State Emergency Management Plan

Extreme Heat Sub-Plan

Edition 2.0

Emergency Management Victoria

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VICTORIA State Government

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Acknowledgement of Country

EMV acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waterways on which we live.

We honour and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ongoing strength and resilience despite the past and present impacts of colonisation and dispossession. We acknowledge the important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people play as leaders in their communities and across Victoria.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent the world's oldest living culture. We celebrate and respect this continuing culture and strive to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as they draw on the strength of their community, families and culture to build a bright future.

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1. Introduction

Extreme heat and heatwaves have led to health consequences that have caused more deaths (cumulative over a period of time) than any other natural disaster in Australia and are often referred to as a 'silent killer'.[1] According to the Climate Science Report 2024, Victoria is experiencing increased heatwave frequency, intensity and duration and an increase in the number of hot and very hot days, which is projected to further increase in the coming decades.[2]

An extreme heat event in Victoria has the potential to cause widespread impacts, including:[3]

- Loss of life, increased illness and heat-related injuries
- Damage to critical infrastructure
- Disruptions to electricity and water supply
- Transport disruptions
- Impacts to pets, livestock, wildlife and flora.

In the coming decades, Victoria is projected to experience further increases in heatwave frequency, intensity, and duration. The consequences of extreme heat events have cost the Victorian economy on average $87 million a year.[4] This cost is projected to rise to $179 million a year by 2030, as extreme heat events become more frequent.[5] Extreme heat can have serious and sometimes life-threatening impacts on communities, often exacerbating challenges with mental health, domestic violence and cost of living. While some social groups or individuals with specific health issues may be at increased risk, the impacts of extreme heat extend beyond this. Limited access to cooling, hydration, and healthcare can worsen these risks, particularly in remote or low-income areas. Social isolation and language barriers may further prevent people from seeking help or understanding forecasts or public health warnings. Extreme heat and heatwave events can have a lasting psychosocial impact.[6]

As detailed in Appendix A, people more at risk from the effects of extreme heat include, but are not limited to:

- People of a certain age or life stage, such as senior citizens or young children
- People with existing health conditions, injuries, disorders or other health issues

[1] Coates et al: Coates, Lucinda, et al. (2014), Exploring 167 Years of Vulnerability: An Examination of Extreme Heat Events in Australia 1844 to 2010, Environmental Science & Policy, vol. 42, pp. 33–44.

[2] Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2024), Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024, pp 54-60

[3] Emergency Management Victoria (2023), Emergency Risks in Victoria 2023 Report, p. 97.

[4] Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2019), The Economic Impact of Heatwaves on Victoria

[5] Victoria State Government (2022), Building Victoria's Climate Resilience, p. 8.

[6] Sevoyan, A., Hugo, G., Feist, H., Tan, G., McDougall, K., Tan, Y., & Spoehr, J. (2013), Impact of climate change on disadvantaged groups: issues and interventions, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility

- People taking medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat, or taking medications requiring storage at a certain temperature
- People with particular social or economic circumstances
- People outdoors during extreme heat.

While preventing extreme heat is not feasible, adaptation and control measures at state, regional, local, community, and individual levels are essential to reducing the consequences. The arrangements outlined in this Sub-Plan provide the most effective way to ensure impacts to the community and minimised and managed.

Extreme heat events can occur in isolation, particularly at a regional or local level, but they also often act as a precursor to, or exacerbate, other Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies, contributing to and compounding the risks, impacts and consequences.[7] For example, extreme heat can increase the likelihood of bushfires, which may spread rapidly under hot and dry conditions. Power outages are also more likely, putting pressure on emergency services and particularly impacting those more at risk, as loss of power removes access to cooling, disrupts medical equipment and refrigerated medications, and compounds risks across health and transport systems.[8] Additionally, the effects of heatwaves can persist even after temperatures ease, as people and animals, infrastructure, health services, and ecosystems need time and resources to recover. The interdependencies between the consequences of extreme heat events mean that impacts in one system, for example impacts to the electricity supply system can create or amplify impacts in others, such as health (where electricity is needed for cooling), transport (where power is required to run public transport) or telecommunications.

Extreme heat events are identified as one of Victoria's top 18 emergency risks in the Emergency Risks in Victoria Report 2023, and are also identified as a key risk across all eight Victorian emergency management regions.

Control and Coordination Arrangements

To support an effective response in Victoria, the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) coordinates relevant agencies, and is responsible for ensuring effective control arrangements are in place and consequences are being managed effectively.

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) outlines which agencies are responsible for managing the response to likely and actual consequences of an extreme heat event, such as health impacts and energy disruptions. Appropriate control arrangements will be established to effectively respond to the most significant consequences of an extreme heat event in Victoria.

Control of response activities during an extreme heat event are undertaken by the relevant Control Agencies identified in the SEMP, with this Sub-Plan providing the overarching coordination across those arrangements. Where the consequences of an extreme heat event escalate into a Class 2 emergency, the relevant Control Agency Officer in Charge

[7] National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (2013), Managing Heatwave Impacts Under Climate Change

[8] Inspector-General for Emergency Management (2010), Review of the 2009 Heatwave in Victoria: Final Report

(CAOiC) may appoint a State Controller to lead and manage the operational response to that specified form of emergency. The EMC will ensure effective coordination of readiness and response activities through the State Coordination Team (SCoT) and other operational mechanisms as outlined in this Sub-Plan.

1.1 Document Purpose

This Sub-Plan contextualises the current emergency management arrangements and roles and responsibilities for planning, mitigation, preparedness, response (including relief) and recovery from extreme heat events, regardless of their duration. This Sub-Plan should be read in conjunction with the SEMP. While this Sub-Plan focuses on readiness and response coordination arrangements for extreme heat events, it complements broader efforts to build community resilience, preparedness and recovery in the face of the increasing risk of extreme heat.

Operational activities of agencies or businesses are covered within their respective operational plans. Agency specific operational or business continuity plans may be enacted to manage the impacts or consequences of extreme heat events, without state level arrangements being triggered.

1.1.1 Document Audience

This Sub-Plan recognises that in emergency management, supporting communities to be safer and more resilient is the shared responsibility of all Victorians, not just the emergency management sector.

This Sub-Plan is targeted at government departments and agencies with a role in emergency management.

1.1.2 Acronyms

A list of acronyms referenced throughout this Sub-Plan is included at Appendix B.

1.1.3 Hyperlinks

This Sub-Plan refers to a range of existing extreme heat and heatwave resources, including documents and websites. This Sub-Plan does not seek to duplicate information contained in these resources and instead provides links to where further information can be obtained.

1.2 Sub-Plan Preparation, Approval and Review

This Sub-Plan is an extension of the SEMP which is prepared under Part 6A of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*. This Sub-Plan aligns with the SEMP and was prepared with regard to the Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans. It is approved by the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) as the approver of the SEMP under Part 6A of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

The Sub-Plan was current at the time of publication and remains in effect until modified, superseded or withdrawn. The Sub-Plan will be reviewed no later than December 2028 in

accordance with the Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

1.3 Sub-Plan Activation

Arrangements in this Sub-Plan apply on a continuing basis and do not require formal activation. The EMC will consider escalating the arrangements in this Sub-Plan when extreme heat or heatwave conditions are abnormally high and have the potential for significant consequences for the general population, including consequences for essential services, energy and water supply, health and wellbeing and the environment.

2. Extreme Heat Definitions

2.1 Extreme Heat

Extreme heat refers to a single day or short period of unusually high temperatures that pose a significant risk to health, infrastructure, and services, regardless of whether it meets the technical criteria for a heatwave.[9]

2.2 Heatwave

A heatwave is defined as a period of at least three consecutive days during which both the maximum and minimum temperatures are unusually high for a specific location. This assessment is relative to the local climate and historical weather patterns.[10]

2.2.1 Excess Heat Factor (EHF)

The Excess Heat Factor (EHF) is the index adopted by the Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) for heatwave monitoring and forecasting in Australia. The EHF is the method by which heatwaves are classified by intensity. The EHF is calculated based on average daily temperatures over three consecutive days. This is measured in relation to the local long-term climate (by comparing the three days to a climatological threshold for that particular location) and to the local recent past (by comparing the three days to observed temperatures over the previous thirty days at that particular location).[11] The EHF and Heatwave Warnings are further detailed in Section 4.2.1.

2.3 Extreme Heat Event

For the purpose of this Sub-Plan, extreme heat events refer to periods of unusually high temperatures that can occur over a single day or multiple days, and can significantly impact people, infrastructure, services, and the environment. Extreme heat events include low-

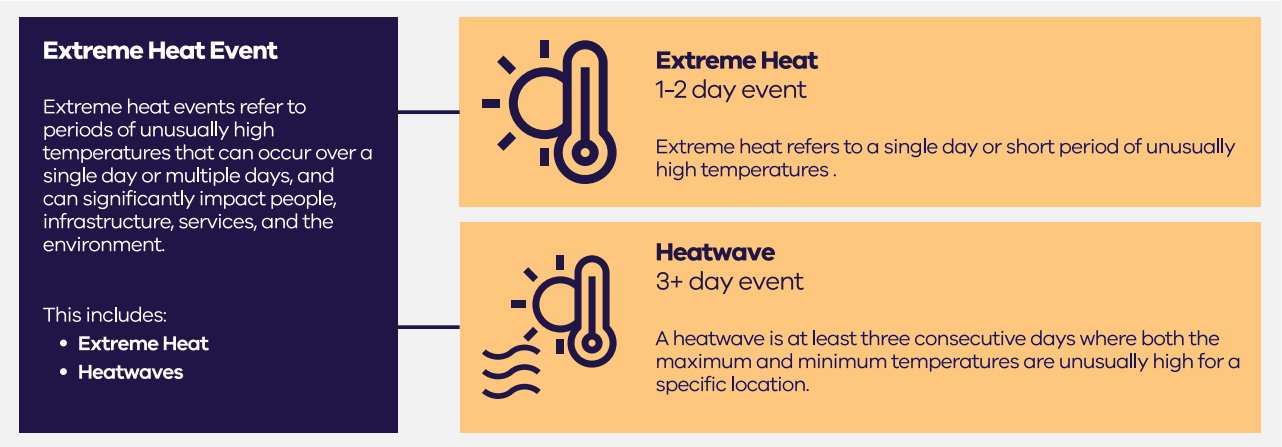
[9] Government of South Australia (2024), SA Health Extreme Heat and Heatwave Strategy, p. 5

[10] The Bureau of Meteorology (2025), What is a heatwave?

[11] The Bureau of Meteorology (2024), Heatwave Service Level Specification, Appendix 1: Excess Heat Factor Calculation, p. 17

intensity, severe and extreme heatwaves (three or more consecutive days of high temperatures) or one or two days of abnormal high temperatures which would impact the general population and include consequences for essential services, energy and water supply, health and wellbeing and the environment.

Figure 1: Diagram definition of extreme heat events



3. Consequences of Extreme Heat Events

Whether an extreme heat event is a single day or a heatwave, the impact and consequences of the event are largely determined by two key factors:

- The physical and behavioural preparedness for extreme heat, including acclimatisation (or lack thereof) to location, seasonal changes, and isolated periods of extreme weather.
- The ability to mitigate, manage and reduce the exposure and impacts of extreme heat.

The consequences of extreme heat events can be far-reaching and significant, affecting Victoria's social, built and natural environments and economic productivity. Extreme heat events can cause heat-related health problems, especially in those who may be more at risk due to age, health, environment, social and economic circumstances, or occupation. They can also affect the health of domestic animals, agriculture and Victoria's flora and fauna.

Consequences for critical infrastructure and essential services may largely be due to compromised operation or failure, including power disruption or outages, public transport disruption and impacts to telecommunications and water supply. The dependency of numerous systems on power supply makes it particularly vital in heatwaves. The economic consequences for extreme heat events, particularly prolonged events, can be long-lasting. Certain industries may experience a decline in productivity while others may see an increase in wastage, particularly those dependent on other systems like power.

Extreme heat events often do not occur in isolation. Concurrent events like bushfires may exacerbate consequences or impact the resources available to respond to an extreme heat event.

Table 1: Common consequences of extreme heat events in Victoria

Consequence Category	Description
Human Health	Extreme heat can cause a range of heat-related issues, from mild to fatal, affecting all people regardless of their risk. It can place significant and prolonged pressure on health services, including General Practitioners, ambulance and hospitals.
Essential Services	Extreme heat can cause power outages, impacts to air conditioning, water, telecommunications, transport, critical and health infrastructure and emergency response systems, compounding the effects of heat. Power, water and transport when impacted has cascading consequences on critical infrastructure.
Transport	Extreme heat can lead to rail buckling, road damage and transport delays or cancellations. This contributes to

		congestion, supply chain issues, and passenger health and safety risks.
	Economy	Heat-related disruptions and impacts to infrastructure can significantly interrupt supply chains and impact industry and business continuity. Agriculture is also vulnerable, with risks to crops and livestock resulting in substantial economic losses, whilst the construction, health, manufacturing and mining sectors may also experience economic impacts.
	Education	Children and young people are more susceptible to heat-related health issues. Schools and early childhood facilities must manage heat risks through preparedness and response strategies, though they do not close based on temperature alone.
	Wildlife and Pets	Heat stress affects animals and plants, increasing bushfire risk and causing wildlife die-offs. Livestock and companion animals may suffer heat stress, requiring proactive care and protection.
	Fire Hazard	Extreme heat events have a direct link to increased bushfire activity. High temperatures increase the incidence of thunderstorms and lightning, resulting in more fire ignitions, particularly in the setting of a storm.[12] While fuel loads may increase, sustained heat can also reduce vegetation growth in some areas.

[12] Modelling and Simulation Society of Australia and New Zealand (2023), Modelling the Probability of Lightning-Caused Ignitions in Australia, p. 1124

4. Mitigation

4.1 Mitigation Arrangements

There are a range of effective actions that can reduce the severity of extreme heat impacts. Promoting these actions and supporting the health and wellbeing of Victorians is a responsibility shared by all Victorians, service providers, community organisations, local governments and state government departments. Throughout each year, agencies undertake pre-emptive community messaging to prepare the community for the effects of heat.

Refer to the Table 8 of the SEMP for the list of key heatwave mitigation activities and agencies who participate to deliver these activities.

4.2 Emergency Information and Warnings

4.2.1 Bureau of Meteorology Heatwave Service

The Bureau provides the National Heatwave Service which operates between the start of October and the end of March each year. This National Heatwave Service provides the Victorian community, as well as health, emergency management and relevant agencies, with essential heatwave forecasts and warnings that are timely and accurate. Additionally, the Bureau hosts the Heatwave Knowledge Centre to support sector and public education.

The primary components of the National Heatwave Service include:

- Forecasts of heatwaves likely in the next seven days.
- Warnings of any severe or extreme heatwave within the next four days.

The Bureau also develops the Heatwave Decision Support Product (HDSP), which is provided to health and emergency service agencies and includes aggregated information on the weather district and town level.

Heatwave Forecast

The Bureau provides Heatwave Forecasts as part of its routine services, which are issued at approximately 1500 hrs daily during the heatwave season (October to March). The Heatwave Forecast service comprises of the National Heatwave Assessment and Forecast Maps, which provide a broadscale picture of where the significant heatwaves are expected to occur across Australia over the coming seven days. The national maps of heatwave areas are accompanied by a text description of the heatwave areas shown on the map, for accessibility purposes.[13]

[13] Bureau of Meteorology (2024), Heatwave Service Level Specification: Season 2024-2025, p. 12

Heatwave Warnings

Heatwave Warnings are a non-routine service provided by the Bureau and are issued throughout the year when Severe or Extreme heatwaves are forecast. A Heatwave Warning can be issued up to one day in advance of the heatwave starting (typically at 1500 hrs) and are issued at weather district level and include severity levels and general safety advice. The warnings have a threshold of 10% of the weather district being affected, in alignment with Bureau warnings for fire weather and severe thunderstorms. Heatwave Warnings are aligned with the Australian Warning System (AWS).[14]

Heatwaves are classified into three intensity-levels (Low-Intensity Heatwave, Severe Intensity Heatwave or Extreme Intensity Heatwave), based on EHF values exceeding the defined EHF intensity thresholds within an event (see Table 2 for a description of heatwave intensities). Whilst Low-Intensity heatwaves are included in the Heatwave Forecast, Heatwave Warnings are only issued for Severe or Extreme heatwave conditions.

Table 2: Description of the Bureau of Meteorology's Heatwave Warning intensity classifications[15]

Heatwave Intensity	EHF Severity Level	Description
Extreme Heatwave	>3	Extreme heatwaves are rare, posing problem for people who don't take precautions to keep cool, even for healthy people. Anyone who works or exercises outdoors can be at risk. Extreme heatwaves can cause widespread health issues and can impact infrastructure such as power and transport.
Severe Heatwave	>1 and <3	Severe heatwaves are less frequent. They are likely to be more challenging for those more at risk. This can include those over the age of 65, pregnant women, young children and babies, people with acute or chronic health problems, people who are socially isolated and people with limited ways to keep cool, such as those without air conditioning or living in buildings that heat up easily
Low-Intensity Heatwave	>0 and <1	Low-intensity heatwaves are frequent during summer. Most people can cope during these heatwaves.

[14] Bureau of Meteorology (2022), National Heatwave Warning Framework, p. 11

[15] Bureau of Meteorology (2022), National Heatwave Warning Framework, p. 27; The Bureau of Meteorology (2025), Heatwave Knowledge Centre: What is a Heatwave?

4.2.2 Heat Health Warning

The Department of Health (DH) issues Heat Health Warnings to subscribers such as hospitals, health and community service providers, local and Victorian state government and the department's program areas. The Heat Health Warnings provide an early notification of forecast or actual extreme heat or heatwave.

DH generally issues Heat Health Warnings from October through March, though this can be extended if required.

Heat Health Warnings are triggered by:

- A new Heatwave Warning by the Bureau based on weather district of date of event, or
- When forecast high maximum and minimum temperatures do not meet the criteria for a Heatwave Warning from the Bureau, but the Chief Health Officer (CHO) considers that a heat health risk exists.

4.2.3 Public Information and Warnings

The relevant Control Agency or the EMC (on advice of multiple Control Agencies through SCoT in readiness) may issue warnings about a forecast extreme heat event through the State's warning platform (VicEmergency) and will decide if warnings need to be issued on VicEmergency during an extreme heat event. VicEmergency aligns with the AWS.

Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning level warnings can be issued on VicEmergency, depending on the severity of the event. An Advice message could be issued before the worst of the heat is forecast, but only if the event threatens to impact communities. A Watch and Act or Emergency Warning could be issued during a long-running event, if there is a continued and demonstrated threat to health or lives.

Additionally, the VicEmergency platform and its linked social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter/X) may not issue formal warnings for low-intensity heatwaves, but they are used to share community health and safety information, such as heat health tips, or to amplify messaging from other departments, such as DH. This ensures timely and consistent communication with the community, even when formal warnings are not activated.

4.3 Urban Planning and Mitigating Extreme Heat

Urban planning, design and building standards are critical to mitigating the impact of extreme heat across the built environment. In urban environments, integrated water management, along with the placement and extent of the tree canopy (for shade), play a significant role in providing improved comfort during days of high temperatures and helping to reduce the impact of the urban heat island effect. Local government provides a pivotal role in mitigating extreme heat through street tree planting, management of open space and design of public places.

5. Planning

5.1 State Emergency Management Plan

The SEMP outlines Victoria's emergency management arrangements providing for the mitigation of, response to and recovery from emergencies, and specifies the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management. This Sub-Plan does not duplicate information contained in the SEMP.

5.1.1 SEMP Sub-Plans

The known and likely consequences of extreme heat events could be significant and trigger a Class 1 or Class 2 emergency, such as a significant or prolonged energy disruption, widespread transport disruption or health emergency. The following SEMP Sub-Plans listed in Table 3 outline the mitigation, response (including relief), recovery and specific roles and responsibilities relevant to those emergencies.

Table 3: List of SEMP Sub-Plans relevant to extreme heat events

SEMP Sub-Plan	Description
SEMP Energy Sub-Plan	This Sub-Plan provides information about energy supply chains and infrastructure, risks and consequences of disruption, and the arrangements for energy emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
SEMP Health Emergencies Sub-Plan	This Sub-Plan provides the arrangements and coordination of roles and responsibilities for the management of health emergencies in Victoria. It also includes guidance regarding mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery activities in line with the SEMP.
SEMP Public Transport Disruption Sub-Plan	This Sub-Plan is for significant and protracted public transport disruptions. The Sub-Plan applies to emergencies only and does not relate to planned disruptions or operational incidents. This Sub-Plan complements the SEMP by providing detail of specific arrangements for public transport disruptions, where DTP is either the control agency or a support agency.
SEMP Bushfire Sub-Plan	This Sub-Plan outlines the current arrangements for the management of bushfires in Victoria. This supports a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach and reflects a shared responsibility for bushfire management. In alignment with the SEMP, this plan contextualises the current arrangements, roles and responsibilities for bushfire mitigation, planning, preparedness, response (including relief) and recovery.

5.1.2 Municipal and Regional Emergency Management Plans

Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs)[16] and Regional Emergency Management Plans (REMPs) are prepared as 'all hazards, all emergencies' plans relevant to the geographical footprint and are prepared as per the *Emergency Management Act 2013* by the relevant Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) or Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC). Specific heat related arrangements and roles and responsibilities may be included in MEMPs and REMPs or complementary plans at that planning tier.

All Councils should refer to impacts of extreme heat through their health and wellbeing plans as a requirement under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and plan for climate change under the *Climate Change Act 2017*. Many Victorian councils have Local Heat Management Plans as complementary plans to their MEMPs.

5.1.3 Complementary Plans

The below table lists other publicly available complementary plans relevant to managing the consequences of extreme heat events in Victoria.

Table 4: List of key documents and arrangements for extreme heat events in Victoria

Document	Description
Climate Change Adaption Action Plans	The Action Plans have been prepared across seven systems in Victoria that are vulnerable to climate impacts or critical to building our state's climate resilience: built environment, education and training, health and human services, natural environment, primary production, transport, and the water cycle. Together, these plans ensure an integrated response to climate change, including extreme heat.
Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan	This Plan guides the integration of arrangements for animal welfare with the State's formal emergency management arrangements to ensure that animal welfare is appropriately addressed in preparation for and response to any emergency.[17]
Victorian Response Plan for Heat Stress in Flying-Foxes	This Plan provides a framework to define the standards, policies, and arrangements for responding to flying-fox heat stress in Victoria, as well as measures for reducing the risk and impact of extreme heat events on flying-foxes.[18]

[16] MEMPs can be accessed via Council websites.

[17] Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (2024), Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan, Revision 3, p. 9

[18] Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (2023), Victorian Response Plan for Heat Stress in Flying Foxes, p. 4

5.2 Preparedness

Shared responsibility is a key component of preparedness for all emergencies. The SEMP outlines how important shared responsibility is across all phases of emergency management, including communities and individuals, having a level of responsibility for preparing for emergencies.

In the context of preparedness for extreme heat events, shared responsibility can encompass:

- Individuals actively planning and preparing heat management for themselves and persons in their care
- All sectors preparing to address the potential risk to operations, and plan for continued service provision including ensuring they have a heat policy in place for their employees, volunteers, customers and clients, including at-risk clients, and community member
- Non-government agencies preparing for increased service demand during heat events.

Reducing the impact and consequences of extreme heat events relies on individuals, communities, businesses, all levels of government and the not-for-profit sector all recognising the risk of heat, and taking the necessary action to protect themselves, their family, those more at risk (see Appendix A), neighbours, and the wider community, wherever possible.

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6. Readiness

6.1 Activation of Readiness Arrangements

The activation of these arrangements will be based on the potential or actual consequences of an extreme heat event. While trigger considerations, including the issuing of a Severe or Extreme Heatwave Warning by the Bureau, as well as mechanisms such as the SCoT, support planning, readiness, and response coordination, ultimate responsibility for establishing control functions rests with the relevant CAOiC and the EMC.

State Controller/s may be identified and/or appointed in readiness, despite an extreme heat event not resulting in an emergency being declared that requires the appointment of a State Controller/s, particularly where the anticipated consequences do not eventuate or where impacts can be adequately managed within existing agency arrangements.

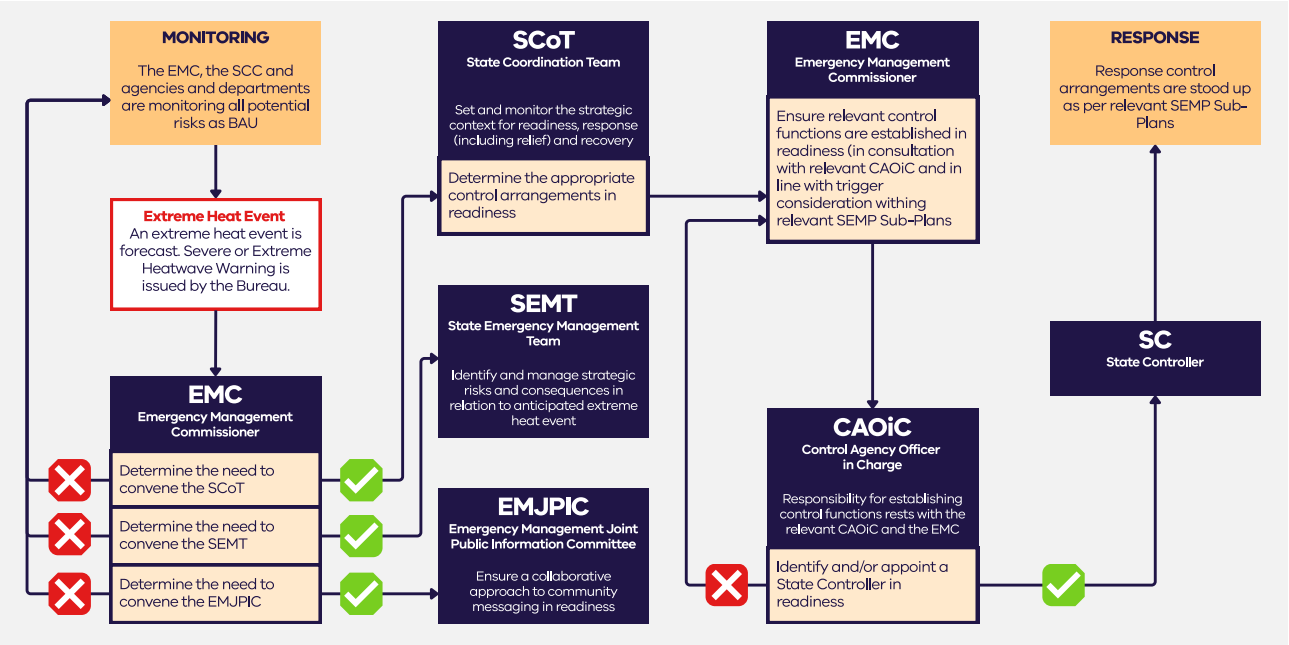
The State Control Centre (SCC) monitors prevailing weather conditions, in conjunction with the embedded meteorologist from the Bureau, and will notify the EMC of the potential for extreme heat and/or heatwave conditions being forecast. The EMC will consider a range of risk-based factors when determining whether to convene a SCoT meeting and initiate readiness arrangements for a forecast extreme heat event. These include, but are not limited to:

- Advice from the Bureau:
    - Issuance of a Severe or Extreme Heatwave Warning affecting one or more forecast districts
    - Forecast of multiple consecutive days of extreme heat, even if formal heatwave thresholds are not met, where health, infrastructure or service impacts are likely.
- Compounding and cascading risks:
    - Alignment of extreme heat days with elevated Fire Danger Ratings or Total Fire Ban declarations
    - Extreme heat coinciding with other emergencies in the landscape
    - Intelligence indicating cascading or compounding consequences across systems such as energy, health, water, or transport.
- Community impact considerations:
    - Anticipated significant impacts on populations that are more at risk (see Appendix A)
    - Presence of large public events or mass gatherings during forecast extreme heat periods where health and safety risks may be elevated
    - Known vulnerabilities in specific regions (e.g. previous incidents of heat stress, network constraints, specific community needs and circumstances, or limited access to cooling facilities).

- Agency advice or requests:
    - Requests from Control Agencies or support agencies for activation to enable coordination, information sharing, and readiness activities.

Taking the above into consideration, the EMC may convene a SCoT meeting to coordinate whole-of-government readiness actions, confirm priorities, and ensure alignment across agencies.

Figure 2: Process for the activation of readiness arrangements



6.2 Emergency Management Commissioner

Based on weather forecasts and in consultation with the SCoT and relevant Control Agencies, the EMC will:

- Ensure relevant control functions are established in readiness:
    - in consultation with the relevant CAOiC
    - in line with activation trigger considerations within relevant SEMP Sub-Plans.
- Determine the activation level of the SCC
- Determine if the Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee (EMJPIC) will be convened to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to community messaging.
- Request that SCoT representatives with roles and responsibilities related to extreme heat consequences ensure their organisation's arrangements are appropriate and report back.

Through the SCoT, the EMC will ensure there are effective strategies in place for the coordinated management of the impacts and consequences of the extreme heat event on the community.

6.3 State Coordination Team

The EMC (or authorised delegate) will, as necessary, convene the SCoT to set and monitor the strategic context for readiness, response (including relief) and recovery.

The SCoT supports readiness for planning in preparation for extreme heat events by:

- Supporting coordination functions and responsibilities of the EMC
- Determining the appropriate governance structure in readiness
- Determining the appropriate control arrangements in readiness
- Monitoring the strategic context for response and recovery coordination and advise the EMC about issues and actions[19]
- Monitoring the relevant SEMP Sub-Plan triggers and readiness activities to ensure appropriate control arrangements are in place
- Reviewing the Bureau's weather forecasts in conjunction with the Bureau's Heatwave Service
- Reviewing the Bureau's heatwave warnings to determine the need to convene over the duration of the extreme heat event to monitor the potential or actual instances of extreme heat impacts and consequences
- Ensuring there is an effective strategy in place for the coordinated management of the impact and consequences of the extreme heat event on the community, particularly for people that are more at risk
- Providing advice on the strategic priorities for a coordinated response (including relief) and recovery.

6.4 State Emergency Management Team

The EMC may convene the State Emergency Management Team (SEMT) in readiness to identify and manage strategic risks and consequences in relation to an anticipated extreme heat event, and to plan the actions of agencies to manage anticipated or likely risks and consequences. The SEMT will facilitate discussions to enable agencies to develop a consistent situational awareness regarding the emerging risks and will support the EMC in developing a plan for the management of any consequences as a result of the extreme heat event, outlining high-level actions of key agencies. The SEMT is also the mechanism through which governance structures and control arrangements are implemented in readiness, as determined by the SCoT.

[19] Emergency Management Victoria (2023), State Tier Emergency Management Governance Arrangements, Version 8, p. 8

6.5 Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee

The EMC may convene the EMJPIC in readiness to ensure a collaborative and consistent approach to community messaging. EMJPIC provides a forum for agencies and government departments to coordinate key messages, prepare joint communication materials and ensure that timely, accurate and consistent information is provided to the community ahead of a forecast extreme heat event.

7. Response

7.1 State Response Arrangements

Given the complexities associated with coordinating the response to the likely consequences of extreme heat, the below coordination arrangements will support effective response. State response coordination for extreme heat events is guided by the EMC under Section 39 of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*. A state-level response is considered the most effective approach due to the unpredictable nature and broad-reaching impacts of extreme heat, which can often coincide with other emergencies like bushfires.

The EMC (or authorised delegate) leads coordination at the state tier across relevant agencies, supported by the Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO), and is responsible for ensuring effective control arrangements are in place and consequences are being managed and/or coordinated effectively. Control Agencies and Lead RSAs are responsible for managing the response to likely and actual consequences of an extreme heat event.

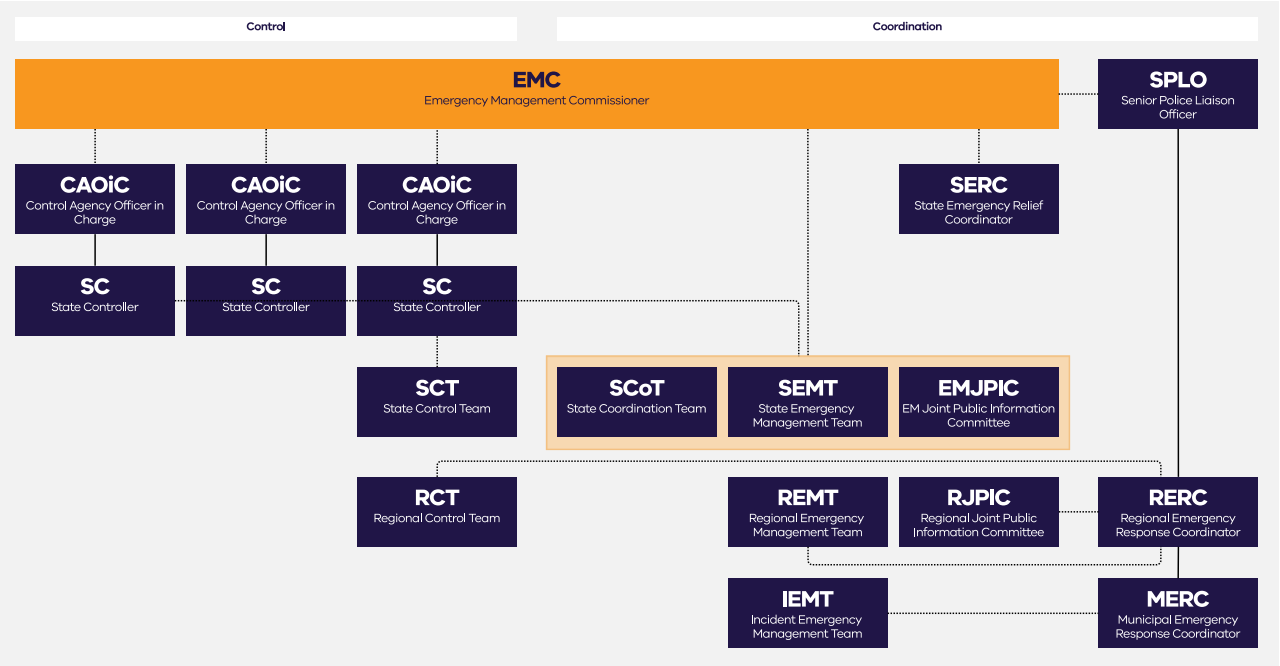
Where a consequence of extreme heat escalates into an emergency (e.g. Class 2 emergencies such as health or energy disruption), a State Controller may be appointed to lead the operational response for that emergency in line with existing operational arrangements outlined in the SEMP.

Supporting coordination mechanisms include:

- The SCoT, which oversees strategic coordination and determines governance structures during complex or concurrent emergencies and supports the coordination of resources across agencies and departments.
- The SEMT, which facilitates cross-agency situational awareness and consequence management.
- The State Control Team (SCT), which supports control functions and responsibilities for both Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies.

Consistent with the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and the SEMP, the EMC is ultimately responsible and accountable for the coordination of Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies, ensuring clear control and coordination arrangements are in place.

Figure 3: Overview of Extreme Heat Coordination Arrangements in Response



7.1.1 Emergency Management Commissioner

As outlined in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and further detailed in the SEMP, the EMC is responsible for maintain oversight and coordinating the response activities of Control Agencies and Lead RSAs.

The key functions of the EMC include:

- Ensure control arrangements are in place for Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies – in an extreme heat event this would be to manage any significant consequences that are likely or realised
- Be responsible for the coordination of the activities of agencies having roles or responsibilities in relation to the response to Class 1 or Class 2 emergencies as outlined in the SEMP
- Be responsible for consequence management for a major emergency by ensuring responsible agencies, as listed in the SEMP, are managing consequences within their portfolios
- Be responsible for coordinating recovery
- Ensure the relevant Minister is provided with timely and up-to-date information.

See Section 6.1 for additional detail as to the EMC responsibilities in relation to readiness.

Control Agencies, Lead RSAs and Participating Agencies are responsible for maintaining the continuity of services to the community and for minimising the adverse consequences of extreme heat on the community.

7.1.2 Senior Police Liaison Officer

Response coordination is undertaken at the State tier by the EMC, supported by the SPLO. The function of the SPLO is to provide advice to the EMC and manage requests to or from the Regional Emergency Response Coordinators (RERCs) and the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinators (MERCs). The role of the SPLO is outlined further in the SEMP. The EMC must take the advice of the SPLO into account for coordination functions relating to regional or municipal response.

7.1.3 Control Agencies

The SEMP outlines which agency is the Control Agency for a particular form of emergency. Control Agencies are primarily responsible for managing the response to a specified form of emergency.

Extreme heat events may result in, or exacerbate, a range of consequences (see Section 3) that may eventuate into one or more emergencies. In such cases, the relevant Control Agency identified in the SEMP will continue to be responsible for managing the response to that emergency type. Where an extreme heat event gives rise or contributes to a Class 2 emergency, the EMC, in consultation with the relevant CAOiC and the SCoT, will ensure that effective control and coordination arrangements are established based on the significant consequences. Noting the key consequences of an extreme heat event may result in one or more Class 2 emergencies, the relevant CAOiC is responsible for appointing a State Controller (see Section 7.1.4) to manage the response to that emergency.

Activation of control arrangements occurs in accordance with the SEMP and relevant SEMP Sub-Plans for that emergency type, and may scale over time, meaning different Control Agencies may be activated at different times and tiers over the course of an extreme heat event. Extreme heat events may involve multiple, concurrent emergencies and involve multiple agencies.

7.1.4 State Controller/s

A State Controller is responsible for leading and managing the operational response to a Class 2 emergency. One or more State Controller/s may be appointed where the consequences of an extreme heat event escalate into a Class 2 emergency (e.g. health emergency or energy disruption). However, under these arrangements there will be no appointment of a State Controller – Heat. The role and functions of a State Controller is defined in the SEMP.

The appointment of a State Controller by the CAOiC will be determined based on an assessment of the significant likely or realised impacts and consequences on the community, in consultation with the EMC. Whilst a State Controller/s may be appointed in readiness, based on the considerations outlined in Section 6, the CAOiC and relevant State Controller/s are responsible for establishing control arrangements in accordance with triggers and considerations outlined in existing SEMP Sub-Plans and agency operational plans.

In large and complex Class 2 emergencies, the State Controller may determine that control arrangements are required at incident and regional tiers in addition to the state tier, to effectively manage the emergency.

Where more than one State Controller is operational, each State Controller will lead the operational response for consequences within their designated portfolio area (e.g. health or energy). Coordination between multiple State Controller/s will be facilitated through the SCoT, and the EMC will oversee these arrangements to maintain effective control and to ensure coordinated consequence management.

7.1.5 Lead Response Support Agencies

As outlined in Table 10 in the SEMP, Lead RSAs provide services, personnel or material to support or assist a Control and/or a Coordination Agency, and/or members of the public during the response to a form of emergency, within the considered functional area.

Lead RSAs with roles and responsibilities for functional areas relevant to extreme heat events and known likely impacts are listed below. Lead RSAs will contribute operational arrangements through attendance in SCoT and SEMT.

Table 5: Lead RSAs with functional areas relevant to extreme heat events

Agency	Functional Area
Bureau of Meteorology	Weather
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Agriculture
	Animal Welfare (livestock and companion animals)
	Threatened Ecosystems and Species[20]
Department of Education	Education (school education and early childhood education)
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Human Services and Community Wellbeing
Department of Government Services	Local Government
	Public Telecommunications
Department of Health	Health Protection (public health)
	Health Services
Ambulance Victoria	Pre-hospital Health Command (as per the SEMP Health Emergencies Sub-Plan)
	Business and Industry

[20] Traditional Owners are key partners in emergency management planning, response and recovery in relation to Threatened Ecosystems and Species.

	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions	Food and Grocery Supply Continuity
		Tourism (including major events)
	Department of Justice and Community Safety	Corrections
	Department of Transport and Planning	Public Transport
		Roads
		Rail
	Emergency Management Victoria	Media/Communications
	Triple Zero Victoria	Emergency Services Telecommunications

7.1.6 State Coordination Team

As outlined in the SEMP, the EMC will convene the SCoT to oversee coordination functions and responsibilities for Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies. The SCoT is the mechanism for coordination of agencies and determining the strategic context for readiness, response, relief and recovery. The EMC, or delegate, will chair a convened SCoT meeting.

Based on the situation and risk of a current or impending emergency, especially for concurrent or complex emergencies, the EMC, in collaboration with relevant Control Agencies, will determine an appropriate governance structure for the coordinated management any concurrent emergencies that eventuate due to an extreme heat event, ensuring that appropriate control is in place and making provision for Ministerial or agency powers that cannot be transferred to a State Controller.

The SCoT supports the prioritisation and strategic coordination of resources when there are concurrent Class 1 and/or Class 2 emergencies, with the EMC (or delegate) chairing the meeting and providing a forum for discussion and decision-making.

Based on their portfolio responsibilities outlined in the SEMP, the following agencies and operational roles, may be invited to attend a SCoT meeting before, during or after an extreme heat event, as determined by the EMC and in relation to the potential or actual consequences of the extreme heat event:

- Ambulance Victoria
- The Bureau of Meteorology
- Control Agency Officer in Charge (or delegate)
- Department of Education
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

- Department of Government Services
- Department of Health
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Emergency Management Victoria
- Emergency Recovery Victoria
- State Emergency Relief Coordinator
- State Controller/s
- State Response Controller
- Triple Zero Victoria
- Victoria Police

7.1.7 State Emergency Management Team

As outlined in the SEMP, the SEMT supports the EMC to undertake the responsibility to coordinate agencies to minimise the adverse effects of emergencies on people, communities, infrastructure and environment. The SEMT is the mechanism through which likely or realised consequences arising from an extreme heat event will be discussed and managed, including any concurrent Class 1 or Class 2 emergencies that may be occurring.

The SEMT is responsible for developing a strategic plan, as required, with high-level actions for agencies to manage consequences including to identify the potential consequences of emergencies and develop mitigation and response strategies to reduce impacts on Victorians, with strategies that are inclusive of those more at risk, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The role, key functions and composition of the SEMT are as outlined in the SEMP if convened in response to the consequences of an extreme heat event.

7.1.8 State Control Team

The SCT is the mechanism that supports control functions and responsibilities for both Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies. If not already active for other major emergencies, the EMC may establish the SCT, chaired by the State Response Controller (SRC) for Class 1 emergencies or the State Controller/s for Class 2 emergencies.

During an extreme heat event, where concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies are likely, the SCT will play a key role in ensuring the functions, responsibilities and activities of Control Agencies and support agencies are effectively coordinated and integrated.

If required, the EMC may establish separate SCTs for the operational management of concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies. The SRC and State Controllers/s will attend

both forums to ensure that they are briefing and being briefed on the strategic context of operational readiness, response, and, where appropriate, the integration of relief and recovery for a major emergency. The SRC and relevant State Controllers/s may also chair the SCT.

7.1.9 State Strategic Governance

Before, during or after any large-scale emergency, the Premier and/or Cabinet may choose to utilise a Cabinet sub-committee to make decisions and provide strategic direction to the emergency management sector. This may involve overseeing the design and implementation of response, relief and recovery activities, particularly with funding and communications, or it may involve sharing information to raise the operational awareness of its members.

7.2 Regional and Incident Response Coordination Arrangements

Unlike Class 1 emergencies, most Class 2 emergencies will only exercise Control during readiness and response phases at the State and Incident (Local) Tier, unless the impacts and consequences have become so significant and/or complex in nature that Regional Control is required.

While there may not be a nominated Controller at the incident or regional tiers, Regional Emergency Management Teams (REMTs) need to consider the impacts and consequences of extreme heat when it occurs concurrently with other emergencies. Agency Commanders from Class 1 and Class 2 agencies, Victoria Police (VicPol) Emergency Response Coordinators and other relevant lead and support agencies may be consulted in planning and response activities on the potential and actual impacts on responders, the community, persons more at risk and the whole of health system due to extreme heat.

Emergency management functions and operational coordination will primarily occur at the state tier, and then through relevant agencies, departments and organisations. The management of consequences from extreme heat events at the regional level are managed by the relevant Control Agency or Lead RSAs relating to their emergency management responsibilities in the SEMP.

Response coordination at the regional and municipal tiers is primarily undertaken by the RERCs and the MERCs. In an extreme heat event, coordination of consequence considerations will be led by the RERC at the regional tier in conjunction with relevant members within the REMT. Practically, this means ensuring appropriate Agency Commanders / Coordinators (e.g., Health Coordinators) are actively participating in REMTs and providing information that supports consequence management and resource management at a regional level. At the incident tier, the MERC will facilitate the coordination of agencies and resources within a municipal footprint, based on the activation of incident (local) control by the Control Agency.

These structures enable a scalable and collaborative response tailored to the specific impacts and consequences of extreme heat events across Victoria.

7.2.1 Regional Emergency Response Coordinator

The RERC is occupied by a member of VicPol for each region and is appointed by the Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP) at the request of the EMC, in accordance with Section 40A of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*. As outlined in the SEMP, the function of the RERC is to coordinate agencies and resources in the region to support the response to the emergency. The RERC provides assurance on behalf of and communicates with the EMC through the SPLO.

The RERC is supported by the MERC, the REMT and the Regional Control Team (RCT) in managing regional coordination responsibilities during a major emergency. The RERC is not responsible for exercising Control on behalf of any Control Agency at the regional tier during an extreme heat event.

7.2.2 Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator

The MERC is occupied by a member of VicPol for each municipal district and is appointed by the CCP at the request of the EMC. As outlined in the SEMP, the function of the MERC is to coordinate agencies and resources within a municipal district to support the municipality's response activities. The MERC provides assurance on behalf of, and communicates with, the EMC through the RERC and subsequently the SPLO.

7.2.3 Regional Emergency Management Team

The REMT supports the RERC and Regional Controller (RC) to manage regional tier response control and coordination. The function and composition of the REMT is outlined in the SEMP. The REMT is chaired by the RERC where no RC is appointed, by the RC where only one RC is appointed, or by either the RC or the RERC where more than one RC is appointed.

7.2.4 Councils

Councils and multi-agency MEMPCs both play a critical role in preparing their community for extreme heat events and supporting their community with relief functions.

As a Participating Agency for heatwave mitigation, Councils undertake urban design and planning on council owned or managed land and participate in heat safety awareness for organisers of council provided public events or public events on council land. Mitigation and relief activities specific to extreme heat events may be outline in the relevant MEMP or heat specific complementary plan, as well as municipal public health and wellbeing plans.

Councils are the primary source of information about the community, community networks, infrastructure, and industry in the local area. Councils may deliver their own preparedness activities to ensure community members, particularly those more at risk during extreme heat events, are protected.

The roles and responsibilities of Councils can be found under the SEMP Role Statement for Councils. As outlined in the SEMP, Councils are responsible for municipal relief and recovery coordination, along with supporting the DH to provide public health advice consistent with heat health messaging developed by the department.

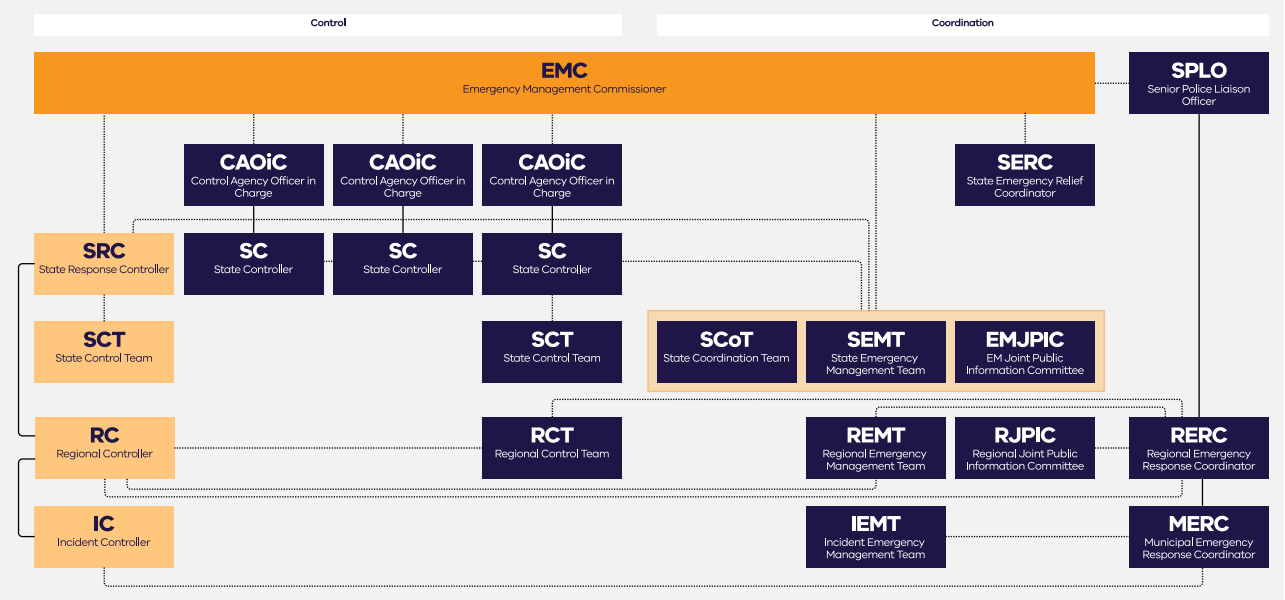
To support response and recovery coordination at the municipal tier, Councils may appoint a Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) and a Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM). As outlined in the SEMP, the MEMO will liaise with control and support agencies about emergency management activities for their municipal district and help coordinate these activities for the relevant Council. The MRM will consider the support recovery coordination by coordinating, in consultation with control and support agencies, the resources of the Council and the community for the purposes of recovery. The MEMO and MRM will work collaboratively to ensure the best use of resources.

7.3 Managing Concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 Emergencies

In the event of concurrent emergencies, including Class 1 and/or Class 2 emergencies, the EMC will collaboratively work with the Controllers, including the SRC and/or activated State Controller/s, to ensure that extreme heat considerations are discussed in the context of other emergencies. It is essential that any developed strategies or plans, actions, and communications are consistent and formed from the combined view and impact of other emergencies.

Where a Controller is appointed to manage a Class 1 emergency at State and/or Regional Tiers, their role is to integrate the heat considerations into the wider response activities of the relevant tier including situational awareness, key messaging and coordination of consequence management activities. This may include ensuring that Class 2 Control Agency representatives (e.g., Regional Agency Commanders) are invited to brief RCT and/or REMTs. There is no expectation that Class 1 agencies will assume control responsibility for Class 2 emergencies, rather the Class 1 agencies and Controllers have a responsibility to ensure that concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies are being coordinated through the relevant mechanism at the relevant tier.

Figure 4: State Extreme Heat Coordination Arrangements with concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies



7.3.1 State Response Controller

SRCs lead and manage the operational response to Class 1 emergencies. They participate in the SEMT and are responsible for ensuring the timely flow of relevant information to the EMC, the SCoT, the SCT for Class 1 emergencies and the SEMT. The SEMT is the mechanism through which consequences arising from an extreme heat event will be managed, as well as the consequences of any concurrent Class 1 or Class 2 emergencies. As a member of the SCoT, the SRC is also responsible for taking on resource requests on behalf of the Class 1 agencies and giving effect to these through the operation of the SCC and/or through State Agency Commanders. The prioritisation and strategic coordination of resources and resource requests for both Class 1 and Class 2 agencies will be undertaken through SCoT.

7.3.2 State Emergency Management Team

When Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies occur together, the SEMT functions as the state-level consequence management mechanism, developing and overseeing a strategic plan to address cascading and compounding impacts, with a focus on minimising harm to people, communities, infrastructure and the environment. The SEMT will also be utilised to ensure that the management of consequences for concurrent Class 1 and 2 emergencies is coordinated, and that the management of consequences does not inadvertently impact the management of another emergency.

7.3.3 State Control Team

During concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies, the SCT integrates and aligns the operational control functions of Control Agencies. Where required, the EMC may establish separate SCTs for Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies, with the SRC and relevant State Controller/s attending both to ensure consistency of operational readiness, response and, where appropriate, integration of relief and recovery.

7.3.4 State Coordination Team

In concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies, the SCoT provides the governance structure and high-level coordination framework across agencies, ensuring appropriate control arrangements are in place and that strategic direction is aligned across readiness, response, relief and recovery. Additionally, the SCoT supports the prioritisation and strategic coordination of resources when there are concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies.

7.3.5 Regional Controller and Incident Controller

Where a RC or Incident Controller (IC) is appointed to manage a Class 1 emergency, their role is to integrate the heat considerations into the wider response activities of the region including situational awareness, key messaging, and consequence management through the REMT or IEMT. The RERC will support the coordination of response agencies/departments for any impacts related to extreme heat and ensure consequences are being managed by the relevant agency at the regional tier.

The REMT is the mechanism through which response (including relief) and recovery are coordinated at the regional tier and will support the RERC and RC to manage their respective response control and coordination responsibilities.

Similarly at the incident tier, the IC will establish Incident Emergency Management Team (IEMT) as required and will work collaboratively with the MERC, MEMO and MRM to support the coordination of response (including relief) and consequence management.

7.4 Relief Coordination

As outlined in the SEMP, Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) is responsible for relief coordination at the state and regional tiers, to ensure effective delivery of relief services by relevant Relief Lead Agencies (RelLAs) and Relief Support Agencies (RelSAs). Councils are responsible for municipal relief coordination.

The relief coordination arrangements for a major emergency are outlined in Table 11 'Specified Relief Activities and Relief Coordinating Agency' and Table 12: 'Relief Coordination' in the SEMP.

8. Recovery

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, the EMC is responsible for coordinating recovery for major emergencies and can delegate this responsibility to relevant agencies. As per the SEMP, ERV is responsible for state and regional recovery coordination, partnering with all levels of government, businesses and not for profit organisations to enable locally driven and locally delivered recovery.

As outlined in the SEMP, recovery is undertaken across four environments - social, economic, built and natural environments – and recovery activities are led by the relevant Recovery Lead Agency (RecLA) with support from Recovery Support Agencies (RecSAs). ERV's approach to recovery builds on the SEMP by identifying five lines of recovery, aligning to the SEMP recovery environments and including a distinct line of recovery for Aboriginal Culture and Healing.[21]

Councils are responsible for municipal recovery coordination, including coordination of local recovery activities and post emergency needs assessment to determine long-term recovery needs.

Specific roles and responsibilities for delivery of recovery coordination and recovery activities are set out in the SEMP Tables 13–18 in the SEMP.

[21] Emergency Recovery Victoria (2023), Recovery Framework, p. 9

9. Public Communications

9.1 Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee

The Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee (EMJPIC) provides strategic guidance for state-level messages across all state government departments and agencies, and assists the EMC with public, stakeholder and government communications including warnings and engagement. The EMC may engage the support of EMJPIC to ensure the state-level messages regarding extreme heat or related consequences are prioritised and included in the key messages to the public. This may also include the integration of messaging across all emergencies, including concurrent emergencies such as bushfires and storms.

Key functions of the EMJPIC are outlined in the SEMP.

The Chair of EMJPIC will, as necessary, convene senior communications representatives from agencies responsible for managing the impacts and consequences of extreme heat, and may include other roles such as the State Emergency Relief Coordinator (SERC) to ensure relief activities are being considered. EMJPIC will coordinate across whole of Victorian Government senior communications representatives with priority coordination with (but not limited to):

- DH which is responsible for coordinating with the CHO to provide public health advice to the community and health sector (typically delivered through the Department of Health channels and stakeholders).
- The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) in collaboration with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), who are responsible for appointing a single industry spokesperson to speak on behalf of the Victorian Electricity Supply Industry when there are widespread and prolonged outages affecting the State.[22] DEECA's Agriculture Victoria disseminates animal welfare preparedness messaging and communications, including social media, in the lead up to high-risk periods and then emergency specific messaging during an emergency which is incorporated into statewide public information messaging
- DTP is responsible for providing information about potential or confirmed impacts to transport infrastructure in line with the SEMP Public Transport Disruption Sub-Plan, the road network and the maritime and freight sectors.
- Ambulance Victoria and Triple Zero Victoria due to impacts on their resources.

[22] Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (2023), State Emergency Management Plan Energy Sub-Plan, p. 46 and Australian Energy Market Operator (2019), Single Industry Spokesperson on Protocol for Electricity in Victoria

9.1.1 Regional Joint Public Information Committee

The Regional Joint Public Information Committee (RJPIC) ensures a consistent and shared approach for the delivery of holistic messaging and targeted response and recovery communications at the regional tier. RJPIC will be established as necessary for the purpose of gathering key stakeholders and ensuring a joint approach to messaging and communications. RJPIC will be represented through EMJPIC.

9.2 Spokespersons

The nominated spokesperson for extreme heat events will vary depending on the anticipated impacts and consequence or the actual impacts and consequences being experienced either as a direct result of an extreme heat event or as part of another emergency event.

9.2.1 State Spokespersons

The EMC and State Controller/s or delegates are the primary spokespersons to ensure a coordinated approach to state media and to the community regarding public safety and whole-of-government arrangements. Where there are multiple State Controllers appointed, the EMC will determine if more than one spokesperson is required. This is based on whether there are significant impacts and/or consequences (for example for the health, energy or transport sector).

Potential spokespersons may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency Management Commissioner
- State Controller/s, Deputy State Controller/s or delegates
- Victorian Premier or relevant minister
- Control Agency Officer in Charge or delegate
- SCC Media Spokesperson

Individual agencies may speak to the media during readiness regarding their own activities. However, this is to be notified, and coordination of messaging considered through EMJPIC before proceeding.

The rostered SCC spokesperson may be utilised to communicate key messages.

9.2.2 Regional and Incident Spokespersons

At the regional and incident tier, the Control Agency is responsible for ensuring appropriate public safety messaging is being provided to relevant communities. Where there is no Class 2 Control Agency at the regional and incident tier, the RC/s and IC/s will ensure that state messaging developed by the EMJPIC is tailored to the regional and local setting.

The RERC/s and MERC/s will ensure that heat specific communications at the regional and incident level are included into any concurrent emergency messaging. Where there are

concurrent emergencies or multiple Controllers, the RERC/s, through the relevant RC, may request that an RJPIC be established to support coordination of messaging.

During concurrent Class 1 and Class 2 emergencies, ICs are responsible only for integrating extreme heat considerations that directly affect their incident. Broader public messaging about extreme heat impacts will be coordinated through EMJPIC at the state level and, where established, RJPIC at the regional tier. This ensures consistency of messaging, avoids duplication, and provides local communities with clear and tailored advice.

10. Legislative Framework

10.1 Victorian Legislation

The below list includes Victorian Acts that provide the legislative frameworks for the management of extreme heat events in Victoria:

- *Emergency Management Act 2013* details the governance arrangements for emergency management in Victoria. It outlines the functions and powers of the EMC and the control of response activities.
- *Emergency Management Act 1986* provides for the organisation of emergency management in Victoria, particularly in relation to the powers and duties of the Minister and the declaration of a State of Emergency in Victoria.
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* provides the legislative scheme which promotes and protects public health and wellbeing in Victoria. This Act outlines the functions and powers of the CHO.
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* defines the framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria, which fosters better planning of the built environment to withstand the impact of a range of likely emergencies, including extreme heat events.
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* outlines the responsibility of animal owners to protect the health of their animal from unreasonable pain or suffering in Victoria.
- *Climate Action Act 2017* embeds climate resilience and emission reduction into Victoria's governance and planning processes, addressing extreme weather events such as heatwaves. It enshrines a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and mandates the establishment of interim targets to guide the process. The legislation also mandates the creation of a climate change strategy every five years, along with Adaptation Action Plans for key systems and sectors vulnerable to climate impacts to guide government action and help institutions, businesses, and individuals to respond to Victoria's changing climate.

10.2 Federal Legislation

- The *Meteorology Act 1955 (Cth)* and the *Water Act 2007 (Cth)* define the functions of the Bureau and the powers of the Director of Meteorology. These Acts empower the Bureau to provide essential meteorological and hydrological services, which are crucial for the effective forecasting and management of heatwaves and related extreme heat conditions in Australia.

11. Appendix A: People more at risk from the effects of heat

Extreme heat can affect anyone. Some people are more at risk during an extreme heat event due to age, health, environment, social and economic circumstances, or occupation. Belonging to more than one at-risk group may further increase susceptibility to extreme heat.

People of a certain age or life stage

- People over 65 years old
- Babies and young children
- Pregnant women

People with particular social or economic circumstances

- People who are socially isolated or living alone[23]
- People who work or exercise outdoors[24]
- People without air-conditioning (or decide not to use it)
- Residents in upper floors of multi-story buildings
- People with low income[25]
- People who are homeless
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People who have recently arrived from cooler climates

People with certain health conditions

- Chronic diseases:

[23] People who are socially isolated may require proactive outreach (including via telecommunications). Reviews of past heatwaves in Victoria found social isolation to be a critical risk factor for heat-related deaths, highlighting the importance of digital inclusion and maintaining access to family, community and support services. Victorian Auditor-General's Office (2014), Heatwave Management: Reducing the Risk to Public Health, p. 1,

[24] Technicians and field staff responsible for maintaining and repairing critical infrastructure. These workers may be exposed to hazardous heat conditions while ensuring continuity of essential services and undertaking mitigation activities to keep infrastructure operational.

[25] Temporary visa holders and migrant workers, particularly in industries such as agriculture, horticulture, construction and meat processing. These groups may lack access to a financial safety net or entitlements, often being paid by the hour. During extreme heat, workers may be forced to prioritise income over safety due to insecure work arrangements or limited protections. Many are also ineligible for disaster relief funding or social security support, making them more vulnerable to the health and livelihood impacts of lost work hours.

  - Heart disease
  - Mental illness (including people experiencing psychosocial impacts, such as household and family violence, and those with pre-existing or emerging mental health conditions)
  - Diabetes
  - High blood pressure
  - Cancer
  - Kidney disease
  - Respiratory disease
  - Certain neurological conditions (i.e. Parkinson's Disease)
  - Heat intolerant conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis
- Spinal cord injury, and skin or sweating disorders such as:
  - Cystic fibrosis
  - Extensive scarring (i.e. burn survivors)
  - Scleroderma
  - Congenital impairments of sweating
  - Quadriplegia/Tetraplegia
- Other health issues:
  - Acute infection, fever, or gastroenteritis
  - Taking certain prescription medications (for example: diuretics and medicines with anticholinergic properties)
  - Problematic alcohol or illicit substance use
  - Low cardiovascular fitness
  - Overweight or obesity
  - Poor mobility (including people with a physical disability)
  - Cognitive impairment/dementia (including people with an intellectual disability)
  - Multiple underlying health conditions

Up-to-date information on planning for extreme heat events is available from the planning for extreme heat and heatwaves resource by DH.

12. Appendix B: Acronyms

Acronym	Description
ACCOs	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
ACCHOs	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
AWS	Australian Warning System
CAOiC	Control Agency Officer in Charge
CCP	Chief Commissioner of Police
CHO	Chief Health Officer
DEECA	Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action
DH	Department of Health
DGS	Department of Government Services
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EHF	Excess Heat Factor
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMJPIC	Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ERV	Emergency Recovery Victoria
HDSP	Heatwave Decision Support Product
IC	Incident Controller
IEMT	Incident Emergency Management Team
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
MEMO	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
RC	Regional Controller
RCT	Regional Control Team

Acronym	Description
RERC	Regional Emergency Response Coordinator
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMT	Regional Emergency Management Team
RelLA	Relief Lead Agency
RelSA	Relief Support Agency
RecLA	Recovery Lead Agency
RecSA	Recovery Support Agency
RJPIC	Regional Joint Public Information Committee
SC	State Controller
SCC	State Control Centre
SCoT	State Coordination Team
SCT	State Control Team
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SEMT	State Emergency Management Team
SERC	State Emergency Relief Coordinator
SPLO	Senior Police Liaison Officer
SRC	State Response Controller
VicPol	Victoria Police

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