



Ararat Rural City

Municipal Emergency Management Plan

2026-2029

Version: 4.0

Responsible Officer: Governance and Risk Lead

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VERSION CONTROLTABLE

Version	Date of Issue	Authors	Desc. Of Changes
V1.0	15/07/2015	Risk, Emergency Management and Local Laws Coordinator	
V1.1	08/2015	Risk, Emergency Management and Local Laws Coordinator	
V2.0	21/06/2017	David Todd (MERO)	
V2.1	05/10/2017	David Todd (MERO)	Changes made resulting from SES Audit
V2.2	10/02/2020	Bob Barks (EMC)	Admin/Contacts change from Annual Review Jan. 2020
V3.0	14/07/2020	Joel Farrow (EMC)	Draft MEMP submitted for adoption by MEMPC/Council
V3.1	22/11/2020	Joel Farrow (EMC)	Minor updated to adopted MEMP from recommendations from MEMP Audit
V4		Chandra Willmott (EMC)	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 How to use this document

The Ararat Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) is a strategic document outlining the emergency management context in the Ararat Rural City, the arrangements in place for emergency planning, mitigation, response, relief, and recovery, and how various agencies with emergency management responsibilities within the Council will work together before, during and after emergencies.

This plan is intended for use by agencies with emergency management responsibilities to understand the emergency management context in the Council, and for members of the public to understand what emergency management arrangements are in place at a local level.

The MEMP identifies several sub-plans and complementary plans which together form the municipal emergency management arrangements. Whilst the MEMP is not intended for active reference during an emergency due to its strategic nature, the sub-plans and complementary plans contain a greater level of operational detail intended to support emergency management activities across the Council.

This plan is always active, and the provisions described herein are available for any incident or emergency across the municipality when required and determined by appropriate agency or person.

1.2 Authority

In 2020, the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018 amended the Emergency Management Act 2013 (EM Act 2013) to provide a new integrated arrangements at the state, regional and municipal levels for emergency management planning in Victoria. This legislation created the requirement for Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs) to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria.

Each MEMPC is a collaborative, multi-agency group comprising members with organisational, industry and personal expertise relevant to emergency planning for the municipality. This MEMP has been prepared by the MEMPC in accordance with and complies with the requirements of the Act including having regard to the guidelines issued under section 77, *Guidelines for Preparing State Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans*.

1.3 Assurance and Approval

A Statement of Assurance (including checklist and certificate) has been submitted to the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) pursuant to the EM Act 2013 (s60AG).

This Plan has been endorsed by the Ararat MEMPC and approved by the Grampians REMPC. This plan comes into effect when it is published and remains in effect until it is superseded by an approved and published update or withdrawn. This Plan supersedes the Ararat Municipal Management Plan 2020-2023.

1.4 Review

To ensure ongoing currency and relevance of this Plan, it is required to be reviewed at least every three years.

An urgent update of the Plan is permitted should there be a significant risk to life or property that may manifest if the Plan is not updated (EM Act 2013 s60AM). Urgent updates come into effect when published on the Council Website and remain in force for a maximum period of three months.

This plan will be reviewed no later than January 2029

1.5. Glossary and Acronyms

Definitions of words and phrases used throughout the MEMP have the same meaning as those prescribed in the relevant legislation, plans and standards, including

- Emergency Management Act 1986 and 2013
- State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)
- Local Government Act 2020
- Risk Management Standards ISO:31000 2018

1.6. Planning Context

This Plan provides for an integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to emergency management at the municipal level. The EM Act 2013 requires the MEMP to contain provisions for the mitigation of, response to, and relief and recovery from emergencies, and to specify the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management (where not outlined elsewhere).

It is recommended that the MEMP be read in conjunction with the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP), the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP), the Sub-plans and Complementary plans of the MEMP, and the Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) currently in place.

1.7. Vision, Goals, Objective, and Strategies

To Support a safe and resilient community.

1.7.1. Goals

- Implement measures to mitigate the effects of emergencies
- Support communities to be resilient and prepare for emergencies
- Support multi-agency cooperation before, during and after emergencies
- Streamline the provision of assistance to affected communities during and after emergencies.

1.7.2. Objectives

- Identify hazards and evaluate risks with the potential to impact upon the municipality
- Implement measures to prevent or reduce the likelihood and consequences of emergencies.
- Develop and administer programs that reduce community vulnerability and increase capacity for resilience and self-reliance.
- Manage support that may be provided to or from other municipalities.
- Assist in meeting the essential needs of individuals, families, and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.
- Assist communities impacted by emergencies to recover.
- Complement other local, regional, and state emergency planning arrangements.

1.7.3. Strategies

- Appoint a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)
- Conduct the Municipal Emergency Management Planning (MEMPC) planning process, including for Sub-plans and Complementary plans as required.
- Undertake a Community Emergency Risk Management (CERA) assessment on a three-yearly basis or as risks become apparent.
- Support emergency mitigation and public awareness programs within the municipality.
- Identify and plan for shared resources (e.g., municipal resources and other stakeholders) to be used in emergency response and recovery.

1.8. Training and Exercising

Exercises are a valuable tool to test the arrangements set out in the MEMP and give staff experience in activating the Plan. The arrangements in the SEMP require the MEMP to be exercised at least once per year.

The MEMPC will plan and undertake an annual exercise in either a desktop or practical format, based on a hypothetical emergency event. Any improvements identified during the planning, conduct, or debrief of these exercises will form part of the MEMP review. Alternatively, the MEMPC may decide the MEMP requires amendment immediately.

Exercises are structured to provide the following benefits:

- Provide the opportunity for members and stakeholders to test their procedures and skills in simulated emergency situations.
- Provide an opportunity for the local emergency management community to work together to build shared capacity and capability.
- Test the MEMP and identify areas for continuous improvement.
- Use observations and outcomes to improve the MEMP.

A list of previous MEMP exercises is an Appendix E. Exercises

1.9. Lesson management

Lessons management involves identifying and learning lessons captured through assurance and learning activities, such as debriefs, monitoring, and reviews. These may be conducted before, during, and after emergencies. Exercises, periodic reviews, and information gleaned from the experience of others are all valuable sources of lessons management information.

The Victorian Emergency Management Sector supports a culture of continuous improvement through the EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework (emv.vic.gov.au). It encourages the sector to share lessons (both positive actions and areas for improvement), encourages learning from assurance activities and good practice, and focuses on systems of work rather than individual performance.

Observations can be made from any participant in a relevant activity and are used to inform the lessons management process. Debriefs, monitoring and reviews are also used to identify observations. Observations can be used to form insights, which in turn support the “learning of lessons”. A lesson can only be considered “learned” once changes have been made and embedded that result in a change of practice.

Reports on observations, insights, and lessons learned should be submitted to the MEMPC for inclusion in Appendix E. Exercises, which includes a section for recording lessons identified from the exercise or event.

2. MUNICIPAL PROFILE

2.1. Ararat Rural City overview

Ararat Rural City is the gateway to the Grampians region in south-west Victoria. The land has a wealth of natural attractions that set the region apart, such as Mount Langi Ghiran, Mount Cole, and the Ararat Hills National Park, which frames our townships with scenic views and unique landscapes.

Ararat municipality is located in Western Victoria covering approximately 4,211 square kilometres with a diverse economy which is underpinned by advanced manufacturing, premium agriculture, nature-based tourism, healthcare, and renewable energy. The Melbourne- Adelaide railway and the Western Highway bisect the municipality and converge at Ararat. The location of the municipality in respect to major regional, interstate, and intrastate transport links gives it a strategic advantage in accessing major markets.

Offering a fantastic regional lifestyle with a diverse economy underpinned by full employment, the recent shift in population to the regions has delivered an uplift in local investment and confidence.

Ararat Rural City Council includes the city of Ararat and the townships of Elmhurst, Moyston, Willaura, Pomonal, Narrapumpelap South, Lake Bolac, Rossbridge, Wickliffe, Maroona, Tatyoon, Buangor, Mininera, Westmere, Streatham, Warrak, Mt Cole, Nerrin, Pura and Armstrong.

2.2. Community Profile and Growth Forecasts

Ararat municipality has an estimated population of 11,880 (ABS, 2021) with women comprising of approximately 47% of the population and men accounting for the approximately 53%. Planning for emergencies requires the inclusion of a broad spectrum of contributing factors relating to the population, including ability, cultural sensitivities, religious considerations, and other factors. Growth forecasts are steady to slight increase.

Ararat Rural City has a broad age range throughout the municipality, with a median age of 46 years present in the population. Based on the potentially higher needs for assistance for those in the more vulnerable age groups (less than 18 years of age and older than 65 years) these age groups account for approximately 45% of the population and as such are a key consideration when undertaking municipal emergency management planning.

34% of Ararat population suffer from one or more health conditions, with arthritis, mental health conditions and asthma being the most common ailments.

2.3. Cultural Diversity

Addressing the need for cultural sensitivity and consideration during emergency management planning. In 2021, 18% of Ararat Rural City residents were born overseas, with most migrants hailing from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, India, and the Philippines. Approximately 6% of people speak a language other than English at home.

Ararat Rural City acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land the Djabwuring and Eastern Maar peoples. In 2021, 225 Ararat Rural City residents, representing approximately 2% of the population, identified as Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The municipality has a diverse presence of religions movements and organisations, with the largest representation present being Catholicism (15.7%), Anglican (8.5%) and Uniting Church (6.8%). Ararat Rural City hosts and supports a wide range of religions, including Buddhism, Islam, and other movements.

2.4. Topography

Ararat rests at an average of 333m above sea level, with its highest elevation at 607m and lowest elevation at 278m. The surrounding area of the municipality is a combination of flat plains, hills and mountains, rivers, creeks, and waterways with pockets of population scattered throughout the area. The township of Ararat is situated 200 km Northwest of Melbourne and on the major road and rail centre to Adelaide and has direct rail links with Geelong, Portland, Western, North-western and Central Victoria. Ararat is located on the Melbourne-Adelaide Railway via Geelong (National Rail Grid) and on the connection from Portland to areas to the north.

The township of Ararat is the first major stopping point for travellers from Melbourne since the construction of the Ballarat bypass. Ararat is a very important service centre for the surrounding agricultural area. It has a full range of regional shopping, educational and recreational facilities. Ararat is situated near the Hopkins River, which runs from its northern point to the North-East of

Ararat to its ocean mouth near Warrnambool. Nearby Lake Bolac, located in the southern area of the municipality, is situated in the fertile western district plains, and is a popular location for camping, fishing, and boating.

The townships of Moyston and Pomonal to the west of Ararat are located at the foothills of the Grampians National Park and offer opportunities for a rural residential lifestyle. The township of Elmhurst attracts people seeking a rural lifestyle given the affordable prices, some services and commuting distance from Ararat.

Willaura and Streatham are located within highly productive and versatile soils which support a wide range of agricultural products.

Key Topographical Features of the Municipality

- Western boundary - Grampians Mountain Range including eastern scarp of the Serra Range and Mt William.
- North and Central - Mt Ararat Range and Black Range together with undulating foothills.
- North-East - Pyrenees Mountain Range including Mt Langi Ghiran, Mt Buangor, Mt Cole.
- Ararat to North - Undulating hills for sheep and wine growing.
- Ararat to South - Undulating open grazing and cropping in broad areas with relatively few connecting roads.
- Lake Bolac, Green Hill Lake (near Ararat), Lake Buninjon (north of Willaura) and many other minor wetlands.

2.5. Climate and Rainfall

Ararat Rural City is in a Temperate zone of south-eastern Australia. During summer, average temperatures range from a low of 10.7° to a high of 26°. In winter, average temperatures range from lows of 3.7° to highs of 12.5° with occasional winter snow on the high peaks above 800m. Historically, January is the warmest month with an average maximum temperature of 27.2°, whilst July is the coolest month, with average minimum temperature of 3.4° and maximum of 11.9°.

Ararat usually experiences 92 rain days per year, delivering an average of 585mm of rain. The wettest months are July and August (averaging 61.9mm and 67.7mm per year respectively), with March being the driest month (with average rainfall of 30.2mm).

2.6. Critical infrastructure

2.6.1. Road

The Ararat Rural City is serviced by an extensive road network jointly maintained by Council and Regional Roads Victoria.

The most significant single item of road infrastructure is the Western Highway (M8), which bisects the municipal in an east-west direction, providing a high speed (110km) dual lane connection to Ballarat to the east and (100km) single lane connection to Horsham to the west.

The M8 is the main road connection between Melbourne and Adelaide, running via Ballarat and Horsham.

The Western Freeway and other declared freeways and arterial roads are managed by Regional Roads Victoria. Ararat Rural City Council is responsible for the maintenance of all roads and related assets listed on its Register of Public Roads, as well as Council owned assets on roads managed by other authorities. Council is also responsible for footpaths, service lanes and median strips adjacent to arterial roads.

Roads for which Regional Roads Victoria is the Responsible Road Authority

The roads for which Regional Roads Victoria is the Responsible Road Authority (pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004) are outlined on the VicRoads website, on the VicRoads Register of Public Roads and is available as an online interactive map.

Within the Ararat Rural City, these roads are:

- Western Highway through Ararat
- Glenelg Highway through Streatham, Westmere, Lake Bolac, Wickliffe
- Mortlake – Ararat Road from South of Lake Bolac to Ararat
- Rossbridge – Streatham Road
- Ararat – Pomonal Road
- Maroona-Glen Thompson Road
- Ararat-St Arnaud Road
- Pyrenees Highway from, Ararat to Elmhurst
- Pomonal Road to the north and north-east of Pomonal

2.6.2. Rail

Ararat Rural City is served by the Melbourne to Ararat rail link. This link offers 62 weekly passenger rail services on the V/Line network, and interstate passenger rail services via the Overland.

The municipal is serviced by four different lines with a mix of freight and passenger. These are:

- Interstate standard gauge from Pura through Ararat towards Stawell.
- Ararat Portland Standard gauge from Maroona to Glen Thompson.
- Ararat Ballarat broad gauge line east of Ararat.
- Pyrenees line standard gauge from Ararat to Elmhurst

2.6.3. Airport

The Ararat Airport is owned managed by the Ararat Rural City Council. The Ararat Aerodrome is licensed and is used by gliding clubs and recreational aviators. The aerodrome has two runways (04/22 and 12/30). The longest runway (12/30) is 1240m long whilst the other runway (04/22) is 660m.

The associated infrastructure includes four hangers, a terminal building, fuel store and amenities, all which is located on the eastern edge of town, adjacent to the Western Highway.

Other unlicensed private aerodromes or aircraft landing strips may also exist within the municipality with regional airports located Horsham, Stawell, Hamilton, and Ballarat. Main interstate and international flight paths also pass over the municipality.

The Ararat Aerodrome Emergency Response Plan, developed by the Ararat Rural City Council in consultation with the MEMPC, is a complementary plan to this MEMP, and outlines emergency preparedness, response, and recovery procedures in the event of an aviation incident on or near the aerodrome.

2.6.4. Information and telecommunications

The quality and resilience of telecommunications infrastructure across the municipality is highly variable. The populated areas in and around Ararat and Lake Bolac generally have excellent access to mobile and fixed telecommunications services, whilst more isolated communities such as Maroona, Mafeking and Wickliffe have more limited services.

The telecommunications infrastructure in the Ararat Rural City includes”

- TV broadcast sites:
- Radio broadcast sites:
- Radio communication sites: Buangor
- Telephone exchanges: Streatham, Lake Bolac, Wickliffe, Ararat, Maroona, Moyston, Pomonal, Elmhurst, Tatyoon, and Pura Pura

2.6.5. Electricity

Currently, most of Victoria’s electricity is generated by brown coal generators in the La Trobe Valley and transmitted via high voltage power lines to terminal substations, where it is reduced in voltage for further transmission and distribution. Powercor is the distribution business servicing the municipality.

The electricity infrastructure in the Ararat Rural City includes:

- Major transmission lines: Roughly North-West from Middle Creek to Armstrong (66V)
- Terminal substations: Ararat Wind farm, 75 turbines (East of Ararat, Challicum Hills Wind Farm, 35 turbines, Southeast of Ararat, and Maroona Wind Farm, 2 turbines, South of Ararat; Crowland Wind Farm 39 turbines (25km north-east of Ararat)

2.6.6. Gas

The Gas Pipelines Victoria operates the Carisbrook to Horsham Pipeline. The pipeline provides high-pressure natural gas to distributors who supply end use customers in Ararat. The line travels from Carisbrook to Horsham and has a take-off to Ararat west of Crowlands and enters in along the Pyrenees Highway to Ararat.

2.6.7. Water

The municipal water come from Grampians Headworks Storages. The “headworks” is the area in and around the Grampians ranges and Wimmera River. It includes 11 reservoirs and diversion weirs and the streams and channels connecting them. Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water maintain the infrastructure of the headworks, while the independent Storage Manager manages the water resources.

2.7. Industry

The Ararat economy supports an estimated 5358 jobs over various industries with Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector being the regionals largest employer and Manufacturing industry sector making the greatest contribution to economic output in the region.

The following industries have been identified across the municipality:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Agriculture, Forestry, and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Public Administration and Safety
- Retail
- Education and Training
- Hospitality
- Construction
- Wholesale trade
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing

3. PLANNING ARRANGEMNETS

3.1. Victorian Emergency Management Planning Framework

This plan supports holistic and coordinated emergency management arrangements within the region. It is consistent with and contextualises the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) for the Grampians Region. The Grampians REMP is subordinate to the SEMP and the Ararat Rural City MEMP is subordinate to the REMP.

To the extent possible, this Plan does not conflict with or duplicate other in-force emergency management plans.

Figure 2 outlines the hierarchy of Victoria's Emergency Management Planning Framework and situates this Plan in the Framework. This Plan should be read in conjunction with the Grampians REMP and the SEMP.



3.2. Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

The Ararat Rural City Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee has been established pursuant to the Emergency Management Legislation Reform Act 2018 (EMLR Act) and the Emergency Management Act 2013 (the Act) section 59D(b).

The MEMPC is one component of a broader structure that enables appropriate planning, response and recovery activities and arrangements at local and regional levels. The Ararat Rural City MEMPC reports to the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC).

The MEMPC membership consists of core and non-core members. Core members have voting rights and are those specific in section 59A of the EM Act and invited subject matter experts.

Non-core members, who do not have voting rights, consist of MEMPC members not reflected in the core membership according to the EM Act, and agency representative attending in a support or observer role.

In accordance with section 59D of the EM Act, the functions of the MEMPC are to:

- Be responsible for the preparation and review of the MEMPC.
- Ensure the MEMPC is consistent with the REMP and SEMP.
- Provide reports of recommendations to the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) in relation to any matter that affects, or may affect, emergency management planning in the municipality.
- Share information with the REMPC and other MEMPCs to assist effective emergency management planning.
- Collaborate with any other MEMPC that the MEMPC considers appropriate in relation to emergency management planning, including the preparation of MEMPCs.
- Perform any other function conferred on the MEMPC by the EM Act, or any other Act.

Sub-committees and working groups may be appointed by the MEMPC to take on the responsibility of planning for emergencies, including for the provision of relief and recovery.

The MEMPC meets four times per year. These are ordinarily in February, May, August, and November. The MEMPC Chair may call additional meetings as required. The Terms of Reference of the MEMPC are available from the Secretariat

3.3. MEMPC membership

This section provides a list of the member agencies on the MEMPC. Agencies nominate their representative and any proxies. A comprehensive and updated list of individual MEMPC representatives is available in Appendix A with the terms of reference for the MEMPC

3.3.1. MEMPC functional roles

As outlined in the MEMPC Terms of Reference, the MEMPC functional roles are:

- Chair – Section 59A of the EM Act specifies the MEMPC Chairperson as the municipal council CEO or delegated council employee. The Ararat Rural City Council CEO is Chairperson for this MEMPC
- Deputy Chair – a MEMPC member elected by the MEMPC
- Secretariat – an officer of Ararat Rural City Council unless otherwise determined by the MEMPC.

Refer to the MEMPC Terms of Reference for further detail on the MEMPC functional roles and their responsibilities.

3.3.2. Core (voting members)

The standing membership of the MEMPC is comprised of the following members:

- Ararat Rural City Council – Chief Executive Officer
- Ararat Rural City Council – Emergency Management Coordinator (Secretariat)
- Victoria Police (VicPol) – Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)
- Country Fire Authority – Assistant Chief Fire Officer, District 16
- Ambulance Victoria
- Victoria State Emergency Services
- Australia Red Cross
- Department of Family Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health
- Community representative
- Vic Roads
- Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA) / Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV)
- East Grampians Health Service

3.3.3. Non-core (non-voting) members

In addition to this standing membership, the Committee welcomes attending of the following organisations and agencies at meetings. Their contributions and attendance are of particular relevance when each Emergency Risk (CERA) relevant to the agency/organisation is reviewed. At other times it is recognised that Reports are submitted for each meeting.

- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
- GWM Water
- Hopkins Correctional Centre
- PowerCor
- VicTrack
- Others as required

3.4. Sub-plans and Complementary Plans

The Victorian Emergency Management Planning Framework contains provisions for sub plans and complimentary plans to an emergency management plan. Further detail on these types of plans is available in Emergency Management Planning Reform Fact Sheet 7. (emv.vic.gov.au)

A sub-plan is a plan prepared pursuant to Part 6A of the EM Act, which provides more specific arrangements that either vary from or contextualise the emergency management plan under which it was prepared. A sub-plan forms part of the emergency management plan under which it is prepared and carries the same authority and obligation to comply. Sub-plans are multi-agency plans – a single agency does not have the authority under the EM Act to prepare a sub-plan. Sub-plans carry the same requirements for consultation, approval, publication, review, and assurance, as any other plan prepared under Part 6A of the EM Act.

The complementary plan is an emergency management plan prepared outside Part 6A of the EM Act. They are usually prepared by a relevant agency to service a specific purpose, for example to meet operational and statutory requirements other than those imposed by the EM Act. Agencies preparing complementary plans are encouraged to develop them in a way that complements emergency management plans prepared under the EM Act., to support an integrated approach to planning. These plans are not subject to the consultation, approval, publication, review, and assurance requirements prescribed by the EM Act. Emergency Management plans prepared under Part 6A of the EM Act may refer to complementary plans as required.

A list of sub-plans and complementary plans to the MEMPC is provided at Appendix C. List of MEMPC Sub-plans and Complementary Plans.

3.5. Restricted operational information

Section 60AI(2) of the EM Act allows the MEMPC to exclude information from published plans that is related to critical infrastructure, personal information, or information that is of a commercial sensitive nature.

A summary of restricted information is included in Table 2, including who the contact point is should the user of this plan require access to the information.

Summary of restricted information	Reason for restriction	Agencies holding this information in full	Contact point
Section 5.3, Page 21; Municipal Emergency Operation Centre	Detailed location of mission-critical emergency coordination centres	MEMPC member agencies	Emergency Management Coordinator
MEMPC Contact List	Agency representative contact details		Ararat Rural City Council (03) 5355 0200
Contact Directory	Agency representative contact details		

Table 2: Summary of restricted operational information.

4. MITIGATION

4.1. The Risk Assessment process

The Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process, facilitated by VICSES, provides the MEMPC with a framework for identifying hazards and improving community safety and resilience. The CERA approach promotes understanding of the likely impacts of a variety of emergency scenarios upon community assets, values, and functions. Accordingly, CERA provides an opportunity to explore multiple community impacts and consequences to be considered in collaborative risk treatment and emergency management planning processes.

CERA combines hazard information and intelligence from multiple sources to gain a clear understanding of the risks applicable to a specific area. These intelligence sources include the Victorian Fire Risk Register (VFRR), Integrated Fire Management Plans (IFMPs), and flood studies, as well as community profile information and local knowledge from subject matter experts and community representatives.

CERA Online tool facilitates the entry of intelligence data and provision of hazard risk data to support emergency management planning and mitigation activities. CERA online tool is available at <https://cera.ses.vic.gov.au>

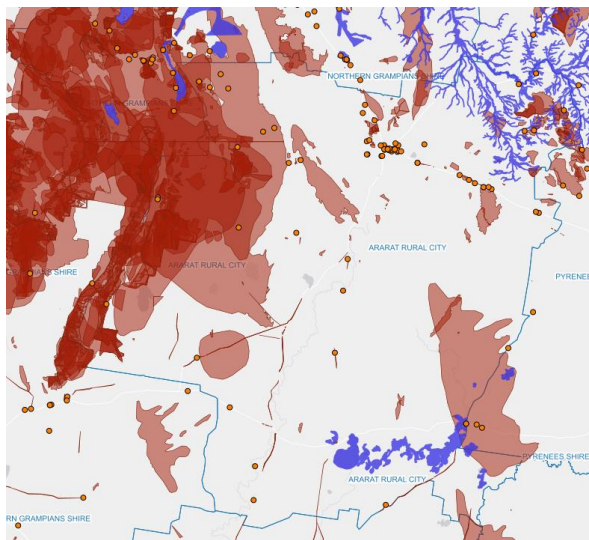


Figure 3: Fire history (red), 1 in 100-year flood extent (blue), and road crash history (dots)

4.2. Key risks for Ararat Rural City

Table 3 outlines the key risks (defined as those “high” and “medium” risk in the CERA facing Ararat Rural City.

Hazard	Risk Rating	Control Agency
Bushfire / Grassfire	High	Country Fire Authority (CFA) / Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
Extreme Temperatures (heat / cold)	High	Emergency Management Commissioner
Flood	High	State Emergency Service (VICSES)
Transport incident – Road	High	Victoria Police
Human Disease (pandemic)	High	Department of Health
Transport accident – Aircraft	High	Victoria Police
Storm	Medium	State Emergency Service (VICSES)
Fire – Commercial / Industrial / High-rise (commercial)	Medium	Country Fire Authority
HAZMAT Incidents*	High	Country Fire Authority

Table 3: Hazards with “High” or “Medium” risk rating in the CERA for Ararat Rural City

* Future addition to CERA requiring MEMPC vote.

4.3. Risk mitigation activities, roles, and responsibilities

Table 8 of the SEMP identifies the relevant mitigation activities and participating agencies for each of the 15 emergency risks assessed as significant for the State. Specific mitigation activities relevant to “high” risks in the Ararat Rural City are describe or referenced below.

All agencies with mitigation responsibilities outlined in the SEMP have a shared responsibility to plan and undertake prevention and mitigation activities aimed at reducing the risk, or minimizing the effect, of emergencies that may occur within the municipality. The MEMPC plays a role in this area by identifying potential hazard areas, overseeing collaborative planning measures, and providing assurance that agreed activities are being undertaken.

4.3.1. Bushfire / grassfire

Refer to the Ararat Rural City Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP), which is a sub-pan of this MEMP

4.3.2. Extreme Temperatures (heat / cold)

Refer to the Ararat Rural City Council Heatwave Mitigation Plan

4.3.3. Flood

Refer to the Grampians Region Emergency Response Plan – Flood Sub-plan
Refer also to the Ararat Rural City Council Flood Response Plan

4.3.4. Transport incident – road

Refer to the control agency – Victoria Police

4.3.5. Human Disease (pandemic)

Refer to the Ararat Rural City Council Pandemic Plan

4.3.6. Transport accident – Aircraft

Refer to the Ararat Rural City Council Aerodrome Emergency Response Plan

4.4. Resilience

Resilient communities are socially connected and facilitate collaboration, communication, learning and the provision of support to individuals and families. Resilient communities promote individual and community wellbeing, the use of available resources, and cohesiveness to strengthen their communities for every day, as well as extreme challenges.

The ability of a community to respond to an emergency and subsequently recover will depend on the community's resilience. A key role of the MEMPC is to help create more resilient communities.

4.4.1. Share responsibility in Emergency Management

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

Through shared responsibility, resilient communities recover more quickly and can better respond to and recover from subsequent emergencies.

The MEMPC and its member agencies are encouraged to seek genuine participation from the community, empowering them to achieve share responsibility. Supporting the creation of Community Emergency Management Plans (discussed at 3.5 above) is one way the Ararat Rural City MEMPC is working towards this goal.

4.4.2. Building resilient communities

Emergency service organisation, agencies and stakeholders have specific programs to build community resilience through awareness and education. These programs include:

- Land use planning and fire prevention through Local Laws
- General community development activities
- Promoting community-led recovery when emergencies occur
- Provide community level emergency response through volunteer emergency services
- Undertake community education (see 4.4.3 below)

- Including communities in emergency management exercises where relevant (e.g., community evacuation exercises)
- Understanding and planning for vulnerability by identifying vulnerable people and facilities in the community.

4.4.3. Community education

Community education is vital to ensure community members understand the risks that apply to them and take action to prepare for an emergency. The development and delivery of relevant and effective community education resources and activities empower communities and enhance resilience by allowing individuals, families, and groups to be emotionally and physically equipped for an emergency.

The MEMPC members and other emergency services and agencies collaborate to engage the community through:

- Targeted community education programs
- Online community education resources
- Media releases
- Flyers, brochures, and information kits.
- Attendance at community events and meetings
- Newspaper and radio advertisements
- Social media promotions.

Community information during emergencies is addressed at 5.7 below.

5. RESPONSE

5.1. Response management arrangements

The SEMP defines Emergency Response as the actions taken immediately before, during and in the initial period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing, and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs.

5.1.1. Operational tiers

In Victoria, the response to emergencies operates at three tiers.

- Incident
- Regional
- State

Emergencies are managed at the appropriate operational tier; usually the incidents commence with incident-level management and are escalated as the situation requires (either as the incident develops or the scale of the incident is recognised). Conversely, as incidents are concluded, management de-escalate to a lower operational tier as required.

5.1.2. Classes of emergency

Between the EM Act 2013 and the SEMP, three “classes” of emergency have been defined. These broadly relate to the type of emergency, and the control agency assigned to manage them.

The classes of emergency are:

- Class 1 – a major fire or any other major emergency for which Fire Rescue Victoria, the Country Fire Authority, or the Victoria Emergency Services is the control agency under the SEMP.
- Class 2 – a major emergency which is not a Class 1 or Class 3 emergency.
- Class 3 – a warlike act or act of terrorism; a hijack, siege; or riot.

5.1.3. Command, control, and coordination

Emergency Management in Victoria is based on the functions of command, control, and coordination.

In broad terms.

- Command is the internal direction of personnel and resources; it operates “vertically” within an agency
- Control is the overall direction of response activities in an emergency; it operates “horizontally” across all agencies.
- Coordination is the bringing together of agencies and resource to ensure effective response to, and recovery from, emergencies.

These functions are enacted by Commanders, Controllers, respectively. For example, an Agency Commander directs the activities of their agencies; an Incident / Regional / State Controller provides overall direction of multi-agency response activities in an emergency; and an Emergency Response Coordinator provides overall coordination of agencies and resources to ensure the response and recovery is handled effectively.

5.1.4. Classification of emergencies

The scale of emergencies can be described using a three-level classification system, as described below.

Isolated emergency

- A single incident or small-scale impact emergency
- Can be resolved using local resources
- Significant consequences to the wider community are not anticipated.
- E.g., single dwelling damaged or destroyed by house fire, localised flood, storm, or vandalism,

Level One emergency

- A small-scale emergency that can be resolved through local or initial response resources.
- Less than 24 hours duration
- The response is limited to the incident area only
- There is little to no potential for escalation.

Level Two emergency

- Medium scale emergency requiring resources beyond the initial response.
- Response duration is over 24 hours
- There are one or more incident areas
- Multiple hazards are involved
- There is potential for escalation of the emergency.

Level Three emergency

- All large-scale emergency with high complexity
- Response duration is multiple days
- There are multiple incident areas
- The incident is, or is likely to become, one of State or Commonwealth significance.

5.2. Municipal Emergency Management Group (MEMG)

To support coordination of an imminent or ongoing major emergency, the Ararat Rural City Emergency Management Team (MEMT) may form at the discretion of the MEMO or MERC. This group consist of the following:

- Municipal Emergency Management Co-ordinator
- Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)
- Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)
- Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)
- Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)
- Chief Executive Officer, Ararat Rural City Council, or delegate
- Control agency representative
- Other agency as required

The role of the MEMG is to provide multi-agency coordination of response and recovery activities, where the scale of the emergency dictates the formation of the group is required to ensure an efficient and integrated response. Members of the group will liaise to determine what level of activation is required, and how activation shall take place.

Where appropriate, the functions of the MEMG will be carried out in close consultation with the MERC and the control agency.

5.3. Municipal Operations Coordination Centre (MOCC)

The Municipal Operations Coordination Centre (MOCC) is a multi-agency team established to maintain situational awareness of emergencies within in the municipal and coordinate the provision of human and material resources deployed in response to the emergency. The MOCC may also be established during significant support operations to a neighbouring municipality.

Administrative support to the MOCC will be drawn from Council staff. Council is responsible for ensuring a surge workforce is identified, trained, and exercised to maintain an appropriate level of readiness for MOCC operations.

The Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator, MEMO, or MERC may direct the establishment of the MOCC.

The primary location MOCC location for Ararat Rural City Council is:

Ararat Municipal Office
Mayors Room
59 Vicent Street
Ararat, VIC 3377

If a contingency MOCC location is required due to an emergency of a scale sufficient to render Ararat site unsuitable, consider seeking assistance from Northern Grampians Shire and/or Pyrenees Shire to house the MOCC at a site in their municipalities for remote operations (see 5.5.3 below).

Detailed MOCC operational procedures are provided in the Ararat Rural City Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre Operational Plan, a complementary plan to this MEMP.

5.4. Roles and Responsibilities

5.4.1. Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)

The Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) is a Council officer appointed pursuant to section 59G of the EM Act 2013. The MEMO and their deputies are appointed by the Council CEO via the Ararat Rural City Council Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation. This role is ordinary combined with the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator, but the MEMO responsibilities are outlined in the Act and SEMP.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the MEMO during the response to an emergency are:

- Coordinate municipal resources in emergency response
- Provide Council resources when requested by emergency services or police during response activities.
- Maintain effective liaison with emergency agencies within or servicing the municipal district.
- Maintain an effective contact base so municipal resources can be accessed on the 24-hour basis.
- Keep the MOCC prepared to ensure prompt activation if required.

- Liaise with the Emergency Management coordination and MRM on the best use of municipal resources.
- Organise a response debrief if requested by the MERC
- Ensure procedures and systems are in place to monitor and record expenditure by Council in relation to emergencies.
- Perform other duties as required.

Municipal authority

The MEMO is responsible to the coordination of municipal resources in responding to emergencies and has a full delegated powers to deploy and manage Council's resources during emergencies.

5.4.2. Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

The Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) is a Council officer appointed pursuant to section 59H of the EM Act 2013. The MRM and their deputies are appointed by the Council CEO via the Ararat Rural City Council Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate municipal and community resources for recovery
- Immediately following an emergency, assist with collating and evaluating information gathered in the Secondary Impact Assessment.
- Establish priorities for the restoration of community services and needs
- Liaise with the Emergency Management Coordinator and MEMO on the best use of municipal resources.
- Establish an information and coordination centre at an appropriate location/s.
- Liaise, consult, and negotiate with recovery agencies and Council on behalf of the affected area and community recovery committees.
- Liaise with the Regional Recovery Committee and Emergency Management Victoria.
- Engage with the Incident Controller in the transition from response to recovery
- Undertake other specific recovery activities as required.

The MRM may delegate duties to provide for effective management of recovery functions.

5.4.3. Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)

The *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* and *Fire Rescue Victoria 1958* require each Municipal Council to appoint a fire prevention officer (generally known as a Municipal Fire Prevention Officer [MFPO]) and any number of assistant fire prevention officers. The MFPO and their deputies are appointed by the Council CEO via the Ararat Rural City Council Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.

Responsibilities

- Work with the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP) (a subcommittee of the MEMPC, if and as established by that body
- Advise and assist the MFMP and the MEMO on fire prevention and related matters.

- Report to Council on fire prevention and related matters
- Carry out statutory tasks related to fire prevention notices and infringement notices.
- Investigate and act on complaints regarding potential fire hazards
- Advise, assist, and make recommendations to the public on fire prevention and related matters.
- Issue permits to burn (unders38 of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*)

5.5. Resource sharing arrangements

5.5.1. Procedures for requesting additional support

Where an agency requires additional support or resources outside their own capabilities, requests should be made through the Incident Commander to the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC), in accordance with the SEMP. Unfulfilled requests are escalated to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) who will seek resourcing within the region. The RERC may then escalate to the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) via the Senior Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) any remaining unfulfilled requests, for resources form across the state, interstate or internationally.

Control agencies may request the use of contracted or Council-managed resources to supplement emergency responses within the municipality if such resources cannot be reasonably sources by other means.

Generally, the order in which resources are drawn on is:

- Agency and local resources
- Support resources; within local area, then within regions, then within the state
- Interstate or Commonwealth resources
- International resources

5.5.2. Ararat Rural City Council emergency response resources

Ararat Rural City Council will provide resources to support an emergency response as outlined in this section, subject to the following:

- All resource allocations must be approved by the CEO or MEMO prior to deployment.
- All resource allocations are subject to availability, risk assessment, and consideration for safety of staff and associated OH&S implications
- In considering a request for resources, Council management must consider the resources likely to be required for recovery immediately post-event and how this may be impacted.
- Per Council's EBA, the maximum shift duration for Council staff is 12 hours, followed by a minimum 10 hour reset break between shifts.

Any requests for Council resources should be made via the MEMO.

Within the Ararat Rural City Council boundaries

Subject to the availability of plant and operators, and following an appropriate risk assessment, Council may supply

- Up to two graders and operators (with additional support vehicle and staff as required)
- Up to two water tankers and operators (for water supply only, not active firefighting.)
- Sand, sandbags and two staff at specific flooding locations.

5.5.3. Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing

The Protocol for Inter-Council Emergency Management Resource Sharing (the Protocol) is a voluntary protocol overseen by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to support the efficient sharing of resources between Councils. It establishes an agreed position between signatory Councils for the provision of assistance for response, relief, and recovery activities during an emergency and provides clear protocols and processes for initiating and completing request for support, and the management of associated operational and administrative requirements.

Ararat Rural City Council is a signatory to the Protocol, with activation of the Protocol delegated from the Council CEO to the Emergency Management Coordinator. Councils are required to re-commit to the Protocol every four years; Council last re-committed to the Protocol in December 2024 and will be due to re-commit by December 2028

Where Council has requested support from other municipalities during an emergency, it is the responsibility of Council to ensure assisting staff have the appropriate training, skills, and delegations to authorise assisting staff (e.g., Authorised Officers under s47 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, or other regulatory instruments that may apply) before those staff may exercise powers on behalf of Council.

Where Council determines activation of the Resource Sharing Protocol is necessary, a Coordinator of the Resource Sharing shall be appointed to manage the process, with a supporting team if required. The Coordinator of Resource Sharing will oversee:

- The resource sharing request and relevant delegate approvals
- Logistics associated with receiving staff from other councils (travel, accommodation, food, and welfare arrangements)
- Ensuring necessary equipment and access is available (e.g., vehicles, IT equipment and access)
- Ensuring necessary delegations and approvals are in place for specialist and statutory roles.
- Induction and briefing of support staff from other councils.
- Financial arrangements (payments and recording of expenses associated with the deployment of support staff from other councils)

5.6. Evacuation

Evacuation is the planned relocation of persons for dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas, and their eventual return. Evacuation may be undertaken by individuals or households of their own volition, or on recommendation of the control agency (via community messaging). Part 5 of the EM Act 1986 allows, where the Premier has declared a state of disaster, the relevant Minister to compel, evacuations from a disaster area (except where a person claims a pecuniary interest in the land, buildings, goods, or valuables therein).

The safest time to evacuate is well ahead of the anticipated impact of the emergency. A late, hasty, or poorly planned evacuation carries significant risk. The decision to recommend an evacuation, shelter in place or other action rests with the control agency in conjunction with Police, with consideration of any available expert advice.

Victoria Police are responsible for evacuation. Consideration must be given to the area of evacuation, the route to be followed, the means of transport, and the location evacuees will be asked to attend. Protection of evacuation routes and the presence of vulnerable persons requiring assistance to evacuate must also be considered.

Through the MEMO, Council should be engaged to assist in the implementation of the evacuation. Council will provide advice on the most suitable Emergency Relief Centre (ERC), including standing up an ERC if required, and the coordination of relief agencies, and the provision of immediate relief requirements.

Support to evacuate may be provided by the following:

- VICSES
- Regional Roads Victoria
- Local bus / public transport companies
- Ambulance Victoria
- Ararat Rural City Council

5.7. Community information and warnings

During an emergency, it is important to ensure warnings and public information are maintained at an optimum level. This ensures the community is informed and aware of the emergency, and where community action is necessary to protect lives, property, and the environment, maximises the likelihood of community members acting as expected.

5.7.1. Community information

During an emergency, individuals and communities should not expect an individual warning (e.g., a “know on the door” form emergency services). Emergency services are usually committed to combating the emergency to provide individual warnings; whilst this may occur on some occasions these are exceptional circumstances. There are several steps individuals should take to be informed of emergencies in their area, some of which include:

- Use of VicEmergency website (www.emergency.vic.gov.au) or app to be alerted to any incident or warnings in the local area.
- Call the VicEmergency hotline 1800226226
 - TTY users' phone 1800 555 677, then ask for 1800 226 226
 - Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1800 226 266
 - People who do not speak English call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 for translated information for the VicEmergency Hotline.
- Know how to tune in to ABC Radio in your area
 - FM107.9 – ABC Ballarat
 - FM 94.3 – News Radio Ballarat
 - ABC Listen app
- Monitor fire danger ratings on the CFA website (www.cfa.vic.gov.au) and severe weather warnings on the Bureau of Meteorology website (www.bom.gov.au)
- Stay connected with neighbours and other community members
- Monitor weather conditions and be alert for signs that may indicate an emergency is nearby.

5.7.2. Emergency warnings

Emergency agencies in Victoria use the standardised Australian Warning System which provides three levels depending on the risks posed by an emergency, and the actions required by community members nearby. These warning levels are:

- Advice : An incident is occurring or has occurred in the area. Access information and monitor conditions. Is also used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.
- Watch and Act: An emergency is developing nearby. You need to act now to protect yourself and others.
- Emergency Warning: An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You are in imminent danger and need to act now. You will be impacted.

Warnings issued will include a call-to-action statement, clearly describing the required actions to take. These may look like “Advice: Stay informed”, “Watch and Act: Prepare to leave”, or “Emergency Warning: Leave Now”.

Additionally, evacuation orders are aligned within the above three levels of warning. Two levels of evacuation warning exist – Prepare to Evacuate and Evacuate immediately.

5.8. Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR)

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

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

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

5.9 At Risk Facility List

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

6. RELIEF

6.1. Relief arrangements

Emergency relief is the provision of essential needs to individuals, families, and communities in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. The provision of relief is considered part of the response phase of an emergency.

The exact type of relief required will depend on the type, location, and extent of an incident and its impact on communities. A needs assessment is necessary to determine the type and location of relief required. Relief may be provided in a physical centre, or through other mechanisms such as virtual or outreach programs as required. Support provided may include (but not limited to) community information, emergency shelter, psychosocial support, material aid, food relief, first aid, financial assistance, animal welfare, and legal support. Relief can be provided at dedicated Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs), other places of community gathering, incident scenes, memorials, or other locations as required. A key function of relief centres is the triage impacted individuals for emergency accommodation if necessary.

Council is responsible for municipal relief coordination, whilst EMV has the responsibility for relief coordination at the regional and state tiers. The level and type of relief required will be determined in conjunction with the Control Agency / Incident Controller, IERC / MERC, MEMO, and MRM. EMV should also be included should escalation of the incident and associated relief need appear likely.

Further details on all aspects of relief may be found in the Ararat Rural City Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan

6.2. Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs)

The Ararat Rural City Council Relief Centre Operations Plan is a complementary plan to this MEMP and outlines in detail where and how ERC's may be established across the municipality. Suitable

facilities have been identified across the municipality, with two primary and 4 secondary ERC locations nominated. This list is not restrictive; an ERC may still be established in another location if required.

Council will establish and manage relief centres as required and provision of emergency shelter. Where in place, the Incident Controller will issue a public information on the location of ERCs as they open and close. It is critical that Incident Controllers and Incident Control Centre Public Information Units keep relief centre information up to date, to ensure detail provided to VicEmergency are accurate.

Council will share relief information on social media and on its website once details have been published on Vic Emergency. Council's Customer Service team will be notified in case residents call requesting information on ERCs (this will be limited to ERC locations and opening hours only; further queries will be directed to the VicEmergency hotline or MOCC as appropriate).

Council will coordinate the provision of council resources as required and assist Victoria Police with management of traffic flow including provision of information regarding road availability, capacity and safety.

6.3. Register.Find.Reunite

The Register.Find.Reunite service plays a critical role in reconnecting affected people during and following an emergency. Victoria Police are responsible for the activation of the Register.Find.Reunite service and will activate the Australian Red Cross to operate the service on their behalf.

The Register.Find.Reunite website is at <https://register.redcross.org.au>

6.4. Animal management in emergencies

Relief arrangements must include provision for animals (including companion animals and livestock). Whilst animals remain the responsibility of the person in charge of the animal, support to provide food and clean drinking water, as well as containment facilities, is often required during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

The Ararat Rural City Emergency Animal Welfare Management Plan is a complementary plan to this MEMP and contains detailed information on the arrangements that may be implemented to provide relief and recovery services for animals in emergencies. This plan outlines locations within the municipality assessed as being suitable to house companion animals and livestock.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is the relief coordinating agency for animal welfare, including domestic animals. In the case of companion animals and livestock this coordination is exerted through Agriculture Victoria. DEECA / Agriculture Victoria should be engaged as required as soon as animal welfare issues become apparent.

6.5. Prevention of family violence in relief

Evidence has shown that family violence increases in emergency-affected communities, even in families that have not previously experienced family violence. As a result, access to support services

in an emergency can be challenging, particularly for women and people with diverse gender identities, and those with additional factors such as age, culture, and disability.

Family violence can increase vulnerability to the risks arising from an emergency; victim survivors subjected to violence aimed at controlling their behaviour may be impeded from making and implementing their own emergency preparedness arrangements. Further, they may feel they are reliant on an abusive partner to house themselves and their children, potentially exposing them to further violence.

Relief centres can also pose significant challenges for victim survivors of domestic violence. The public space and shared emergency accommodation common at ERCs may expose them to an abusive ex-partner. Intervention orders may also be difficult to enforce during emergencies, including at relief centres.

The Ararat Rural City Council Relief and Recovery Sub-plan contains detailed information and strategies to aid in preventing family violence in relief. Refer also to 7.4.4 below for information on preventing family violence in recovery.

7. RECOVERY

7.1. Recovery arrangements

Recovery refers to the process of assisting persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a suitable and effective level of functioning. Recovery for each individual and community is different, making it impossible to measure recovery by a time period or strict definition. Is it impossible to return to a pre-disaster state, and some people may never fully recover from an emergency.

Recovery planning and programs refer to the Victorian Government's recovery outcomes, which are:

- Victorians are safe, resilient, and healthy
- Victorians are connected to people, places, and culture
- Government responses and services are people-centred, adaptable, and sustainable.
- Victoria has thriving regions and a healthy environment.

Further detail on all aspects of recovery may be found in the Ararat Rural City Council relief and Recovery Plan.

7.2. Transition to recovery

As the response to an emergency de-escalates, planning for an orderly transition to recovery should commence. The Controller at the relevant tier (Incident, Regional or State) should lead the transition, working with the Relief and Recovery Coordinator at the same tier to hand over coordination. It is critical to include the MRM or MEMO early in the process to ensure a smooth transition to recovery.

In most incidents, the response does not trigger significant recovery concerns or programs. Therefore, the response phase transitions, or deescalates, to business as usual for the municipality without the requirement for a formal event-specific response to recovery transition document. Formal transition from response to recovery is not required when there are no substantial regional or state coordination requirements in multiple recovery pillar coordination environments.

A formal transition or coordination from response to recovery may be required, this is between the Incident Controller and the MEMO/MRM and may only occur when:

- The threat of the incident has subsided
- The extent of community relief needs has been validated, and
- The resources required for recovery have been mapped to support the municipality to develop early recovery planning, focussing on operational recovery activities.

Effective transition from response to recovery needs to be considered early with a focus from the Incident Controller on gaining Impact Assessment data and situation updates. This will ensure Council has a clear understanding of the situation, impact, and indicators of need to continue with the early recovery support.

7.3. Impact assessments

Impact assessments are critical, they aid in understanding the extent, location, nature, and type of impact caused by the emergency. This supports relief and recovery planning, prioritization of relief and impacts caused by the emergency. This supports relief and recovery planning, prioritization of relief and recovery operations, and reporting to each level of government. This in turn allows recovery funding and other supports to be targeted according to need. See 7.4.4 below for more information on recovery funding arrangements.

7.3.1. Initial Impact Assessment (IIA)

The initial Impact Assessment (IIA) is a primary assessment by visual inspection and collection of quantifiable early data, undertaken by response agencies. These often comprise collection of data such as the number of dwellings destroyed or damaged and impacts on people remaining in affected areas.

The IIA is critical information for Council to understand the immediate relief and early recovery activities and permits the prioritization of subsequent assessment activities. It also indicates if further assessment and assistance is required. The outputs of the IIA process form a key component of the transition to recovery process. The IIA is undertaken 24-48 hours after safe access to the impact area has been attained

7.3.2. Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA)

The Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) is a more detailed and holistic assessment of the impact of the event on the community, and takes place following the IIA, and ideally within two weeks of gaining access to the impact area but no more than four weeks. Whilst the IIA provides a general

overview of the impact on communities, the SIA process is systematic, adds more detail, and considers built cultural, natural, economic, and social impacts.

Coordination of SIA is the responsibility of the Emergency Management Coordinator and the MRM. Council SIA teams conduct assessments using the Crisisworks system. Teams consist of multiple disciplines dictated by the nature of the emergency and its impacts. Teams may include a combination of Emergency Management staff, building inspectors / surveyors, environmental health offices, and planning staff. Refer to the Ararat Rural City Relief and Recovery Plan for further information.

7.3.3. Post Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA)

The Post Emergency Needs Assessment (PENA) is a longer-term, thorough assessment of the impacts and consequences of the emergency on the health and wellbeing of the community, its infrastructure and built environment, the economy, and the environment. This includes the longer-term impacts of destroyed assets, displaced residents, interruption in business, industry and tourism, and psychosocial impacts. This assessment informs the medium to long term recovery process. The period considered by the PENA is widely variable based on the scale of the emergency but can extend to 12 months or more.

Coordination of the PENA is the responsibility of the Recovery Coordinator (i.e., the agency to which control was handed during the transition to recovery (see 7.2 above). At the local tier, this will be Council. Refer to the Ararat Rural City Recovery Plan for further information.

7.4. Recovering from emergencies

7.4.1. Lines of recovery

Five overarching priorities provide guidance to ensure recovery planning is holistic and coordinated across different areas of government (Lines of Recovery – Victorian Government www.vic.gov.au). These are described below:

People and wellbeing

- Led at state level by DFFH
- Works to ensure impacted community members are safe, healthy and connected with their community

Aboriginal culture and healing

- Led at state level by EMV
- Works to ensure the voice of Aboriginal Victorians affected by disaster is represented in government decision-making and aims to ensure overall recovery efforts consider and safeguard a culturally appropriate and safe recovery for Aboriginal Victorians.

Business and economy

- Led at state level by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Works to support impacted business and industry sectors to recover and strengthen while ensuring employment opportunities are accessible and resilience is increased.

Environment and biodiversity

- Led at state level by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Works to coordinate and support recovery efforts for biodiversity and environment with a focus on biodiversity, water and catchments and sustainability.

Building and Infrastructure

- Led at state level by the Department of Transport and Planning, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, the Department of Education and Training, and Regional Development Victoria.
- Works to coordinate efforts to restore essential community and state-wide infrastructure safely and quickly, including rebuilding or repair of residential, commercial, and agricultural properties and community facilities.

7.4.2. Local recovery coordination

In emergencies where the requirement for formal recovery is defined, the Ararat Rural City Municipal Emergency Management Committee may establish an incident-specific recovery committee. The initial responsibilities of the of Recovery Committee will include formalising the governance structure, overseeing the transition from response to recovery, the establishment of working groups as required, and the development of a formal Recovery Plan. Recovery Plans will be developed to encompass the pillars of People & Well-being, Social, Economic, Built, Natural and Aboriginal Culture and Healing.

The Recovery Committee is responsible for ensuring affected communities are adequately consulted and represented in the recovery planning process, which may be through the support and engagement of Community Recovery Committees.

Detailed information on local recovery coordination arrangements including the establishment and terms of reference of incident-specific recovery committees and development of Recovery Plans, is available in the Ararat Rural City Relief and Recovery Plan.

7.4.3. Community engagement

Community engagement is fundamental to overall recovery. In the early stages on an emergency, engagement can be largely limited to information sharing and short-term recovery activities, however as the process of recovery commences, it is critical to ensure impacted communities and individuals are consulted and supported to make decisions about their own recovery.

Effective engagement can restore a sense of being in control for communities impacted by emergencies. It can also build the knowledge, experience and skills that assist the community to be more resourceful and resilient in the future.

A comprehensive engagement plan should be developed as part of a Municipal Recovery Plan to outline how communities will be informed, consulted, involved and empowered. Further information on community engagement in recovery is available in the Ararat Rural City Relief and Recovery Plan, and in the EMV Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Local Government.

7.4.4. Recovery funding arrangements

Recovery funding streams are available from various sources following an emergency. These include EMV, NEMA and recovery sector lead agencies. The availability and amount of funding available is determined through reporting of initial and secondary impact assessment, allowing funding bodies to target funding to the required areas.

The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement (DRFA) are predictable funding arrangements to assist Council on funding expenditure for recovery after significant disasters. Council must submit an intent to claim within 5 days of impact from the event. A successful DRFA claim requires detailed information on Council infrastructure and assets, including its condition prior to the emergency, and works undertaken to make the infrastructure or asset safe, and to recover the infrastructure or asset to its pre-emergency state. To facilitate this, Council Operations crews and contractors engaged in make-safe and recovery operations must maintain contemporaneous records of work undertaken (including geo and time stamped photographic evidence) as per the DRFA Guidelines. DRFA also has funding reimbursement for the operations of Emergency Relief Centres and phyco-social community support and session support for Council teams after a disaster. In Victoria, DRFA is streamlined through EMV. The DPT Assessor is the main point of contact for DRFA claims.

7.4.5. Prevention of family violence in recovery

Family violence in the recovery stages of an emergency, similarly to the relief stage (discussed at 6.5 above) has been shown to be a significant problem requiring consideration and mitigation throughout the recovery process. The Family Violence Framework for Emergency Management contains guidance on steps that should be taken through the recovery process to provide support for users and victims of family violence.

DFFH Family Violence Principal Strategic Advisors are available for including in recovery committees to provide specific advice on steps that may be taken to prevent family violence. Recovery plans must contain family violence referral pathways and services based on local needs, ensure public meetings and forums provide information of family violence in emergencies and ensure support agencies (including Victoria Police and other local services where practicable) are present.

It is important that all stakeholders understand the challenges to families, communities and their recovery posed by family violence, and consider how family violence can be addressed before, during and after an emergency.

8. APPENDICES

A: MEMPC Terms of Reference

B: Acronyms and abbreviations

C: List of MEMP Sub-Plans and Complementary Plans

D: Neighbourhood Safer Places

E: Exercises

APPENDIX A: MEMPC TERMS OF REFERENCE

MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE (MEMPC) TERMS OF REFERENCE	Document No:	NA
	Review Date:	March 2025
	Last Reviewed:	March 2023
	Next Review Due:	March 2027
	Revision No:	5
Responsible Officer:	Emergency Management Coordinator	
Approved By:	MEMPC	
Related Documents:	Municipal Emergency Management Plan	

PURPOSE

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) is a multi-agency committee for the municipal district. It is the intent of its emergency planning process to develop a coherent plan that is known and understood by all agencies, MEMPC members, senior Council officers and all who have emergency management responsibilities.

SUMMARY

This Committee is formed pursuant to Section 59F of the Emergency Management Act 2013 (EM Act 2013) and Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018 (EMLA 2018).

FUNCTIONS

The MEMPC is the peak planning body for the municipal district and operates as a forum for government and non-government agencies to develop policies, procedures, strategies and frameworks to support coordinated emergency management planning for the municipality.

In line with Section 59D of the EM Act 2013, the function of the MEMPC is to:

- Be responsible for the preparation and review of its MEMP
- Ensure that its MEMP is consistent with the State Emergency Management Plan and its relevant REMP
- Provide reports of recommendation to its REMPC in relation to any matter that affects, or may affect, emergency management planning in the municipality
- Share information with the REMPC and other MEMPCs to assist effective emergency management planning
- Collaborate (having regards to the Guidelines) with any other MEMPC that the MEMPC considers appropriate in relation to emergency management planning, including preparing MEMPs
- Perform any other function conferred on the MEMPC by the EM Act 2013, or any other act.

MEMBERSHIP

Selection Process

Section 59A of the EM Act 2013 specifies the minimum membership requirements of the MEMPC. The Committee may invite additional people with key skills or knowledge to join the MEMPC as necessary.

Membership

The following agencies/organisations comprise the core membership of the MEMPC:

- Municipal Council (Ararat Rural City Council)
- Victoria Police
- Country Fire Authority
- Ambulance Victoria
- Victoria State Emergency Service
- Australian Red Cross
- Department Families, Fairness and Housing.
- Department of Health

Member Responsibilities

The following are the responsibilities of all representatives of core member agencies/organisations of the MEMPC:

- Prepare for, prioritise and attend scheduled meetings
- Proactively contribute to the work of the MEMPC
- Provide meeting papers to the Chair at least 7 days prior to a scheduled meeting
- Respect confidential and privileged information
- Represent all areas of their agencies and associated entities
- Report on relevant agency activity relating to emergency management mitigation, response or recovery activities with a focus on emerging risks or opportunities

Proxies

Representatives of core member agencies/organisations who are unable to be present at MEMPC meetings must nominate a suitably skilled and authorised representative from their agency/organisation a minimum of 24 hours to the MEMPC Chair, in writing, before the meeting is scheduled to occur. This proxy is considered to have the same voting rights as the substantive MEMPC member, unless the MEMPC Chair is advised otherwise.

Additional Members of the MEMPC

The MEMPC may invite additional agencies/organisations for the purposes of skill/knowledge specialisation, specific hazard knowledge and transparency with partner agencies that operate within the municipal district. These members will not have right to propose or vote on motions requiring a decision by the MEMPC, but are welcomed to contribute knowledge, information and insight on behalf of their organisation to the MEMPC.

Observers

Observers to MEMPC meetings may attend at the discretion of the MEMPC Chair, and must be nominated in writing a minimum of 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting to the MEMPC Chair. Observers must respect all confidentiality and operating protocols of the MEMPC, and must not:

- Propose or vote on motions
- Intrude on the procedures of the MEMPC
- Take part in the meeting proceedings without the invitation of the MEMPC Chair

Meeting Frequency

The MEMPC is required to meet a minimum of four (4) times per year. The specific dates and times of MEMPC meetings are to be determined on a yearly basis for the following calendar year at the discretion of and agreement by the MEMPC.

Quorum

A quorum is greater than 50% (50% + 1) attendance of the current voting members and includes the MEMPC Chair or Deputy Chair (if applicable)

The MEMPC may meet in the absence of a quorum being present, however no decision-making processes, such as motions, may be actioned until a quorum is present.

Secretariat

The administration of the MEMPC will be determined by discussion and agreement of the MEMPC.

Duties include:

- Scheduling meetings
- Providing Committee members with the meeting agenda
- Record agreed actions in the MEMPC Actions Register

The nominated Secretariat of the Ararat MEMPC is Chandra Willmott COO, ARCC

Voting Rights

The representatives of the core member agencies/organisations of the MEMPC are allocated one (1) vote for the purposes of decision making within the MEMPC.

Additional member agencies/organisations and observers do not have voting rights for the purpose of decision making within the MEMPC.

Reporting Requirements

Representatives of core member agencies/organisations are required to submit a written report a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the scheduled occurrence of the MEMPC meeting. Written reports are to be also presented verbally to the MEMPC during the scheduled meetings, and will be recorded within the minutes of the meeting.

Representatives of additional member agencies/organisations may submit a written report to the MEMPC Chair if the issue/topic is considered of importance to the MEMPC, otherwise a verbal report may be submitted at the MEMPC and will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Minutes of MEMPC meetings will be forwarded to all representative members of the MEMPC (including Additional Members, excluding Observers) and to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC).

The collection, collation and distribution of documentation relating to the MEMPC is the responsibility of the Secretariat of the MEMPC. The proceedings, information and documentation of the MEMPC is considered confidential unless determined by the MEMPC, however these records remain discoverable under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Expected/Definite Life of the MEMPC

The life of the MEMPC is considered to be ongoing. Representatives of core member agencies/organisations are required to notify the MEMPC Chair (in writing) of any material/substantive changes to the representation of their agency/organisation if it affects the operation of the MEMPC as soon as practicable.

Sub-Committees & Working Groups

Sub-Committees and Working Groups may be established at the discretion and agreement of the MEMPC to address specific hazards or areas of interest in relation to emergency management within the municipal district. The membership, Terms of Reference and scope of the sub-committee/working group is required to be adopted by the MEMPC.

The Chair of each Sub-Committee/Working Group is required to report to the MEMPC at each scheduled meeting on the proceedings of their Sub-Committee/Working Group and raise any issues/areas of concern to the MEMPC for consideration.

Reporting to the REMPC

Any issues that require escalation to the REMPC will be completed by the MEMPC Chair, and will be conveyed at the REMPC meetings by the nominated REMPC representative for the Ararat MEMPC.

The nominated Ararat MEMPC representative to the REMPC is: Chandra Willmott, COO, ARCC

REFERENCES

Emergency Management Act 2013

Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018

Emergency Management Victoria – Emergency Management Planning Reform Guidelines

APPENDIX B: ACRONYMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Explanation
ARC	Australian Red Cross
AV	Ambulance Victoria
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
CA	Control Agency
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DH	Department of Health
DJSIR	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning (including Head, Transport for Victoria)
EM	Emergency Management
EMLO	Emergency Management Liaison Officer
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
EPA	Environment Protection Authority

Acronym	Explanation
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
FFMV	Forest Fire Management Victoria
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
ICA	Insurance Council of Australia Ltd
ICC	Incident Control Centre
IMT	Incident Management Team
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
PV	Parks Victoria
R.F.R	Register.Find.Reunite
RCC	Regional Control Centre
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMPC	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
RSA	Response Support Agency

Acronym	Explanation
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Salvation Army	Salvation Army – Victorian Emergency Services
SCC	State Control Centre
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SERC	State Emergency Relief Coordinator
SRC	State Response Controller
VCC EM	Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry
VFA	Victorian Fisheries Authority
VicPol	Victoria Police
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service

APPENDIX C: LIST OF MEMP SUB-PLANS AND COMPLEMENTARY PLAN

Plan Name	Type		Owner
	S	C	
ARCC Municipal Emergency Management Plan	●		MEMPC
ARCC Municipal Fire Management Plan	●		MFMC
ARCC Flood Response Plan		●	Council
Grampians Regional Emergency Response Plan Flood Sub-plan	●		REMPC
ARCC Animal Emergency Management Welfare Plan	●		MEMPC
ARCC Relief and Recovery Sub-Plan		●	Council
Relief Centre Operations Plan		●	Council
Donations and Appeals Plan		●	Council
ARCC Heatwave Plan		●	Council
ARCC Pandemic Plan		●	Council
ARCC Emergency Coordination Centre Operation Plan		●	Council
Ararat Airport Emergency Plan		●	Council
ARCC Children and Young People Emergency Plan		●	Council

Other specific plans have been developed to address the risks identified by the MEMPC
Details of the responsible authority and holder of the plans are as follows

Additional Emergency Plan	Responsible Agency
Ararat Hopkins Correctional Centre	Ararat Prison
Wind Turbine Rescue Plan	Victoria Police
Blue-Green Algae Plan	GWM Water
Ararat Hospital Plan	EGHS
Western Highway Diversion Plan	VicRoads
School Bus Route Plan	Dept. Education
School Evacuation Plan	Dept. Education

APPENDIX D: NEIGHBOURHOOD

This appendix provides a summary of the Neighbourhood Safer Places and Community Fire Refuge present in the Ararat Rural City Council. Refer to the Ararat Fire Management Sub-Plan for more details.

Bushfires Places of Last Resort (BPLR)

BPLAs are locations that may provide some protection from direct flame and heat from a fire, but do not guarantee safety. They are intended as a place of last resort if all other fire plans have failed.

Emergency services may not be present at an BPLR, no support services are provided, and shelter from the elements may no be provided. Travelling to the BPLR may expose people to significant danger.

CFA advises that BPLRs are places of absolute last resort. The safest place to be in out of a high-risk bushfire area.

More detailed information on BPLRs is available on the CFA website.

Six BPLRs are maintained in the Ararat Rural City municipal. They are located at:

Locality	Street Address	Location name / type
Ararat	Waratah Avenue	Alexandra Oval
Willaura	Main Street (Opposite Commercial Street)	Willaura Memorial Hall
Streatham	Campbell Street (Glenelg Highway)	Streatham Memorial Hall
Elmhurst	High Street (Pyrenees Hwy) between Elmhurst-Glenpatrick Road and Degraes Street	Elmhurst Mechanics Hall
Lake Bolac	Glenelg Highway (near corner Mortlake-Ararat Road)	Lake Bolac Information Centre
Moyston	Crn Moyston-Great Western Road and Ararat-Halls Gap Road	Moyston Recreation Reserve

APPENDIX E: EXERCISES

Title	Date/s	Agencies Involved	Nature of Event	Number of Attendees	Location	Activity objectives
Ballyrogan	14 th May 2012	Victoria Police Ararat Rural City Council Ambulance Victoria CFA SES	Challicum Wind Farm	11	Challicum Hills Wind Farm, 20 km East of Ararat	The exercise was to test the effectiveness of plans in response to an incident, at height and within a wind turbine generator structure (the nacelle).
ERC Exercise	28 November 2013	Ararat Rural City Council Department of Human Services Grampians Community Health Victoria Police	Fire has broken out in McDonald Park. Fire is heading towards Chalambar Golf Course		Desktop	Document the multi-agency relief support available for a medium sized emergency.
Moyston Fire	2 January 2015	Multi agency	Incident			
Jalukar Fire	22 April 2015	Multi agency	Incident			
Ballyrogan Fire	25 November 2015	Multi agency	Incident			
Exercise Vincent	21 June 2016	Ararat Rural City Council SES Dept JTR DHHS AV Red Cross	Two truck collision at Crn Vincent Street and High street. One truck is carry livestock and one is LPG tanker	21	Desktop	Test internal and external communications in and between agencies. Assess the knowledge of local Emergency Services in relation to actions required in the event of a

		CFA Victoria Police				major incident in the town To check the currency of contacts as listed in the MEMP
Hopkin River Flood	15 September 2016	Multi agency	Incident			
COVID Pandemic	25 January 2020	Multi agency	Incident			
2022 October Flood	October 2022	Multi agency	Incident			
Pomonal Fires	13 February 2024	Multi Agency	Incident			
Bayindeen Fires	22 February 2024	Multi Agency	Incident			
Yarram Gap Fires	17 December 2025	Multi agency	Incident			