Pyrenees Shire Council

HEATWAVE PLAN

2016

Amendment Record.

Amendment No.	Sections Amended	Issue Date
1.	Version 1 - Original Issue	17/10/2012
2.	Version 2 - Review and update	30/09/16
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Contents

Executive Summary

This Pyrenees SC Heatwave Plan has two functions:

1. It explains why heatwave preparedness is an essential part of the municipal emergency management planning process and;
2. Outlines a strategic action plan to minimise the adverse effects of extreme heat related events upon vulnerable members of the community.

Heatwaves have been experienced in the past and are forecast to increase in frequency and intensity in the future. In Victoria, during January and February 2009, the State experienced a heatwave with temperatures amongst the highest ever recorded. The Victorian Chief Health Officer estimated an additional 374 deaths occurred during this heatwave. The frequency and intensity of hot days and warm nights contributed to Victoria's death rate, predominately from heart attacks, stroke and heat exhaustion.

The impact of changing climatic conditions and the population health risk posed by heatwave conditions has prompted the Victorian Government to instigate heatwave planning measures through a local government platform**.** It is expected that every Council will have a Heatwave Plan in place and review it annually.

Adverse health effects of hot weather and heatwaves are largely preventable and this Heatwave Plan aims to form partnerships with other levels of government and local agencies to increase the resilience of the community and to ensure that solid plans are in place to respond to heatwaves in the future. This Heatwave Plan has been based on the *Heatwave Plan for Victoria, 2009-10, Protecting health and reducing harm from heatwaves* (State Plan), in conjunction with the *Victorian Department of Health's 'Heatwave Review Tool 2011'*, and outlines the internal operations of the Pyrenees SC during a heatwave, a public health communications strategy and the provision of community support.

The Pyrenees SC Heatwave Plan, as a sub plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan, sets out a range of strategies to:

1. Prevent heat related illness and mortality;
2. Educate and alert community members and organisations in relation to heatwave events and;
3. Assist the most vulnerable individuals within the community and the Pyrenees SC to maintain wellbeing during heatwave conditions.

The Heatwave Action Plan has three stages of implementation:

Stage 1: Heatwave Alert
Stage 2: Heatwave Response
Stage 3: Recovery and Review

The priority of this heatwave plan is to establish systems for the care of heatwave vulnerable population groups.

Section 1: Understanding Heatwaves

1.1 Climate Change

Australia and the globe are experiencing rapid climate change. Since the middle of the 20th century, Australian temperatures have, on average, risen by about 1°C with an increase in the frequency of heatwaves and a decrease in the numbers of frosts and cold days. Rainfall patterns have also changed - the northwest has seen an increase in rainfall over the last 50 years while much of eastern Australia and the far southwest have experienced a decline. Conservative predictions state that by 2030 that average rise will reach 2°C. The graph below, 'Average Number of Very Hot Days', shows the growing trend in the frequency of these extreme heat events. (Bureau of Meteorology, *'Impacts of climate change'*)

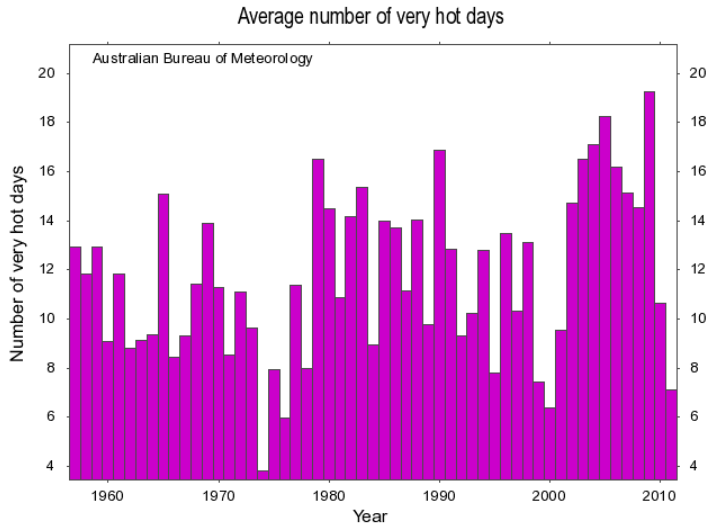


Figure 1:
Average number of very hot days BOM (2012)

As a direct result of advanced climate change, heatwaves are expected to increase in frequency and intensity in Victoria. The Victorian Climate Change Act (2010) affirms the risks of rising average temperatures and sets out planning guidelines which aim to reduce the impact of climate change drivers. A climate change 'Adaption Plan' is due to be released by the State Government in 2012. The implications for municipalities charged with the responsibility of planning for heatwave events are compelling.

1.2 What is a Heatwave?

Currently there is no universal definition of a heatwave although most describe such as 'a prolonged period of excessive heat'. The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) publication, "*The Population Health Impacts of Heat, 2011"* states, "There is no single, internationally accepted definition for a heatwave or period of extreme heat because similar temperatures can have different impacts on different communities at different times. Factors such as the demographic profile of a population, acclimatisation, humidity and urban design all play a role in determining the impact of extreme heat events on human health."

DHHS however, has developed a technical definition for extreme heat events specific to the State of Victoria. This is based on the lower temperature limit above which there is likely to be an impact on human health. This technical definition is described as the **'heat health temperature threshold'.**

Heat health temperature thresholds have been identified for Victoria, above which heat-related illness and mortality increases substantially. These thresholds are based on a range of evidence and information and differ across the state to recognise the higher temperatures experienced in northern parts of Victoria. There are three heat health temperature thresholds in Victoria that apply to three broad geographical

bands or zones,1 running horizontally from east to west across the state. **(Refer to *Appendix One - DHHS publication. "Heat Health Alert System, 2011-12')***

The highest threshold (mean 34 °C) applies to the northernmost (warmest) area of Victoria and the lowest threshold (mean 30 °C) applies to the more southern (coolest) areas of the state. Pyrenees Shire has been places in the ***Southwest District*** for Heat Health Alerts.

The 'heat heath temperature threshold' for The Pyrenees Shire has been calculated at a mean of 30°C

This mean temperature threshold is calculated by adding the forecast maximum and minimum temperatures and dividing by two.

For example - (38° + 22°) / 2 = 30°C
The threshold for the Southwest District, and hence the Pyrenees Shire, = Mean of 30°C

Any calculation which is equal to or exceeds this mean threshold is classified as a heatwave and activates the Pyrenees SC Heatwave Action Plan.

The threshold set for the Pyrenees Shire is exceeded when the mean of the forecast daily maximum and the forecast daily minimum for the following day on any given day is greater than 30°C.

An example of this calculation where the mean heat threshold is exceeded is demonstrated below:

Tuesday
Min: 23°C
Max: 40°C

Wednesday
Min: 22°C
Max: 31°C

(40 + 22) / 2 = 31°C
The forecast mean temperature for the Pyrenees Shire = ***31°C***
The temperature forecast indicates that the threshold will be exceeded.

DHHS operates a heat health alert system for Victoria each summer. This involves monitoring temperatures in each of the weather forecast districts and issuing heat health alerts when forecast temperatures are predicted to equal or exceed respective heat health temperature thresholds

Pyrenees Shire has two temperature zones –The Avoca area north of the dividing range and Beaufort area south of the range. Experience has shown that the Avoca area can exceed the heatwave threshold while the Beaufort end will not resulting in this action plan predominantly being activated for the Avoca area.

1.3 Impacts of Heatwaves

As temperatures exceed the 'heat health temperature threshold' there will be a range of impacts on Council, staff and the community. The range of potential impacts includes:

- A significant loss of life and injury;
- Increase in staff absenteeism;
- Substantial population displacement from non-urban areas;
- Decrease in economic activity, especially for street side shops and outdoor markets;
- Disruption to public transport;
- Stress to parks and gardens;
- Short term power blackouts or brownouts;
- Increased demand on medical and community facilities and services;
- Increased probability of fire; and
- An increase in severity of consequences of other emergency events if they transpire.

Although all of the potential impacts listed above require the attention of municipal emergency management planners, ***it is the direct impact on the health of council staff and community members that is the primary focus of this plan.***

Heatwaves are often seen as a passive threat, unlike fire or flood, but have caused a number of deaths as reflected in Brisbane, January 2000, when 22 people died and 350 required hospitalisation. More recently, as stated in the Executive Summary, in Victoria during January and February 2009, the State experienced a heatwave with temperatures amongst the highest ever recorded (highest max being 48.8°C in Hopeton). The Chief Health Officer estimated an additional 374 deaths occurred during this heatwave. Heat related deaths are underreported so the full impact of heatwaves are never really known with the incident of cardiac events increasing when a person is heat stressed.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in Australia and was the underlying cause of death in 43,946 Australian deaths in 2012 (30% of all deaths), according to the AIHW National Mortality Database. It was an associated cause of death in a further 37,558 deaths. Where CVD was listed as underlying cause of death:

- 46% were due to coronary heart disease (CHD)
- 19% were due to stroke
- 10% were due to heart failure and cardiomyopathy (Figure 1).

Source - http://www.aihw.gov.au/cardiovascular-disease/deaths/

Extremely high temperatures are not the always the issue

But the temperature does not have to reach the peaks of Hopeton 2009 (48.8°C) to have a fatal impact. It depends on the temperature's variation from the norm. For example, in August 2003, a heatwave in Europe (with cooler averages than Victoria) illustrated the vulnerability of people to summer temperatures at the upper end of the average range. It is estimated that between 22,000 and 35,000 excess deaths occurred in a two-week period during this heatwave. This was an extraordinary heatwave impact. Although heatwaves suggest extremes in heat, increased mortality and morbidity can occur at more modest temperatures, which occur more frequently.

Compounding factors

Additionally, there are compounding factors to very hot days which need to be considered. These include:

- The 'heat island effect' in urban and suburban areas where many common construction materials absorb and retain more of the sun's heat. The influence on the temperature is normally more pronounced at night than during the day; and
- Infrastructure failure and other natural emergencies can place additional stress on the community, economy and community services. Power outages, for example, will impair people's ability to run air conditioners and refrigerate food. Likewise, councils may be unable to access information stored electronically. This situation only magnifies the stress on the community.

The impacts of a heatwave can be devastating upon individuals and communities. How can Municipalities mitigate those impacts and help those members of the community most at risk?

1.4 Vulnerable Population Groups

The plan first needs to identify those greatest at risk. The Victorian Department of Health (DOH) publication, "*The Population Health Impacts of Heat, 2011"* states, "Heatwaves, or brief periods of extreme heat, can affect anyone in the population. However, there are certain groups of people who are more susceptible to the health impacts of heat than others, including older people, infants/young children, those with existing medical conditions and people taking medications that may affect their reaction to heat."

The key points of the study conducted by DHHS on vulnerable population groups are:

- People aged 65 years or over were four times more likely to present to a hospital emergency department in Melbourne with a heat-related condition than people from any other age group;
- People born in Australia were more likely to present to a hospital emergency department in Melbourne with a heat-related condition, than people born overseas;
- People who lived alone in a private residence were more likely to present to a hospital emergency department in Melbourne with a heat-related condition than people living in other types of accommodation or living arrangements; and
- Those less likely to present to a hospital emergency department in Melbourne with a heat-related condition included the very young and those living in residential aged care facilities.

The study also listed population groups who are susceptible to extreme heat events and these include:

- people who work in hot environments or are physically active outdoors (such as outdoor council workers, gardeners and labourers);
- people who have a mental illness, particularly those on medication (antidepressants or antipsychotics);
- people with problematic alcohol or other drug use such as amphetamines;
- people with an illness or infection that causes dehydration or fever;
- people with cognitive impairment who may not be able to identify or communicate their discomfort or need for water;
- people who have trouble moving around (such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs)
- people who are overweight or obese;
- pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies and young children;
- people with health conditions that impair sweating including people with heart disease, dehydration, extremes of age, skin disorders (including sunburn, prickly heat and extensive scarring from burns), congenital impairment of sweating, cystic fibrosis, quadriplegia and scleroderma;
- people who are unable to acclimatise;
- homeless people;
- people who are dehydrated;
- people of low socioeconomic status;
- people who live alone or are socially isolated;
- people with low cardiovascular fitness; and
- non-English speaking people who may not be able to understand heatwave announcements or who have reduced access to appropriate health or support services.

Clearly, the elderly are the highest risk group to heatwaves in the community. It is important that heatwave planners understand why and factor that into their planning.

Why are older people at such a high risk during heatwaves?

The Victorian Government publication, (2010), 'Residential Aged Care services Heatwave Ready Resource' gives the following reasons:

- Older people have a reduced ability to adapt to summer heat and are more prone to heat stress. They are more likely to have a combination of factors, including the effects of ageing, chronic medical conditions and disability, taking prescribed medication, and social factors;
- Age-related changes can reduce the sweating response to hot weather and older people may not drink enough to keep themselves hydrated; and
- Chronic illnesses associated with an increased risk of death during heatwave occur more often in older people. These illnesses and the medications used for their treatment may affect normal responses to heat, mobility, and awareness of a hot environment or the ability to care for oneself. Many older people live alone and are unable to reach help during a heatwave.

Each municipality has their own unique population profile which means the Pyrenees SC will need to understand what that means before identifying all of their vulnerable population groups within their municipal boundaries. It also need to understand what it's planning responsibilities are.

Section 2: Heatwave Planning Responsibilities

Municipalities have three compelling reasons why they need to plan for heatwaves. These are:

1. Victorian State legislation requires them to do so;
2. Councils have a duty of care for those they provide direct support services to, their staff and the broader community; and
3. They know their communities better than any other organisation.

Victorian Government Legislation

The Emergency Management Act 1986 requires Council to have arrangements in place to prevent, respond to and recover from any emergencies that could occur within the municipality. In addition the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 states that Council's function is to 'seek to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district.' That includes the staff employed by the Pyrenees SC.

With direct communication links to the community, and access to specialised local knowledge, people naturally seek help from the Council and emergency management agencies during emergencies including being part of the recovery process. In Victoria, natural events like heatwaves constitute an emergency under the Emergency Management Act 1986 and 2013. The Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) details the emergency roles and responsibilities for agencies in relation to the prevention, mitigation, risk reduction, response and recovery components of emergencies.

Utilising existing Council planning frameworks, most notably Municipal Public Health Plans and Municipal Emergency Management Plans, the Victorian Heatwave Strategy underlines the fact that municipal councils are the closest level of government to communities, and have access to local knowledge about the demographic, social and human service features of their area.

Section 3: Achieving Heatwave Readiness

Heatwave readiness is achieved through planning and preparation. This section outlines the process the Pyrenees SC has followed to achieve heatwave readiness.

3.1 Developing the Heatwave Plan

Under the Victorian legislation requirements, the Pyrenees SC acknowledges its responsibility to develop a Heatwave Plan. This plan describes a coordinated response to prevent the adverse effects of extreme heat on their staff and the local community. It is envisaged that as a result of a collaborative planning process led by Council, key stakeholders will:

In the short term:

- Have arrangements in place to reduce the impact of a heatwave on Council staff and the community;
- Increase the understanding of heatwave planning and management across Council and key external stakeholders;
- Develop partnerships and collaborative arrangements with stakeholders, community service and health providers to better respond to heatwaves; and
- Increase understanding of heatwaves in communities so as to increase their capacity to respond during a heatwave event.

In the longer term:

- Develop a sustainable behavioural change to minimise the impacts of heatwaves on health and wellbeing; and
- Promote climate adaption in residential and public space planning and development.

To do that, the heatwave planners need to first identify their vulnerable population groups.

3.2 Pyrenees Shire Community Profile

Pyrenees Shire covers a rural area of 3,500 square kilometers, with a population fewer than 7000 people (6822 in 2015). The Shire has a number of relatively isolated communities scattered across the area, with 2 main towns being Avoca in the north and Beaufort in the south of the shire. Pyrenees Shire has the third lowest SEIFA score (943.9) in the State, based on the 2006 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas'.

Aging population above the state average percentage

It is predominantly a rural and agricultural community with an aging population, as a comparison between the 2006 and 2001 Census demonstrates. The major differences in 2006 between the age structure of Pyrenees Shire and Regional Victoria were:

- A larger percentage of 60-69 year olds (13.5% compared to 9.4%);
- A larger percentage of 50 to 59 years old (17.5% compared to 13.7%).

This is also observed in the comparison between the 2006 and 2001 Census within the Shire, which reflects an aging population as follows:

- A larger percentage of 85 years and over (2.0% compared to 1.1%);
- A larger percentage of 70 – 84 years old (10.5% compared to 8.4%):
- A larger percentage of 60-69 year olds (13.5% compared to 10.8%);
- A larger percentage of 50 to 59 years old (17.5% compared to 13.0%).

Very high percentage of HACC clients

HACC clients aged 0-69 per 1,000 target population represent 683.2 individuals in the Pyrenees Shire, compared to 257.3 in the Victoria measure, ranking Pyrenees Shire the 8th highest in Victoria.

HACC clients aged 70 and over per 1,000 target population represent 588.9 individuals in Pyrenees Shire compared to 368.3 in the Victoria measure ranking Pyrenees Shire 6th highest in Victoria.

NOTE: A major factor in the delivery of services in rural areas is the difficulty people have in accessing public transport to medical and social support opportunities

The aging profile of the Pyrenees Shire, as demonstrated in the statistics above, highlights the presence of a large group of residents who are vulnerable to heatwave stress.

Other vulnerable groups within the Pyrenees Shire

- pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies and young children;
- people who work in hot environments or are physically active outdoors (such as outdoor workers, gardeners and labourers);
- people who live alone or are socially isolated;
- people who have a mental illness, particularly those on medication (antidepressants or antipsychotics);
- people with cognitive impairment who may not be able to identify or communicate their discomfort or need for water;
- people who have trouble moving around (such as those who are bed bound or in wheelchairs);
- people who are overweight or obese;
- people of low socioeconomic status; and
- people with low cardiovascular fitness

The Pyrenees SC have direct responsibility for some of the vulnerable groups within the community (such as Home and Community Care (HACC) and Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) clients and Council staff), but there are a range of external agencies which also care for many of these vulnerable groups. This heatwave plan includes a collaborative partnership approach to achieving heatwave readiness.

3.3 Heatwave Stakeholders and Partners

Pyrenees SC departments (internal) and agencies/community organisations (external) that either, have responsibility for people who are vulnerable to heatwave events, or have the capacity to assist with the implementation of the heatwave mitigation strategy and heatwave response include the following:

Internal (Stakeholders)

- Communications;
- Environmental Sustainability;
- Aged Services;
- Early Years;
- Local Laws;
- Maternal and Child Health;
- Public Health;
- Libraries;
- Infrastructure Services;
- Outdoor work staff; and
- Emergency management staff

External (Partners)

- Family Day Care;
- Child Care Centres;

- Aged Care Providers;
- Community Health Services; and
- Disability Service Providers

NOTE: The list of Internal heatwave stakeholders and external partners can be viewed in ***Appendix Two titled 'Pyrenees SC Heatwave Stakeholders and Partners'***.

Contact information for each stakeholder and partner is kept and maintained by the **'Manager Community Wellbeing', Pyrenees SC.**

3.4 Heatwave Mitigation Strategy

The heatwave mitigation strategy aims to minimise the impact of heatwave events upon the vulnerable population groups. This can be achieved by collaboratively undertaking the following actions:

3.4.1 Community Education

The Pyrenees Shire Council will develop and implement a Community Education Plan. This can be done in parallel with existing bushfire preparedness community education activities.
ACTION: *Heatwave information leaflets are to be distributed at community bushfire preparedness forums. This information can also be included in community newsletters and provided to community groups, centres and partner organisations.*

3.4.2 Training of Vulnerable HACC and CHSP Staff

The elderly, and people with disabilities, are one of the most vulnerable groups in a heatwave, and also often depend heavily or interact regularly with social services, particularly through the (HACC) program. ***Appendix Three. Titled 'HACC and CHSP Staff Heatwave guide – Supporting people in their homes during a heatwave'*** provides information for staff that can assist them in ensuring the elderly are able to manage their health in the heat.

The Pyrenees SC undertakes to do the following:

- The Australian Red Cross provides preparedness training to support agencies that work with clients and this service will be used where possible;
- Encourage institutions and facilities accommodating vulnerable populations and service providers to train staff who have a role to play during heatwaves and to train workers to recognise the signs of heat-related illness; and
- Council will provide training to its Home Community Care workforce to ensure that they provide accurate and timely advice and encouragement to clients and can recognise the signs of heat relating illness and what to do in the event of an emergency.

ACTION: *The Family Services Team Leader will facilitate simple issue training and discussion for HACC and CHSP staff at team meetings. Having staff well informed is one of the simplest and most effective ways to assist the elderly to manage in the heat.*

3.4.3 Support Plans

A range of support plans need to be developed for both the Council and its partner organisations. These include:

- Agencies and stakeholders identify heatwave vulnerable clients and develop support plans for coping in heatwave conditions

  ACTION: *Pyrenees SC HACC and CHSP Assessment Officer develop heatwave response plans for each of their vulnerable clients. The same is undertaken at each of the partner organisations for their vulnerable clients.*

- Promote a collaborative approach to developing a plan which supports socially isolated residents who are not connected to formal service networks.

  ACTION: *Pyrenees SC have developed a register of vulnerable residents who will be contacted during a heatwave(or any other emergency).* ***This register sits with the Manager Community Wellbeing****.*

- Promote the importance of heatwave planning across all council departments so that staff welfare is at the forefront of the heatwave response plan.

  ACTION: *Pyrenees SC have developed polices for staff working in heat. The PSC will promote the application of these policies across Council activities during December management meetings and on the Intranet. These policy documents can be viewed in* ***Appendix Four titled 'Working In Heat – HACC/CHSP' and 'Heat Stress – All Staff'.***

- Develop organisational capacity to support the heatwave plan implementation.

  ACTION: *Managers and their staff are trained by the Emergency Management team in the heatwave response plan and allocated positions of responsibility.*

3.4.4 Cooling Centres

A **cooling center** is an air-conditioned public space set up by local authorities to temporarily deal with the health effects of a heat wave. **Cooling centers** are meant to prevent hyperthermia caused by heat, humidity, and poor air quality.

The Pyrenees SC has identified four community facilities which can act as a cooling centre for residents in need. Information on these facilities can be viewed in ***Appendix Six, 'Cooling Centres'***.

3.4.5 Pyrenees SC Contingency Plans

In the event of an emergency, such as a heatwave, it is the role of local government to ensure the continuation of essential services to the community. Ensuring business continuity during heatwaves in order to protect or support clients, staff and the community is a high priority.

The Pyrenees SC have business continuity plans in place in the event a major or prolonged heatwave event occurs. The impact on Council operations will be significant during a heatwave, especially as Council is likely to be in a Code Red fire danger period when most heatwaves are declared. All departments will be affected by people's willingness and/or ability to go outside and do their job. Council departments that have outdoor staff, provide community services or staff who manage community facilities will be the most affected.

Power brown outs, where power companies limit power supply to areas of the municipality on a rotating basis to manage exceptionally high demand, are likely and will affect most homes and businesses in an impacted area. An extreme event with prolonged power outages, especially a blackout which is an uncontrolled outage due to infrastructure or system failure, will severely affect everyone.

Staff absenteeism is likely to be one of the primary impacts that are likely to affect the functioning, and hence the business continuity of the Pyrenees SC. This could be due to:

1. Looking after sick or vulnerable relatives or friends;
2. School closure (particularly for staff in bush fire vulnerable areas) requiring parents to look after their children;
3. Heat stress due to heat exposure or lack of sleep during hot nights;
4. Attending to bushfire threats – primarily for staff living in bush fire areas, but may include other responsibilities like CFA volunteers; and
5. Traffic management issues.

In an extreme heat event, Business Continuity planning may well be triggered - see documents- Business Continuity Plans. These can be located on the PSC internal network drive:

J:\IMS\Public\Business Continuity Plans

3.4.6 Town Planning

Pyrenees SC is incorporating heatwave planning into existing plans and encourages community planning groups to assess their local areas and address local heatwave issues. Council will encourage community projects which incorporate elements that reduce the effect of heat on residents and event patrons.

Examples of possible urban environment adaption measures include:

- Installation of water bottle filling stations and bubble taps;
- Promotion of thermally protective building codes;
- Promotion of insulation purchase and installation schemes;
- Increase of shady areas including shady seating areas and shady parking spaces;
- Increased tree planting; and
- Heatwave provisions for staging of major events.

3.5 Heatwave Communications Strategy

Elements of the Communication Strategy

Effective communications are a key component of responding to a heatwave. Raising the level of awareness results in better heat health management, as well as assuring people that the Council is taking effective and informed action. Internal communications are just as important to ensure that staff look after their health and are able to effectively communicate heat health messages to the community.

This strategy promotes:

- Preparation of materials and communications before heatwaves are likely to occur;
- Heat health messages during summer;
- Heatwave communications during an event;
- Follow up media to encourage people to take action over the cooler months;
- Staff information and FAQ's; and
- Internal communication of OH&S procedures and heat policies.

Communicating heat health messages to Council staff is a critically important part of the communications strategy. This is particularly so in an emergency situation

Key messages

Media releases can be written as needs arise, but should reinforce the heat health messages promoted by the Department of Health and work in with bushfire messaging. The key messages to promote are:

- **Keep the home cool** (retrofit, close out the heat/open when cooler, utilise the coolest rooms, turn off non-essentials);
- **Keep out of the heat** (if you have to go outside, go early or late in the day, change schedules if needed, move to a cooler place if required e.g. other people's homes, cooler public spaces);
- **Keep the body cool and hydrated** (light loose clothes, damp cloth or shower, spray water, drink plenty of water);
- **Help others if you can** (visit or call vulnerable friends and family, volunteer to be the person on a care plan);
- **Know what to do if you have a health problem** (know danger signs, medication care, what to do in an emergency); and
- **Know what to do when others feel unwell** (know the danger signs, medication care, what to do in an emergency).

The Department of Health also has brochure templates and files containing heat health information for individuals to take care of themselves and look out for family, friends and neighbours who may need help coping with the heat.

These can be located at the following internet address:

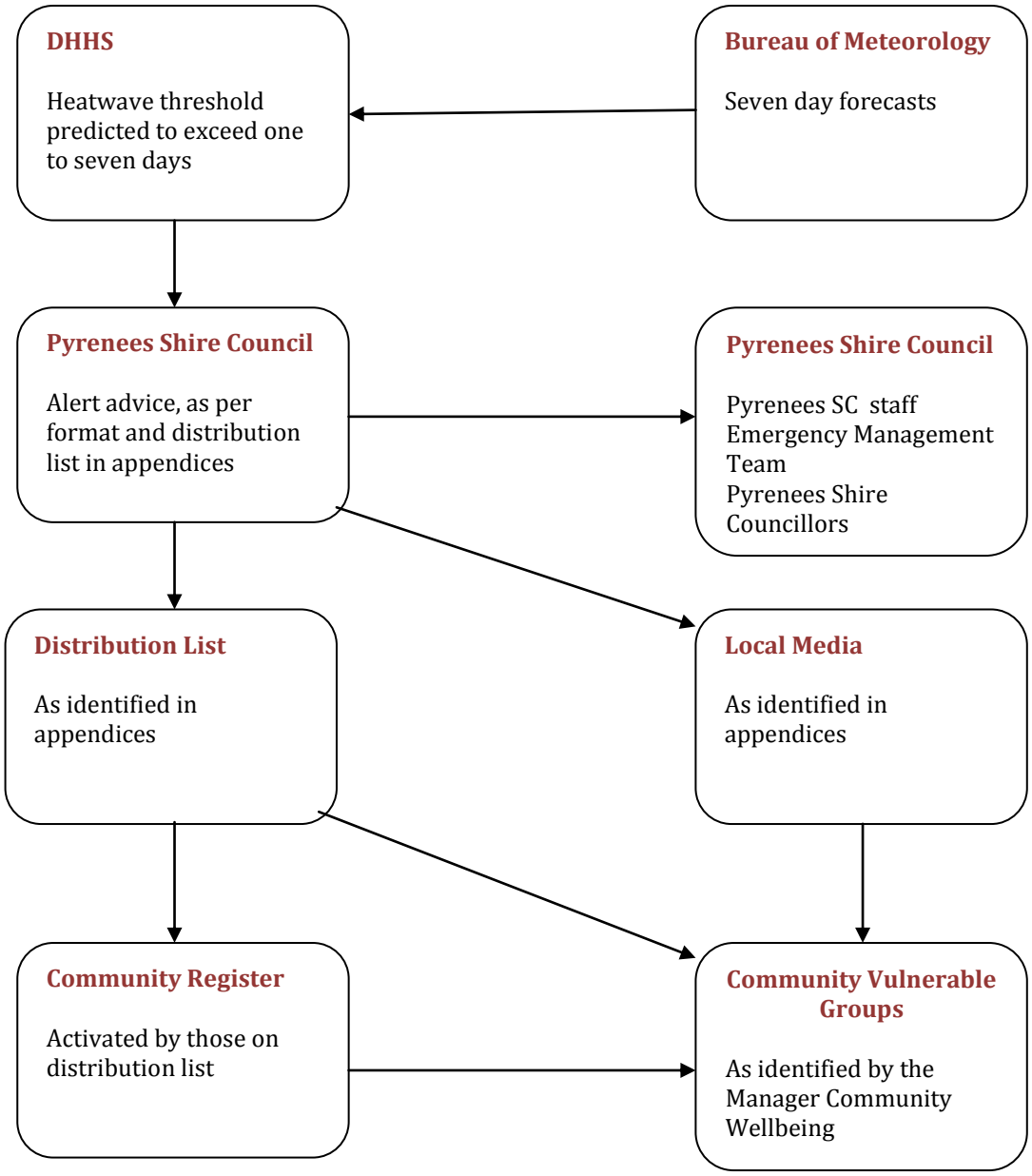
http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave/

Heatwave Communications Plan

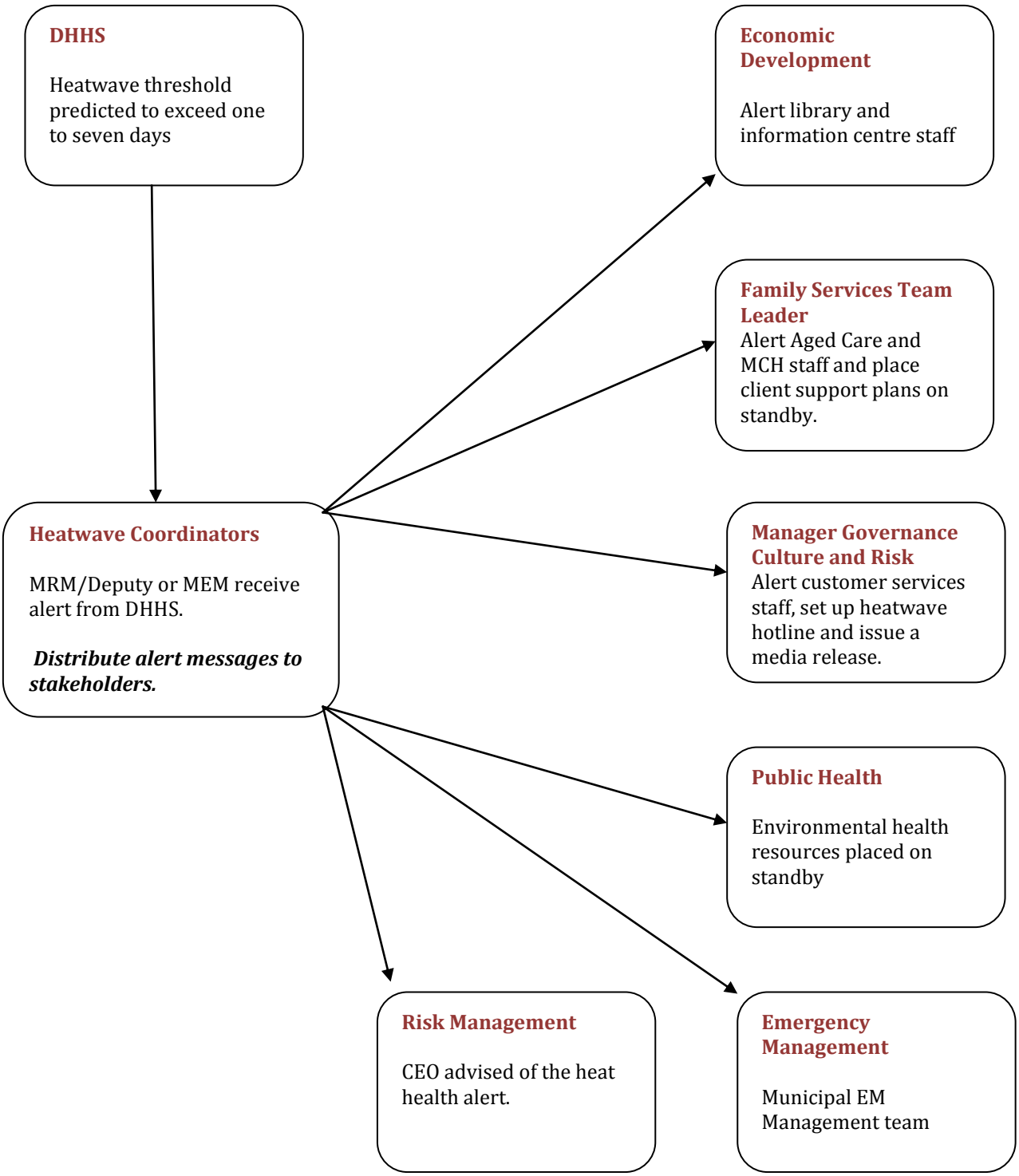
When	What	How	Responsibility
Before Summer	Prepare heatwave information and promotional materials to address the needs of the Pyrenees community for Heatwaves.	• Review existing materials and prepare additional resources as required, including fact sheets etc. • Ensure identified vulnerable population groups have access to the information and resources • Prepare key messages for customer service staff	Communications Officer Community Wellbeing Family Services
	Educate the community regarding heatwaves Provide advice to mitigate the impacts of climate change (e.g. modifications to houses to enhance natural cooling, tree planning)	• Council Website • Council publications (e.g. Pyrenees News, Bushfire Bulletin) • Community bushfire preparedness forums • Newspaper ads • Email networks/lists • Website • Environment email networks/lists	Communications Officer Environmental Health Officer Fire Prevention Officer Environment & Sustainability Officer
	Provide education and training to HACC and Child care workers on the effects of heat	Training at team meetings • Provide information on how to recognise the signs of heat stress and what to do • Provide information through Maternal and child health nurse, senior citizens centres, family day carers	Community Wellbeing Family Services
	Provide access to resources and education materials on heatwaves	• Council Website and intranet	Environmental Health Officer
During Summer	Promote and provide key Heatwave messages to the Community Promote "Cool Places" within the municipality Educate parents of young children about the dangers	• Local Papers • Council Website • Displays in Council foyers & Libraries • Council Pools • Immunisation Sessions • Childcare centres • Seniors citizen centres • Website • On venues • Local papers • During new mothers groups	Communications Officer Environmental Health Officer Community Wellbeing Family Services Communications Officer Community Wellbeing Family Services

	of hot weather. Educate Older Adults regarding the effects of Heatwaves Promote pet care during heatwaves Reinforce OH&S policies with Council staff regarding heat stress	• Display Posters & distribute brochures • Early Years Newsletters • School newsletter • HACC newsletter • Senior Clubs meetings • Verbal advice when delivering meals • Website • Fact sheets for rangers • Internal email, intranet, staff meetings and • noticeboards	ECKA, Uniting care, YMCA Community Wellbeing Family Services Communications Officer Local Laws All relevant units
Heatwave Forecast (up to Seven days prior forecast event)	Alert people to forecast Heatwave	• Email to all internal staff and to external key partners • Internal staff to forward Alert to their primary stakeholders (eg Aged Services to seniors clubs, etc) • Display Heatwave Alert on front page of Council Website • Provide staff with information and advice on working in the heat via intranet. • Key messages for Customer Service	MRM Community Wellbeing Family Services Communications Officer Manager Finance
During Declared Heatwave	Alert people to the extreme heat conditions and provide information on appropriate behaviour Provide information on power black outs	• Display Extreme Heat Alert on Website • Display extreme heat warnings in key public places (eg Council foyers, libraries, childcare centres) • Key messages for Community Services Organisations • Communications, Public Health provide information on power black outs • Provide Food safety advice (including website) for power outages	Communications Officer Community Wellbeing Family Services Communications Officer EHO

Pyrenees SC Heatwave Alert System



Pyrenees SC Internal Heatwave Communication Tree



Section 4: Pyrenees Heatwave Action Plan

Stage 1: Heatwave Alert

Upon receiving a heat alert notification the Heatwave Coordinator or Deputy Heatwave Coordinator will implement the communications plan informing all internal stakeholders and external partners.

The message will be consistent and will follow that set out in Appendix 7

Pyrenees Shire Council	External Partners
The Department of Health Fact Sheet titled ***'Public Health Information – Preventing Heat-Related Illness' (Appendix Five)*** will be attached to external communication messages. External agencies will be requested to distribute the information to their staff and network of contacts and place their heat health support plans on standby.	Partner organisations place their heat health support plans on standby.
Family Services Team Leader will ensure that Home and Community Care and MCH staff and volunteers, who have existing relationships with people vulnerable to heat related illness, place their heat health support plans on standby.	Partner organisation maintain a regular communication line with the PSC Heatwave Coordinator
Pyrenees SC staff will be provided with general information to deal with enquiries from the general public regarding heatwaves. This will include details of state government websites and contact numbers.	
Pyrenees SC implements 'Heatwave Hotline'. Members of the public will be referred to the Heatwave Coordinator or Environmental Health Officer for more specialised public health information where required.	
Pyrenees SC reviews BOM website reports three times a day via mobile devices using the Weather Zone application	

Stage 2: Heatwave Response – threshold triggered

Pyrenees SC alerts registered organisations of the threshold being '**triggered**' as per the Communications Plan.

As well as the Heat Health Threshold being exceeded, Pyrenees SC's Heatwave Plan shall be 'activated' in part or in its entirety if any one of the following conditions are met:

- at the request of the Control Agency;
- at the request of the Police Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator or Police Divisional;
- Emergency Response Coordinator;
- at the request of the Council's Chief Executive Officer ;
- at the request of the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer; and
- if Council's Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre is activated in response to a Heatwave

In the event of an emergency, such as a heatwave, it is the role of local government to ensure the continuation of essential services to the community. Ensuring business continuity during heatwaves in order to protect or support clients, staff and the community is a high priority.

Upon full activation of this Response Plan, at the earliest opportunity the following will be undertaken:

Pyrenees Shire Council	External Partners
Either the MRM or MEM will inform Council's Chief Executive Officer that the Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and/or Heatwave Plan have been 'activated'.	Partner organisations implement their heat health support plans
A meeting of Council's Emergency Management Group shall be convened by the Municipal Emergency Management Group and/or Council's Heatwave Coordinator.	Partner organisation maintain a constant communication line with the PSC Heatwave Coordinator
Pyrenees SC HACC and CHSP staff implement their heat health support plans. Identified vulnerable citizens are contacted.	
Cooling centres activated (see appendix 6)	
Pyrenees SC increases local media campaign and capacity of Council heatwave hotline	
Pyrenees SC reviews BOM website reports four times a day	
Pyrenees SC implements business continuity plans if required.	
Ensure that health information and support is readily available to the community, vulnerable population groups and their carers during a heatwave; and provide a coordinated emergency response to heat events so as to increase effectiveness.	

Stage 3: Recovery and Review

Once the heatwave event has abated, the response arrangements are deactivated and the recovery and review process is implemented. The following is undertaken:

Pyrenees Shire Council	External Partners
Pyrenees SC maintains a community response to community members who were most affected, providing assistance to restore their emotional and physical wellbeing .	External partners maintain a community response to community members who were most affected, providing assistance to restore their emotional and physical wellbeing .
Pyrenees SC l deactivates heatwave response. Messages will be sent to all stakeholders and partners and advised to deactivate heatwave plans.	Instigate education to increase resilience in preparation for future heatwaves
Local media campaign is reduced	Partners instigate debrief sessions with staff . and a review of the heatwave planning effectiveness. Was the service equipped with sufficient knowledge to carry out their responsibilities? Identification of gaps or deficits in the service, and what worked well is recorded and shared.
Stakeholder debrief session held within 7 days if required	
Instigate education of HACC and CHSP staff clients to increase resilience in preparation for future heatwaves	
Facilitation of a stakeholder review session within 28 days of the cessation of the heatwave emergency, to review heatwave management outcomes.	
Facilitate the sharing of agreed learning's from the time the first heat alert was issued .	
Impact and effectiveness of the plan is reviewed annually each winter	

Section 5: Heatwave Emergency Contact List

The contact information used in the Pyrenees SC Communication Plan for alerting stakeholders and partners is utilised by the Heatwave Coordinator, but is maintained by staff positions within Council. This section lists the names of those lists and the titles of the Pyrenees SC staff responsible for them (contact list coordinators), but for privacy reasons, they will be held on file.

It is the responsibility of the Heatwave Coordinators to establish and maintain a regular dialogue with those 'contact list coordinators'.

1. Municipal EM Contact List (MEMP Administrator)
2. Vulnerable People (Manager Community Wellbeing)
3. External Partner organisations (Manager Community Wellbeing)

Section 6: Heatwave Planning Team

PyreneesShire Council acknowledges the contribution to this document by members of the Pyrenees Shire Heatwave Plan Workgroup, namely:

Name	Title	Organisation
Martin Walmsley	Manager Governance and Risk MEM	Pyrenees SC
Douglas Gowans	Director Assets & Development, MERO	Pyrenees SC
Sue O'Brien	Manager Community Wellbeing, MRM	Pyrenees SC
Ray Davies	Manager Economic Development Deputy MRM	Pyrenees SC
Paul Brumby	Manager Finance Deputy MRM	Pyrenees SC
Kaylene Baird	Family Services Team Leader	Pyrenees SC
Alex Serrurier	Environmental Health Officer	Pyrenees SC
Phil Hoare	Manager Works	Pyrenees SC
Ernie Welsh	Municipal Fire Prevention Officer	Pyrenees SC
Jo Guerts	Kindergarten Cluster Manager and Family Day care Coordinator	Eureka Community Kindergarten Association
Phil Diprose	Manager Contracts Swimming Pool contract	Pyrenees SC
David Draffin	Emergency Management Resource Officer	Pyrenees SC

Section 7: References

The following publications have been used in the preparation and writing of the Pyrenees SC Heatwave Plan.

1.	Victorian Department of Health (DOH) ,(2011) '*The Population Health Impacts of Heat*'
2.	Victorian DOH, (*2011-12) 'Heat Health Alert System'*
3.	Department of Human Services, Vic.(2009). 'Heatwave Planning Guide'
4.	Victorian DOH, *(2009-10), Heatwave 'Plan for Victoria, Protecting health and reducing harm from heatwaves'*
5.	Victorian DOH (2011), 'Heatwave Plan Review Tool'
6.	Commonwealth of Australia, (2012). Bureau of Meteorology
7.	The Victorian State Government, (2010), 'Residential Aged Care services Heatwave Ready Resource'
8.	Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)
9.	Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)
10.	Victorian Climate Change Act (2010)

Section 8: Appendices

8.1	DOH publication. "Heat Health Alert System, 2011-12'
8.2	Pyrenees SC Heatwave Stakeholders and Partners
8.3	HACC and CHSP Heatwave guide – Supporting people in their homes during a heatwave
8.4	Working In Heat – HACC/CHSP staff' and 'Heat Stress – All Staff
8.5	Public Health Information Brochure – Preventing Heat-Related Illness
8.6	Cooling Centres
8.7	Heat health alert messages
8.8	Heat Health Checklists

APPENDIX 8.1 – DOH Heat Health Alert System 2011 - 12

Attach PDF document here

APPENDIX 8.2 – Pyrenees SC Heatwave Stakeholders and Partners

Stakeholders (internal)

Function	Responsible Department
Communications	Economic Development
Aged Services	Family Services
Public Health	Environmental Health
Local Laws	Infrastructure Services
Tourism	Economic Development
Maternal and Child Health	Family Services
Libraries	Economic Development
Planning	Infrastructure Services
Emergency Management	MEMP Committee
Customer Services	Manager Finance
Risk Management	CEO

Partners (external)

Agency Name	Service Provision
Beaufort and Skipton Health Services	Aged care services and community health programs
Maryborough & District Health Services	Aged care services and community health programs
YMCA	Kindergarten Management and swimming pools
Uniting Care	Kindergarten Management
ECKA	Kindergarten and child care
Department of Education Grampians Region	School education

APPENDIX 8.3 - HACC and CHSP Heatwave Guide

Supporting people in their homes during a heatwave

What is a heatwave?

A heatwave is a period of extremely high temperatures that impact negatively upon the health of a community. In Nillumbik this is defined as a 24 hour period where the average day/night temperature is 30□C or more.
In January 2009, 374 additional deaths were recorded during the heatwave in Victoria. This was an increase of 62% over what would have normally been expected for that time of year.

Why are we developing a heatwave strategy?

The HACC, including CHSP, guidelines, October 2009 says that: *"The department of Health is preparing for potential emergency situations in the next summer season. These may occur as a result of bushfires and/or extreme weather events. HACC providers support a diverse client group of frail older people and younger people with moderate, sever or profound disabilities and their careers.*

It is expected that most people in this group will simply need to be prompted with information about how to care for themselves in heatwave conditions and be provided with information about how to develop a personal emergency management plan. It is expected that they will take action on their own behalf or with the assistance of relatives, friends or neighbours to develop a personal emergency management plan and to care for themselves appropriately ina heatwave.

Services should prompt clients to take this action and supply them with relevant information ...Organisations should encourage their staff to prompt all clients to identify their risk, to plan for what they will do in an emergency or extreme weather event and to discuss their plan with family, friends and neighbours so that it is realistic and able to be implemented." (p 25)

What are the risks?

In a severe heatwave you may get dehydrated and your body may overheat. If you already have a heart or respiratory problem, this may make your symptoms worse. Additionally, it can cause heat exhaustion or heatstroke. Keeping yourself cool will reduce the risk of illness. If you start to feel unwell, it is important to seek medical advice as soon as possible. The symptoms of heat exhaustion include headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle weakness or cramps, pale skin, and a high temperature. You should move somewhere cool and drink plenty of water or fruit juice. If you can, take a lukewarm shower, or sponge yourself down with cold water.

Heatstroke can develop if heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning. Symptoms include headaches, nausea, an intense thirst, sleepiness, hot, red and dry skin, a sudden rise in temperature, confusion, aggression, convulsions and loss of consciousness. Heatstroke can result in irreversible damage to your body, including the brain, or death.

Who is at risk?

The heat can affect anyone, but some people run a greater risk of serious harm. These include:

- Older people;
- Babies and young children;
- People with serious mental health problems;
- People on certain medication;
- People with a serious chronic condition, particularly breathing or heart problems;
- People who already have a high temperature from an infection;
- People who misuse alcohol or take illicit drugs;
- People with mobility problems;and
- People who are physically active, like manual workers and sportsmen and women.

Factors which increase the risk:

1. An inability to adapt your behaviour to extreme heat;
2. Social isolation;
3. A home that you cannot cool; and

4. Health conditions which are worse in extreme heat

What should you do?

If you or your client has any of the above heat related illnesses, whatever the underlying cause of heat related symptoms, the treatment is always the same – ***move the person to somewhere cooler and cool them down***

Mostly it's a matter of common sense. Listen to your local weather forecast so you know if a heatwave is on the way and plan ahead to reduce the risk of ill health from the heat.

If the power is out

Often heatwaves and power outages occur together. Remember that if the power goes out, air conditioners, fans, lights, fridges and freezers won't work, making it hard to keep cool and ensure that foods don't spoil. Also, radios and walk-around telephones may not work if they need power making it very hard to contact clients to make sure that they are coping with the heat.

How to look after yourself and others:

1. Keep out of the heat

- If a heatwave is forecast, try and plan your day in a way that allows you to stay out of the heat;
- If you can, avoid going out in the hottest part of the day (11am – 3pm);
- If you can't avoid strenuous outdoor activity, like sport, DIY, or gardening, keep it for cooler parts of the day, like early morning or evening;
- If you must go out, stay in the shade. Wear a hat and light, loose-fitting clothes, preferably cotton; and
- If you will be outside for some time, take plenty of water with you.

2. Stay cool

- A loose damp cloth or scarf on the back of the neck, or spraying or splashing your face and the back of your neck with cold water several times a day can help keep you cool;
- Stay inside in the coolest rooms in your home as much as possible;
- Reduce heat from sunlight coming through the windows. External shading, e.g. canvas blinds are best. Internal blinds or curtains can also help, so keep them drawn during the hot parts of the day;
- Keep windows closed while the room is cooler than it is outside. Open windows when the temperature inside rises above the outside temperature. It is also helpful to open windows at night for ventilation. If you are worried about security, a security screen door will allow breezes through your house at night, or open windows on the first floor and above;
- Indoor and outdoor plants will help keep your home cool due to evaporation and the shading from trees and bushes; and
- Take cool showers or baths.

3. Drink regularly

- Drink regularly even if you do not feel thirsty – water or fruit juice are best;
- Try to avoid alcohol, tea and coffee. They make dehydration worse; and
- Eat as you normally would. Try to eat more cold food, particularly salads and fruit, which contain water.

4. Seek advice if you have any concerns

- Contact Nurse on Call, your doctor, a pharmacist if you are worried about your health during a heatwave, especially if you are taking medication, if you feel unwell or have any unusual symptoms;
- Watch for cramp in your arms, legs or stomach, feelings of mild confusion, weakness or problems sleeping. If you have these symptoms, rest for several hours, keep cool and drink water or fruit juice; and
- Seek medical advice if they get worse or don't go away.

Remember, heatstroke can kill. It can develop very suddenly, and rapidly lead to unconsciousness. If you suspect someone has heatstroke, call Nurse on Call (1300 6060 24) or 000 immediately.

5. Helping others

If anyone you know is likely to be at risk during a heatwave help them get the advice and support they need. Older people living on their own should be visited daily to check they are OK.

6. While waiting for the ambulance

- If possible, move the person somewhere cooler;
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or using a fan;
- Cool them down as quickly as possibly by loosening their clothes, sprinkling them with cold water or wrapping them in a damp sheet;
- If they are conscious, give them water or fruit juice to drink; and
- Do not give them aspirin or paracetamol.

Adapted from:
Heatwave a guide to looking after yourself and others during hot weather, NHS (2008), United Kingdom, www.dh.gov.uk/publications,

APPENDIX 8.4 – Working in Heat – HACC and CHSP staff

Working in Heat Policy- HACC and CHSP

Version: 1.0 Last modified: 03/04/2012 File no: com-2011-19
Responsible officer: Family Services Team Leader Next Review: 03/04/2014

PURPOSE

To minimise the risk of injury to Pyrenees SCs HACC and CHSP Staff when in the work place , during hot weather conditions;

To provide Pyrenees SCs Support Staff Members with procedures that reduce exposure to heat stress associated with unusually high temperatures.

SCOPE

1. HACC & CHSP Staff

This Working in Heat Procedure applies to the following HACC and CHSP staff:

It requires employees working in their allocated workplace to be able to identify symptoms of illness caused by heat exposure, to apply first aid processes, and to determine whether further medical assistance is required.

A support staff member is defined as an employee, who, in the course of their duties is required to work in the homes of consumers of Pyrenees SCs HACC and CHSP services.

2. HACC and CHSP Services

This Working in Heat Procedure applies to the following HACC and CHSP services delivered by Pyrenees SC:

- Domestic Assistance ;
- Personal Care;
- Respite Services ;
- Delivered Meals including Community Meals;
- Unaccompanied Shopping;
- Transport Services;
- Home Maintenance (Minor) Services; and
- Home modifictions (contractor's responsibility)

It will include:

Encourage staff to participate in work health checks

Rostering adjustments to ensure all HACC and CHSP services have been delivered by 12mD of the heat emergency

Rostering to ensure at risk MCH clients are contacted by telephone and not visited on site

HACC and CHSP Care Coordinator contacts all clients on Vulnerable Clients List to advise of cooling options, reminders for hydration and or Fire Plan considerations.

Workplace and Worksite Heat Stress Assessment

As with U.V radiation, Heat Stress can be a hazard for any employee who spends prolonged periods working outdoors or in allocated workplaces during periods of hot weather condition.

Assessments for allocated workplaces are to be undertaken in conjunction with the HACC Assessment Officer and the consumer of Pyrenees SCs HACC services. It will include the noting of the absence or presence of heating and cooling. Can we discuss please ?

Heat Stress Assessments need to be undertaken for worksites, Contracts and the consumers of Pyrenees SCs HACC and CVHSP services where environmental and climatic conditions dictate. Assessments form part of the HACC and CHSP holistic Assessment documentation for HACC consumers.

Safety Audits

A copy of the Working in Heat Procedures for HACCand CHSP staff Staff , to identify and manage heat stress illness, is to be displayed at the Family Services office and individual copies given to each HACC and CHSP staff Member.

1. Heat Stress Risk Factors and Procedures

There is no one factor that impacts on heat stress. Factors may include:

- Temperature;
- Humidity;
- Air velocity;
- Radiant heat;
- Clothing; and
- Physical activity level etc.

Personal factors that impact can include:

- Comorbidies including cardio vascular disease;
- Febrile illness (flue etc.);
- Inability to acclimatise ;
- Obesity;
- Medication; and
- Level of hydration etc.

HACC and CHSP staff are required to monitor their work environment and assess whether any of the listed risk factors are present.

HACC and CHSP staff are required to take action if any of these risk factors are affecting their wellbeing.

Exposure to these risk factors has the potential to bring on heat stress.

2. Characteristics of Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when more heat is absorbed by the body than can be dissipated. The two types of heat stress are heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

2.1 Heat Exhaustion Signs & Symptoms

The identified signs and symptoms associated with heat exhaustion are:

- Muscle cramps, especially in the calves and toes;
- Exhaustion and general weakness;
- Nausea and/or vomiting;
- Dizzy spells;
- Incohenerncy or confusion
- Pale, cool, clammy skin at first, becoming flushed and red later; and
- A rapid, weak pulse and rapid, noisy breathing.

In addition, staff should be encouraged to monitor urinary output. Reduced levels of urine output are an indicator of dehydration. Urinary concentration (yellower than normal) is a sign of pending dehydration and heat stress.

Heat exhaustion occurs when someone becomes dehydrated due to loss of water from exercising or working in poorly ventilated conditions.

Advice to staff should include:

- Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity. Drink extra water all day;
- Stay indoors in air-conditioned areas when possible;
- Drink less tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages;
- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes;
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat or using an umbrella;
- Increase the time you spend in daily outdoor activities slowly and gradually;
- Schedule vigorous activities for cooler times of the day.;
- Try to avoid spending time outdoors during the hottest hours of the day: 10am to
- 6pm;
- During an outdoor activity, take frequent breaks and drink water or other fluids every 15 to 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty. If you have clear, pale urine,you are probably drinking enough fluids.
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about drinking extra fluids and about your medicines.

2.2 Heat Stroke Signs and Symptoms

The identified signs and symptoms associated with heat stroke are:

- No longer sweating;
- Red, hot and dry skin;
- A body temperature over 40◦C;
- A rapid, thready pulse;
- Rapid, noisy breathing;
- Irrational or aggressive behaviour; and
- Obvious deterioration of the conscious state.

Heat Stroke is serious and means the body is no longer able to regulate its temperature by cooling the skins surface by sweating. The internal body temperature rises, and organ damage can occur.

HACC and CHSP staff are required to monitor their physical health and assess whether any of the listed signs and symptoms are present.

HACC and CHSP staff are required to take action if any of these signs and symptoms is affecting their wellbeing.

Heat stroke has the potential to damage organs and death can result.from heat stroke.

HACC and CHSP staff experiencing any signs or symptoms of heat stroke are to:

- Call 000 for an ambulance (112 from a mobile phone);
- Seek the assistance of someone to cool you using wet towels or a wet sheet with a fan directed across the surface;
- If ice packs are available, wrap you in towels and place them in the armpits or groin;
- If shivering occurs stop active cooling; and

- Notify the HACC and CHSP care Coordintor

3. Managing Heat Stress on High Temperature Days

On high temperature days or within high temperature environments HACC and CHSP staff will reduce the risk of heat stress by:

- Wearing lighter or looser fitting clothes, preferably or loosely woven natural fabrics such as cotton to assist the evaporation of sweat;
- Drinking at least 100-200 ml of cool water at frequent intervals to replace fluids lost due to sweating;
- Restricting the work to be undertaken to light duties. This means lmit cooking, vacuuming, cleaning windows, ironing, sweeping outside paths and verandahs after 12MD;
- Rescheduling work or particular tasks to cooler times of the day or an alternative day;
- Opening door, windows or vents where possible;

- Stopping or slowing down if feeling unwell; and
- Taking rest breaks in a cool well ventilated place, each hour.

If a HACC and CHSP staff ceases work, due to a high temperature environment, then the service will be rerosterd and or rescheduled by the HACC and CHSP Care Coordinator. Brokered HACC and CHSP client Cae Mager are to be notified. .

HACC and CHSP staff must notify the HACC and CHSP Care Co-ordination Cell if they cannot perform their duties.
HACC and CHSP staff are required to take action if any of these signs & symptoms is affecting their wellbeing.

Heat exhaustion has the potential to cause vomiting, cramping, and reduce levels of consciousness.

HACC and CHGSP staff experiencing any signs or symptoms of heat exhaustion will:

- Lie down at total rest in a cool area;
- Loosen any tight clothing;
- If fully alert and conscious drink frequent small drinks of water or suck ice chips;
- If muscle cramps occur, gently stretch the affected muscles to ease pain;
- Notify the HACc and CHSP Care Coordintion Unit; and
- Call 000 for an ambulance (or 112 from a mobile phone)

STANDARDS AND REFERENCES

Australian Red Cross Emergency REDiPlan November 2009

Victorian WorkCover Safety 2007

Occupational health and Safety (OHS) Act 1985

FORMS AND RECORDS

Working in Heat Procedures for HACC andf CHSP Staff

DEFINITIONS

Light duties - Means performing light hand or arm movements e.g. making beds, washing dishes, dusting, cleaning toilets, preparation of meals (not cooking).

Moderate duties - Means walking about with moderate lifting and pushing e.g. mopping floors, cleaning baths and showers, shopping, fitting of aids such as splints, callipers, toileting.

Heavy duties - Means working with heavy lifting and pushing eg cooking, vacuuming, cleaning windows, ironing, lighting fires and stoves, sweeping outside paths and verandahs.

HAQCC nad CHSP staff - An employee of the Pyrenees Shire Council employed to assess, manage, coordinate and or undertake HACC duties in the home of a HACC consumer.

Home and Community Care (HACC) Program and Commonwealth Hme Support Program (CHSP) - Joint Commonwealth, State and Local Government funded programs that fund basic maintenance and support services to help frail older people and younger people with disabilities to continue to live in their community.

HACC Clients - A person who has been assessed as in need of assistance with daily tasks of living in their home.

APPENDIX 8.5– Heat Stress Policy – All Staff

Heat Stress Policy- All Staff

Version: 1.0 Last modified: 1/09/16 File no: pyr-09-202
Responsible officer: OH & S Officer Next Review: 24/10/2018

PURPOSE:

To provide the mechanism by which all personnel are aware of safe work practices and first aid requirements, including medical treatment for employees and contractors effected by heat cramp, heat stress or heat exhaustion.

SCOPE:

Extends to require Managers and Supervisors to identify the risk of exposure when working in hot conditions and to ensure that safe working procedures are in place and communicated. It also requires employees on site to be able to identify symptoms of illness caused by heat exposure, to apply first aid processes, and to determine whether further medical assistance is required.

An outdoors worker is defined as any department employee who in the course of their duties is required to work outdoors.

ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILTIES:

RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers and Supervisors of Work Sites are responsible to ensure that worksites are subject to a THERMAL CONDITIONS RISK ASSESSMENT.

Assessments are to be undertaken in conjunction with Occupational Health & Safety Representatives and employees.

In undertaking RISK ASSESSMENTS the responsible Manager or Supervisor shall have regard for and ensure the following:

- Personnel undertaking assessments are trained in the identification of environmental heat conditions which could expose employees to illness.
- Meal and rest breaks can be taken in cool and shaded areas.
- Whether additional staff can be redeployed to share workloads.
- Reducing time on hot work sites by job rotation.
- Whether tasks can be re-scheduled so that labour intensive activities can be performed during earlier parts of the day.
- Can Engineering controls be adopted to provide shade structures for employees working long periods in the sun?
- Isolation of hot working processes if applicable.

- Ensure employees wear the lightest clothing that provides adequate protection in accordance with U.V. Radiation policy.
- When allocating work tasks consider the individuals physical capabilities when planning work schedules.

Workplace and Worksite Heat Stress Assessment
As with U.V. Radiation, Heat Stress can be a hazard for any employee who spends prolonged periods working outdoors during periods of hot weather conditions.

Heat Stress Assessments need to be undertaken for worksites and Contracts where environmental and climatic conditions dictate. Assessments are to form part of Safety Plans with respect to the Assets & Infrastructure Business Unit.

Heat Stress Risk Assessments when carried out will identify both systems of work and employees that are exposed to circumstances associated with Heat Stress and the mechanisms for reducing or minimise the incidence of Heat Stress occurring.

The Assessment is to be undertaken by Managers and Supervisors who have a sound knowledge of the work processes, in conjunction with employees and site Health & Safety Representatives. Assessments are to be carried out using the Heat Stress Assessment checklist and the Risk Control Report and in combination represent a risk control plan for the worksite. (Refer to Work Instruction: Heat Stress (Below))

Follow up assessments need to be undertaken when control measures are implemented to monitor effectiveness or changed circumstance.

Worksite Induction and Training
In accordance with Site Specific Safety Plans site induction meetings shall reference Heat Stress requirements applicable to the works, including measures identified through assessment.

Site Induction Meetings shall include subcontractors engaged to perform work. In conducting Site Induction Meetings Supervisors shall ensure that new employees receive induction training which covers the topics of acclimatisation, the need for frequent drinking of water to avoid dehydration, use of clothing, symptoms of heat illness (refer work instruction) and initial first aid treatment.

New employees will be allowed a period of acclimatisation and will be directed to undertake lighter duties for a couple of days if working in hot conditions, this will also apply to employees returning from illness or leave.

Managers are to ensure that Supervisors are provided with training to recognise potential heat stress situations and to implement measures to minimise heat stress.

Safety Audits
Safety audits undertaken on Contractors and the Assets & Development Business Unit will be carried out using Supplier Audits Procedure or IMS - Internal Audits Procedure and will

include compliance to Heat Stress requirements.

A copy of the Work Instruction to identify and manage heat stress illness is to be displayed at Work Depots and Site Huts for ease of reference.

STANDARDS & REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health & Safety Act, 2004
- Heat Stress Policy Statement
- IMS - Internal Audits Procedure
- Supplier Audits Procedure
- Central Records File: PYR-09-202

FORMS & RECORDS:

Heat Stress Assessment Checklist
Heat Stress Risk Control Report

WORK INSTRUCTION
Heat Stress

The following instructions serve as a guide and reference to enable employees and supervisors to identify symptoms and initial first aid treatment for heat related illness.

1. Heat Cramp

Heat Cramp is caused by the loss of body salts; and

Symptoms are characterised by painful muscle spasms of the limbs or abdomen;

Management

Rest in cool place;

Do not massage affected area;

Gently stretch affected area; and

Apply ice packs (according to time limits for safe application).

2. Heat Exhaustion

Heat Exhaustion is caused by insufficient water intake to balance losses due to sweating.

Symptoms are characterised by clammy moist skin, weakness, extreme fatigue, nausea, headache and weak pulse.

Management

- Move employee to a cool place;
- Apply cold Packs to Major Arteries;
- Spray intermittently with water or apply wet cloths to exposed skin;
- Give plenty of water if conscious;
- Ensure a staff member stays with the employee until recovery and
- Call for medical assistance and notify HACC and CHSP Care Coordination Cell.

3. Heat Stroke

Heat Stroke is caused when the body's core temperature rises to high and the body's internal heat regulating mechanism fail. The condition, although not common, can be FATAL.

Symptoms are characterised by hot dry skin, rapidly rising body temperature, disorientation, collapse, convulsions and loss of consciousness.

Management

The employee should be cooled as quickly as possible by removing excess clothing, cover with damp cloths or towel, fan but do not over cool.

Call for medical assistance as soon as possible

Notify HACC and CHSP Care Coordination cell.

APPENDIX 8.6 - Public Health Information Brochure – Preventing Heat-Related Illness'

Attach PDF brochure here

APPENDIX 8.7 – Cooling Centres

A **cooling center** is an air-conditioned public space set up by local authorities to temporarily deal with the health effects of a heat wave. **Cooling centers** are meant to prevent hyperthermia caused by heat, humidity, and poor air quality.

The Pyrenees Shire has identified the following cooling centres:

Beaufort Community Resource Centre

- Indoor;
- Air conditioned;
- Water available;
- Tea and coffee making facilities available;
- Within walking distance to shops;
- Internet facilities available; and
- Open business hours only.

Beaufort Swimming Pool

- Outdoor facility;
- Some shaded areas;
- Life Guard on duty ??
- Toddler and adult pools; and
- Pool to remain open until 9pm on days of extreme heat.

Avoca Information & Community Centre

- Indoor;
- Air conditioned;
- Water available;
- Tea and coffee making facilities available;
- Within walking distance to shops;
- Internet facilities available; and
- Open business hours only

Avoca Swimming Pool

- Outdoor facility;
- Some shaded areas;
- Life Guard on duty ??
- Toddler and adult pools; and
- Pool to remain open until 9pm on days of extreme heat.

Activation Process:

1. Heatwave forecast received by MRM
2. Managers of the facilities identified as cooling centres notified.
3. Manager's roster staff to ensure adequate staff available at cooler places.
4. Customer Service Staff notified of Cooling Places.

APPENDIX 8.8 – Heatwave Alert Messages

[Date]

HEATWAVE ALERT ISSUED

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast temperatures above heat health thresholds for the Pyrenees Shire for three days from **[insert date/s]** with extremely high temperatures forecast to reach maximums of **[insert temperatures]**.

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

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

• keep out of the heat - look for shade and wear a hat;

• drink plenty of water;

• naturally cool your home - close windows/blinds in daytime;

• talk to your health service if you have a health issue;

• check on people who may struggle in the heat; and

• help people who are feeling unwell.

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

Pyrenees Shire Council CEO **[insert name]** said people needed to ensure their air-conditioners were in good working order, they drank plenty of water and had an alternate place to go if their home was not adequately prepared to cope with the heatwave conditions.

“Can you go to a neighbour or relative’s place?” CEO **[insert name]** asked. “Can you assist a neighbour or family member if they need somewhere that is better equipped than their own home?

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

For further information on how to better cope with heatwave conditions, contact the Pyrenees SC Customer Service centre **[number of heatwave hotline]**

Internal Communication Message

[Date]

Heat Health Alert

Pyrenees Shire Council has been issued with a 'High Temperature Heat Health Alert' from the Department of Health for **[Insert Date/s]** and has been advised to prepare to activate its Heatwave Plan to support members of the community who may be vulnerable during high temperatures.

The temperature is predicted to reach **[Insert temperature/s]** on **[Insert Date/s]**. This forecast temperature, if reached will trigger our 'Heat Health' response plan.

While this forecast may change during the next few days, the Pyrenees Shire Pyrenees Shire Council urges all staff to be aware of the possible effects of extreme temperature and take appropriate precautions against them. Also note the Pyrenees Shire Council policy on working in the heat. This policy document can be located on the intranet by navigating to:

Path to 'Working in Heat' policy ……..

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

• keep out of the heat - look for shade and wear a hat;

• drink plenty of water;

• naturally cool your home - close windows/blinds in daytime;

• talk to your health service if you have a health issue;

• check on people who may struggle in the heat; and

• help people who are feeling unwell.

You will be advised of any changes in in the forecast and whether this heat health alert will be escalated or withdrawn.

Any further advice can be obtained by contacting **[Insert Name and Contact Details]**.

External Communication Message

[Date]

Heat Health Alert

Pyrenees Shire Council has been issued with a 'High Temperature Heat Health Alert' from the Department of Health for **[Insert Date/s]** and has been advised to prepare to activate its Heatwave Plan to support members of the community who may be vulnerable during high temperatures.

The temperature is predicted to reach **[Insert temperature/s]** on **[Insert Date/s]**. This forecast temperature, if reached will trigger our 'Heat Health' response plan.

While this forecast may change during the next few days, the Pyrenees Shire Pyrenees Shire Council urges all organisations with vulnerable clients to be aware of the possible effects of extreme temperature and take appropriate precautions against them.

This information is forwarded to you in accordance with Pyrenees Shire Council's Heatwave Plan. Please place your heatwave plan in a state of readiness. A Department of Health information brochure titled 'Staying Healthy in the Heat' has been attached.

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

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

You will be advised of any changes in in the forecast and whether this heat health alert will be escalated or withdrawn.

Further advice and resources can be downloaded from Pyrenees Shire Council's website : www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au or from www.health.vic.gov.au

Any further advice can be obtained by contacting **[Insert Name and Contact Details]**.

APPENDIX 8 – Heat Health Checklists

Heat Health Checklist for Home Community Care Workers

When a heat health alert is issued, the following should be checked by HACC and CHSP Staff:

Question	Tick If YES	Action to take if answer is NO
Is the client indoors?		You should encourage the client to come indoors by 11am and explain that today is a predicted heatwave day.
Does the client have an air conditioner? Is the air conditioner on?		Air conditioner should be switched on when one is available.
Have all curtains and blinds been closed?		All curtains and blinds should be closed
Have meals for the day been reviewed?		Discuss alternatives for changing meals eg replacing hot meals with cold salads
Does the client have passive activities planned for the afternoon?		The client should be encouraged to remain indoors and participate in non-physical type activities.
Is clothing worn by the client minimised?		The client should be encouraged and/or assisted to remove unnecessary clothing.
Does the client have access to cool water?		Place a jug of cool water out for the client to drink during the day. Place another jug in the fridge for later on. Encourage the client to drink adequate amounts and eat icy poles.
Does the client live alone? Is the client staying home for the day?		Check to see if someone will be calling around or phoning in the afternoon. If still NO, then notify the Home Community Care Services Coordinator so that phone contact can be arranged.

In addition to the above, the Home Community Care HACC and CHSP staff should encourage clients to:

- Monitor the temperature inside the house and aim to keep the house around 25°C if possible;
- Rest during the hottest part of the day in the coolest part of the house;
- Use wet face cloths or the like to increase comfort; and
- Be aware that it is very hot and they should be extra careful to look after themselves

If there are any concerns about the health of the client, the HACC and CHSP Care Coordinator should be contacted immediately.

Reminder: HACC s and CHSP staff should take regular breaks on hot days and drink plenty of water. Don't forget to look after yourselves.

Heat Health Checklist for Care Accommodation Facilities

When a heat health alert is issued, the following should be attended to by **11:00am**:

Question	Tick If YES	Action to take if answer is NO
Have staff been informed of the high forecast temperatures and know what to do to protect themselves and the residents?		Ensure all staff are informed of the expected heatwave and what they need to do to protect themselves and the residents.
Are all residents inside?		All residents need to be brought indoors.
Have all curtains and blinds been closed?		All curtains and blinds need to be be closed.
Have meals for the day been reviewed?		Discuss alternatives for changing meals eg replacing hot meals with cold salads
Have activities been reviewed to limit physical exertion?		Passive activities should be arranged such as board games and reading.
Is clothing worn by the residents minimised?		The residents should be encouraged and/or assisted to remove unnecessary clothing.
Has frequency of fluid been increased?		Offer and encourage the residents to drink adequate amounts and to eat icy poles.
Are signs of dehydration being monitored frequently?		Monitor residents closely for early signs of heat illness and initiate appropriate treatment when needed.

In addition to the above, the following should be attended to by **2:00pm:**

Has the internal temperature been measured?		Measure the temperature inside the building where residents are located.
Can residents be moved to cooler areas where the internal temperature is 25°C?		Where possible, move residents to air conditioned rooms.
Have residents been encouraged to rest in bed/chair?		Encourage residents to rest during the hottest part of the day.
Have wet face cloths been offered?		Offer wet face cloths to reduce body temperature and increase comfort.
Are signs of dehydration being monitored frequently?		Monitor body temperatures, pulse rates, blood pressure and hydration.
Have staff been encouraged to take regular breaks and drink plenty of water?		Encourage staff to take regular breaks and drink plenty of water.