Engagement:** Proactively involving the community in response planning, situational awareness, and resilience-building.

These arrangements reflect the established framework as outlined in the [SEMP](#) under the *Response – Command, Control, Coordination, Communication, Consequence Management and Community Connections* sections.

Figure 2: Overview of Command, Control and Coordination in an incident management structure



5.3 Local response arrangements and responsible agencies

The SEMP provides arrangements for an integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management at the state management level. The [EM 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.

OFFICIAL

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 critical 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 in [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.

For more information, refer to [Section 7 – Roles and responsibilities](#).

5.4 Council Emergency Operations Centre (CEOC)

Once an emergency is identified, Council may activate a CEOC, a facility which brings together key Council staff to coordinate the provision of Council and community resources during an emergency for the response and recovery effort. The CEOC is not a control centre for emergency response but is in close contact with the control agency/Incident Control Centre throughout an emergency. The CEOC is not an interface to the public.

5.5 Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS)

To enable agencies to “work as one” the Victorian emergency management sector operates under AIIMS. The AIIMS principles of flexibility, management by objectives, unity of effort, functional management and span of control ensure that everyone contributing to an emergency management effort understands their role. The Wimmera MEMPC encourages agencies to adopt AIIMS so that seamless integration of all relevant agencies in emergency management planning, operations and recovery can be achieved.

5.6 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 several supporting agencies, the control agency will be responsible for costs incurred.

OFFICIAL

A requesting agency will be responsible for all associated costs for the provision of resources to support the response to an emergency event. The Wimmera MEMPC Councils will keep track of resources distributed by recording their provision in the Crisisworks emergency management system.

Councils are responsible for CEOC setup costs and emergency relief services and provisions. All expenditure must be authorised by the MEMO or MRM, in accordance with the normal Council financial arrangements, and recorded and logged for potential cost recovery.

Employees from other Councils who are asked and authorised to assist during a municipal emergency, should claim staff costs through their Council finance system 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@dft.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.

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

Hindmarsh Shire Council maintains designated Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort (NSP-BPLR) as part of its bushfire preparedness arrangements. These locations provide a last-resort option for community members when all other bushfire survival plans have failed.

NSP-BPLRs are generally open spaces such as sports grounds or large cleared areas that offer some protection from radiant heat and ember attack. They do not guarantee safety and should never be considered a primary bushfire survival plan.

The current NSP-BPLR sites within Hindmarsh Shire are published on the [CFA](#) and [Hindmarsh Shire Council](#) websites. These sites are assessed and approved in accordance with the Country Fire Authority NSP Assessment Guidelines and reviewed annually.

CFRs offer a last resort shelter option if you cannot leave the area in the event of a fire. CFRs are purpose-built or modified buildings that can provide protection from radiant heat and embers. They will only be activated and opened once there is significant fire in the local area.

CFRs are not available within Hindmarsh Shire. Residents are strongly encouraged to leave early on days of extreme fire danger and not rely on NSP-BPLRs as a primary safety option.

[Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#) includes a list of sites.

5.8 Planning for cross boundary events

Hindmarsh Shire shares a border with Horsham Rural City and West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shire Council, together with Mildura Rural City Council.

Horsham Rural City and Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shire Councils operate under the WEMRSP and currently have well-prepared plans and protocols in place for capability and capacity.

Industries, notably agriculture and utility services, operate across the South Australian 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 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 Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC). Deployment of resources over and above the 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 Country Fire Authority have current cross border response protocols in place with South Australian Emergency Services. The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action has 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.

5.9 Resource sharing protocols

The four Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership (WEMRSP) Councils have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out agreed arrangements for sharing Council resources across the five phases of emergency management – mitigation, planning, preparedness, response and recovery.

The WEMRSP Councils are also signatories to the Municipal Association of Victoria's Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing. The protocol sets out an agreed position between Councils regarding the provision of resources to assist other municipalities with responses and recovery tasks during and after emergencies. The protocol is consistent with the concepts and policy guidelines articulated in the [EM Act 2013](#) and the [SEMP](#).

In addition, Hindmarsh Shire Council's plant and equipment are listed on the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) External Plant Panel. This arrangement enables DEECA and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to call upon Council resources to assist with emergency events, including fire suppression and recovery operations. Please contact the Forest Fire Management Victoria District Duty Officer for the latest External Plant Panel information.

These protocols ensure that resources can be deployed quickly and efficiently to support emergency response and recovery efforts across the region.

5.10 Debriefing arrangements

Continuous improvement is a core principle of emergency management in Victoria. After every emergency activation or exercise, the Wimmera MEMPC encourages participating agencies to conduct structured debriefs to identify lessons and opportunities for improvement.

Debriefs should occur as soon as practicable after the event and include representatives from all relevant agencies. Outcomes are documented and encouraged to be shared via EM-SHARE to support sector-wide learning and compliance with the Victorian Emergency Management Assurance Framework.

The process includes:

- Immediate hot debrief at the conclusion of operations to capture initial observations
- Formal debrief or After Action Review within 4–6 weeks to analyse performance, identify lessons, and assign actions
- Integration of lessons into planning, training, and future exercises through MEMPC meetings

Lessons management ensures that improvements are tracked and implemented, strengthening preparedness and resilience across the region.

6. Recovery arrangements

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of recovery is to provide recovery services to assist the emergency affected community in the management of its recovery. It is the coordinated process of supporting communities in the reconstruction of physical infrastructure, agriculture and natural environment as well as restoring emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing to individuals. It may involve the establishment of a Recovery Centre.

6.2 Recovery principles

Victoria's recovery coordination approach is guided by the six national disaster recovery principles and two additional principles introduced by Emergency Recovery Victoria. They are:

1. Understand the context
2. Recognise the complexity
3. Use community-led approaches
4. Coordinate all approaches
5. Communicate effectively
6. Recognise and build capacity
7. Strengthen communities
8. Ensure an inclusive approach.

These principles ensure a structured, inclusive and community-driven process and inform all recovery coordination across the state.

6.3 Management structure

As defined in the [SEMP](#), Local Government (Council) is the lead agency for local emergency relief and recovery. Emergency Recovery Victoria is responsible for state and regional relief and recovery coordination.

The Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-plan complements the 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. It 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.

The Grampians Region Relief and Recovery Sub-plan complements the [Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan](#) (REMP). This plan describes the processes for regional emergency relief and recovery coordination. It outlines the arrangements for managing the planning for implementing relief and recovery coordination at the regional level and provides guidance for municipal relief and recovery planning.

For more information on the sub-plans, refer to:

[Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#)

[Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan](#)

[Grampians Region Relief and Recovery Sub-plan](#)

6.4 Transition to recovery

Recovery operations will commence as soon as possible after the onset of the emergency event and will develop alongside the response and relief activities while the incident is still under the management of the Incident Controller from lead response agency.

The activation process for emergency relief and recovery staff, facilities and services is guided by the Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan and the Grampians Region Relief and Recovery Sub-plan.

For further information, refer to [Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements](#).

7. Roles and responsibilities

An agency that has a role or responsibility under this plan must act in accordance with the plan.

The [SEMP](#) and [Grampians REMP](#) outline agreed agency roles and responsibilities, noting that existing duties, functions, power, responsibility or obligations conferred on an agency by law, licence, agreement or arrangement prevail to the extent of its inconsistency with this plan ([EM Act 2013](#) s60AK).

OFFICIAL

The roles and responsibilities outlined in this plan are specific to the municipality 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 REMPC for consideration.

This plan details emergency management agency roles and responsibilities for mitigation, response, relief and recovery. It also maps agency roles against the core capabilities and critical tasks under the [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#) (VPF) for the management of major emergencies.

At the time of finalising this version of the MEMP, there were no local agencies identified with an emergency management role and responsibilities which differed from that in the SEMP and Grampians REMP.

Refer to the [SEMP](#) and [Grampians REMP](#) for agreed agency roles and responsibilities.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Document administration

Amendment register

Version	Author	Update details	MEMPC approval date
1.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	New plan – 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	New plan – adoption of version 2.0	November 2017
2.1	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Administrative amendments: Update contacts and Crisisworks links in Appendix C – adoption of version 2.1	November 2019
3.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	New plan – adoption of version 3.0	January 2023
4.0	Wimmera MEMPC	New plan – adoption of version 4.0	12 March 2026

Document approval

Name	Title	Date	Signature
Ram Upadhyaya Hindmarsh Shire Council	Wimmera MEMPC Chair	24 April 2026	See certificate of assurance below
Steve Alcock	Grampians REMPC Chair	20 May 2026	See certificate of assurance below

Municipal Emergency Management Plan
Statement of Assurance



Part 2: Certificate of Assurance for the

Step 1: name of municipal district Step 2: If a sub-plan, name of sub-plan (e.g. Storm), otherwise ~~delete this step~~ Step 3: Choose type of plan

Plan Preparer: Wimmera Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee

I certify that the attached Municipal Emergency Management Plan complies with the requirements of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, including having regard to any relevant guidelines issued under section 77 of that Act, to the extent outlined in the attached checklist.

<p><i>(For MEMP and MEMP sub-plans)</i></p> <p>On behalf of the Wimmera Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee:</p> <p> Ram Upadhyaya Chair, Wimmera Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee 24/04/2026</p>	<p><i>(For sub-plans only, if prepared by an agency on behalf of the MEMPC)</i></p> <p>Nominated representative of preparer:</p> <p>Insert signature here</p> <p>Name of nominated representative of preparer</p> <p>Title and agency Click or tap to enter a date.</p>
<p>The Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee approves this plan.</p> <p>Wednesday 20th May 2026</p> <p></p> <p>Steve Alcock Chair, Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee 25th May 2026</p>	

Appendix B – Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
CEOC	Council Emergency Operations Centre
CERA	Community Emergency Risk Assessment
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DFFH	Department Families, Fairness and Housing
EM Act	<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMT	Emergency Management Team
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ERV	Emergency Recovery Victoria
FFMV	Forest Fire Management Victoria
ICC	Incident Control Centre
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MEMO	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
RCC	Regional Control Centre
REMPC	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VPF	Victorian Preparedness Framework
WEMRSP	Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership

Appendix C – Special plans and arrangements

Title	Location
MEMPC Sub-plans	
Municipal Fire Management Sub-plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Hindmarsh Shire Flood Emergency Sub-plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website VICSES website
Wimmera Emergency Animal Welfare Sub-plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Sub-plan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Complementary plans	
Mt Arapiles-Toooan State Park (Dyurrite) Search and Rescue Plan	EM-COP
Nhill Aerodrome Masterplan	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Other relevant documents and resources	
MAV inter-council emergency management resource sharing protocol	MAV website
Wimmera MEMPC strategic plan	Wimmera MEMPC Teams Channel
Wimmera MEMPC terms of reference	Hindmarsh Shire Council website
Grampians Region Relief and Recovery Sub-plan	EMV website
Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Places of Last Resort	Hindmarsh Shire Council website CFA website
VICSES Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA)	VICSES CERA portal

Appendix D – Maps and Hindmarsh Shire Council community map



[Hindmarsh Shire Council community map](#)