Ararat Rural City

Ararat Municipal

Children and Young People Emergency Plan

Version 1.1 – Date of issue: 15/06/2017

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Version control

Version number	Date of issue	Author(s)	Brief description of change
V 1.0	22/05/2017	MRM	Draft
V 1.1	15/06/2017	MEM	Minor stakeholder amendments, and move from draft to final version.

AUTHORITY

The Municipal Recovery Partners, Children and Young People Emergency Plan has been developed with reference given to the *Child safe standards*. These arrangements have been prepared as a sub plan to the *Municipal Emergency Management Plan* (MEMP) for the Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Victoria has introduced compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from abuse. The child safe standards apply to organisations from 1 January 2016.

Under the Child Safe guidelines, a child is defined as aged under 18.

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources

Children and young people respond to disasters in a different way to adults, and have unique needs that must be addressed when planning relief and recovery activities. Additionally children and young people have capacity, energy and innovation and are able to contribute ideas and to assist in the delivery of activities that can support their community to be prepared for a range of disasters.

The CHSTL is seen as the Subject Matter Expert, liaising with partner agencies to ensure that any Council run Relief/Recovery centre is a child safe place.

1.1 ACTION PLAN

This plan will identify short and long term actions that Council will undertake to ensure that this plan fulfills its aim. The action plan will outline the actions and an achievable timeframe for implementation. The Municipal Recovery Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

1.2 ACTIVATION

This plan may be activated by any of the following:

- The opening of a relief centre
- The opening of a recovery centre

1.3 EXERCISES & TRAINING

Training of staff and volunteers that have a role in protecting children and young people during and after an emergency is an essential component in ensuring their welfare. As identified in the action plan (Appendix A), Council will seek to have all staff that have nominated themselves to work in a relief or recovery centre undertake Personal Support training as a minimum.

Exercises are conducted by Council in conjunction with other agencies to enhance the training of emergency management personnel and to allow for the testing of emergency arrangements. Where possible, all exercises should test a component of the Child Safe Guidelines.

2.0 CHILD SAFE TEAM LEADER - DESCRIPTION

2.1 EXCERPT FROM THE ERC SOGS:

Who:	Selected personnel appointed to the position will undertake this role. Possess a current working with children card and police check; ideally as part of their ongoing council role. Personnel must be familiar, and comply with the Child Safe Standards.
Reports to:	Emergency Relief Centre Manager; working alongside the Community Support Team Leader

Responsibility:	In accordance with the Child Safe standards, create and maintain child safe environments for people aged under 18 within a Relief or Recovery centre.
	
	    ▪ assist the triage of affected young people attending and redirecting them to the most appropriate service;
	
	Along with VCC and Red Cross, may be directed by Victoria Police to look after unaccompanied minors:
	
	    ▪ ensure all attending young people are registered; assist with that registration
	
	    ▪ support VCC and Red Cross to fulfill their roles; and
	
	    ▪ ensure young people once registered are advised what to do next.
	
	    ▪ Contribute to the overall effective functioning of the ERC.
	
	    ▪ Other appropriate duties as directed by the Community Support Team Leader or Victoria Police in relation to comfort and welfare of affected young persons.
	
	    •

2.2 CONTACT DIRECTORIES

Contact details for internal staff, volunteers and external agencies and suppliers are included in the MEMPlan. The MEMPlan will list contact details for suitable, screened Child Safe Team Leader(s) and other authorised staff/volunteers.

This list is on Crisisworks and is available from the MRM or MERO.

2.3 REVIEW

The Municipal Recovery Committee will review this plan two years after adoption and then biennially, or following an emergency event involving its activation.

2.4 COUNCIL'S ROLE IN EMERGENCIES

There are a number of activities that Council undertakes in its emergency management role. They can be classified as things that Council does before, during and after emergencies. This plan will identify the actions that Council will take at each of these stages to ensure that the Child Safe Standards are adhered to.

Complying with the Child Safe standards is a proactive approach to creating a safe and friendly environment for children and young people during emergencies. The Child Safe standards ensure children and young people do not encounter any harm in the aftermath of an emergency. It also supports staff and volunteers who work in these environments.

The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is paramount.

There are some additional factors however, which should be considered:

- Children and young people separated from parents/guardian (unaccompanied minors)

- Children and young people with disabilities

- Homeless young people

- Children experiencing/showing signs of distress, anxiety or confusion

- Increased family violence following emergencies

- Children from a CALD background

The MEMPplan and the Municipal Recovery Plan will identify ways to embed child safety standards in Council emergency management activities and inform future iterations of this plan.

3.0 BEFORE

The municipality protects the community's welfare through ongoing prevention strategies and programs. In this planning and prevention phase of emergency management, Council will ensure that the needs of children and young people are considered and actions identified to address them.

Activities that are or can be undertaken in the preparedness phase include:

3.1 STAFF WHO WILL HAVE CONTACT WITH CHILDREN DURING AN EMERGENCY

- Pre - Screening – Police Check and current Working With Children checks (ideally as part of their ongoing Council role)

- Establishment of accountability lines (they report to the ERC manager)

- Method of identification in the ERC or Recovery Centre (tabard)

- Read and abide by Council Code of Conduct.

3.2 EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Personal Support training for staff and volunteers who will have contact with children

- Family Violence in Emergencies for staff and volunteers who will have contact with affected residents

- Familiarisation with the Child Safe Standards

- How to raise/report a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child/young person

- Roles of other agencies

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF ERCS AND RCS

CHSTLs should provide subject matter input to any assessment of centres identified as ERCs or RCs to ensure they meet Child Safe Standards as far as practicable.

Refer to: ARCC Audit Check List for Relief/Recovery Centres

4.0 DURING

4.1 EMERGENCY RELIEF CENTRES (ERCS) AND RECOVERY CENTRES (RCS) SEE NOTE ABOVE

When an ERC or RC is activated the MRM will:

- Direct the ERC or RC Manager to establish a child friendly space at the ERC and/or RC
- Appoint a Child Safe Team Leader from the pool of suitably screened/trained staff
- Ensure that the CSTL is aware of any Red Cross; VCC-EM and Salvation Army Team Leaders on site who are able to provide psychological first aid and may possess Working with Children cards.

4.2 CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES:

- All staff and volunteers have been formally appointed to work in child friendly spaces (CFS) or centres – do not allow people to turn up and offer to volunteer unsolicited

- Child Safe Team Leader (CHSTL) be appointed and easily identifiable – main contact point for children, young people, parents, and staff and volunteers to contact if they have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person

- Liaise with VicPol; Red Cross; VCC-EM and Salvation Army as agency partners in Child safety

- Ensure that adequate provision is made for infants, this includes consulting with Maternal Child Health to support breast feeding mothers and appropriate supplies for bottle fed infants

- Reporting mechanisms for concerns about a child/young person or an adult be made clear to everyone in ERC or RC (in accordance with the Child Safe Standards)

- Physical environment assessed to ensure child safety – family groups separate from single adults. Toilet areas well lit all night.

- Program activities age appropriate (mix of pre-primary, primary and youth activities)

- Program activities take into account different activities that would appeal to boys and girls

- Children and young people made aware of evacuation and emergency procedures

4.3 ROLE OF CHILD SAFE TEAM LEADER

- Specific people designated as Child Safe Team Leader (CHSTL) for the duration of an emergency response to action and monitor child safe procedures,

- May be responsible for investigating any reports of children at risk

- May be designated by Victorian Police responsibility for supervision of separated children and young people and collaborate with agencies on reunification.

4.4 CHILD SAFE REPORTING MECHANISM

Any ERC or RC personnel who have reported to them or who have concerns about the welfare of any child in an ERC or RC will immediately inform the CHSTL. The CHSTL will take immediate action to ensure the child at

risk is taken out of the environment causing the risk. This includes physical and psychological risk. The CHSTL will then ensure the ERC or RC Manager is notified of the situation.

In an ERC, the ERC Manager will liaise with the Victoria Police member allocated to the ERC who will determine whether and what action should be taken. The ERC Manager will inform the MRM as soon as practicable. The ERC Manager will ensure appropriate record keeping of any incident.

(Note: a VicPol member will attend at the request of MERC when an ERC is activated)

In an RC the RC Manager will liaise with the MRM to determine whether and what action should be taken. The RC Manager will contact Police to attend if a child attends unaccompanied or the manager feels the child is at risk by another person or an offence against a child has or may possibly occur. The RC Manager will ensure appropriate record keeping of any incident.

If there is any uncertainty about the action that should be taken, the ERC Manager or Victoria Police member should refer to DHHS Emergency Management for advice. Ararat Rural City Council is part of the Grampians/Barwon South West DHHS Emergency Management region and the contacts are as follows:

During business hours call: 1800 675 598

After hours call: 13 12 78

5.0 RECOVERY PHASE

5.1 MUNICIPAL SECONDARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (MSIA)

When initiating an 'Outreach Program' in the recovery phase of an emergency, it is important that all relevant Council staff are made aware of the needs and safety of children and young people. Where possible a member of the outreach team should have a Working with Children Check (WWCC). It is important that they are aware of the increased incidence of domestic violence following an emergency. Red Cross and VCC-EM should be asked to assist in Outreach and providing personal support.

The needs and safety of children and young people should also be considered in any vigils/memorials that may occur during the recovery phase.

Refer to ARCC Secondary Impact Assessment Guidelines.

6.0 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This Plan has been developed with the support and input from the following Council services:

- Community Life team (including Maternal & Child Health)
- Emergency Management Team

And partner agencies:

- Red Cross
- Victorian Council of Churches – Emergency Ministry
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Community Health Organisations

The Children and Young People Emergency Sub-plan of the MEMPlan was adopted by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee on:

ARCC   Date: 23 May 2017

6.1 DISTRIBUTION

This plan will be distributed to the following: (refer Appendix B for the List of Acronyms)

- EMC
- MERO
- MRM
- Department of Health and Human Services
- MEMPC
- Victoria Police
- Red Cross
- Victorian Council of Churches - Emergency Ministry
- Other internal or external personnel, where appropriate

6.2 REFERENCES

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/764616/Planning-Guide-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/764248/EM-planning-for-children-and-young-people-web.pdf

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources

6.3 CODE OF CONDUCT

Council and each Partner Agency is to refer to their own Code of Conduct

Action	When	By	Progress
Update the CHSTL role statement in the ARCC ERC SOGs	15 May 2017	MRM	In progress
Ensure testing against the Child Safe guidelines occurs in every ERC exercise as an objective	15 May 2017	MRM	In progress
Contact Community Health CEOs in the Grampians region to discuss/launch the plan	June 2017	MRM	

ARC	Australian Red Cross
CFS	Child Friendly Spaces
CHSTL	Child Safe Team Leader
DHHS	Department of Health & Human Services
EM	Emergency Management
EMLO	Emergency Management Liaison Officer
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ERC	Emergency Relief Centre
MECC	Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre
MEMPlan	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
MERO	Municipal Emergency Resources Officer
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
MRP	Municipal Recovery Partners
MSIA	Municipal Secondary Impact Assessment
NWMetro	North West Metro Relief & Recovery Collaboration
NWMetro SOGs	North West Metro Relief & Recovery Collaboration: Standard Operating Guidelines
RC	Recovery Centre
SA	Salvation Army
SES	State Emergency Service
VCC- EM	Victorian Council of Churches –Emergency Ministry
VicPol	Victoria Police

APPENDIX C: DISTRIBUTION REGISTER

Name and position	Item/version distributed	Date of distribution
As per MEMPlan - ARCC	Version 1.1	15/6/2017

Physical Safety and Security		
Questions	**Yes/No**	**Strategy to address gap**
Is there a location for children in a secure section of the centre?		
Are children supervised at all times?		
Are there security measures to ensure the children's section is protected at all times?		
Are children secure in an area away from animals that may be dangerous? E.g. Pets or stock.		
Are children able to safely access all relevant areas of the centre without passing hazards? E.g. Bathrooms play areas.		
Are all areas accessible and safe for children with physical disabilities? E.g. Wheelchair access.		
Do family sleeping areas have direct access to bathrooms? Are infant and children's washing facilities available?		
Are there centre staff monitoring bathroom activity to reduce the risk of inappropriate activity in bathrooms?		
Are bathrooms segregated by sex and well lit inside and outside? Are there toilet facilities that children can use safely and easily? ▪ sufficient space for parents to accompany children ▪ ability for a parent of either sex to accompany their children into the toilet. ▪ well signed – easily recognised by children and parents ▪ baby nappy change facilities		
Are all areas well lit at night? E.g. Children's paths to bathrooms.		
Is there an agency responsible for first aid?		
Are there hygiene standards in place across the evacuation centre? E.g. Food, linen, rubbish disposal.		

Child Protection		
Are children in the care of their parent/legal guardian?		
Is there evidence of child neglect or abuse?		
Are there systems in place to report unlawful acts against children or concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child? Are centre staff and volunteers aware of this system?		
Has information on reporting concerns regarding child neglect/abuse been made public? Do centre staff know how to refer issues if appropriate? Is there a staff member designated to monitor concerns from all those in the centre including staff, community and children?		
Is the area for families and children separate from the area for single men and single women?		
Have all agency staff and volunteers interacting with children been checked for photo ID? Is there a registration process?		
Do all people working with children have police checks and working with children checks? Is there a system to register and monitor this?		
Is there a sign in and sign out system for all visitors entering areas that are designated for children?		
Child Friendliness		
Do children have age appropriate spaces to play, eat and sleep?		
Is there a space for rest and relaxation? E.g. porta cots for infants.		
Is there a space for active play?		
Are there distressing images visible to children? E.g. News footage.		
Are signs and notices also located at a child friendly level? E.g. Directions to bathrooms.		
Is there information letting children know who they can talk to if they have any concerns for their safety or for the safety of others? Is this information displayed in a way and at a level that is appropriate for children?		
Are nutritious, age appropriate meals, drinks and snacks available for children? Are children able to access food outside meal times?		
Is the distribution of food being appropriately supervised? E.g. Monitoring hygiene and possible food allergies.		
Are there appropriate medical staff and services available to address the needs of children? E.g. Paediatrician, maternal and child health nurse or helpline numbers.		

Are children's mental health needs being assessed and addressed?		
Has the evacuation plan for the centre considered the needs of children?		
Are there adequate sanitation services available for children? E.g. Can children reach hand basins in the bathrooms?		
Is there a nappy changing area? Is there appropriate sanitation and proper disposal of nappies?		
Is there a private, quiet area for breast feeding women? Is there support for breastfeeding women if required? E.g. Maternal and child health nurse, help line number.		
Is there an appropriate area with supplies for preparing formula for bottle fed babies? Can this be accessed any time day or night?		
Child Rights		
If the centre is open for a protracted period is there provision for continuity of education? E.g. Buses to schools or tutors in evacuation centre.		
Are children being treated with respect and consideration?		
Are children being listened to are their rights being upheld?		
Are photographers seeking parental consent to take photos?		
How might children perceive their level of safety in this environment?		
Have the implications of nearby traffic been considered in relation to children's safety (location, volume of road crossings and speed controls)?		

References

Malone. K. (Draft November 2010). *UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Country Accreditation: A critical review. Discussion paper one, child friendly Asia pacific. Wollongong, NSW.*

NSW Commission for children and young people. (June 2009) *Built 4 kids, a good practice guide to creating child friendly built environments.* NSW.

Howard. A. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. (2006) What constitutes Child Friendly Communities and How are they built. Perth.

National Heart Foundation of Australia. (2004) Healthy by Design: a planners' guide to environments for active living. Victoria