

Horsham Rural City

Municipal Emergency Management Plan

2022-2025

Version 3.0



Administered by the:

Wimmera Emergency Management Team



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1. Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Horsham Rural City Council, as Chair of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

1.2 Authority

In 2020, the [Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018](#) amended the [Emergency Management Act 2013 \(EM Act 2013\)](#) (Act) to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the state, regional and municipal levels. It created an obligation for a MEMPC to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria. Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to the task of emergency management planning for the municipal district.

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

1.3 Plan assurance and approval

1.3.1 Assurance

A Statement of Assurance (including a checklist and certificate) has been prepared by the Horsham Rural City MEMPC and submitted to the REMPC pursuant to the [Act](#) (s60AG).

This planning template holds similar information as MEMPs developed for the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership municipalities of Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack. The plans are maintained by members of the Wimmera Emergency Management Team on behalf of the four Councils. Each plan is developed in collaboration with the four MEMPCs, however, each is individualised to the specific municipality.

Meets assurance general: Plan has been prepared with regard to the following guidance in ministerial guidelines issued under the [Act](#) s77 ([Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans](#)).

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1.3.2 Approval

This plan has been written and approved by the Horsham Rural City MEMPC at its meeting held on 16 March 2022.

The plan has been through an assurance process overseen by the Grampians REMPC and is self-assured by the Horsham MEMPC. This plan comes into effect when it is published and remains in effect until superseded by an approved and published update.

1.4 Plan review

The MEMP will be reviewed and updated as required:

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

To ensure the plan provides for a current integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management and is effective, it is to be fully reviewed at least every three years. An urgent update of this plan is permitted if there is a significant risk that life or property will be endangered if the plan is not updated ([Act s60AM](#)). Urgent updates come into effect when published on the Council website.

This plan will be reviewed no later than March 2025. This plan is current at the time of publication and remains in effect until modified, superseded or withdrawn.

[Appendix G: Amendment register](#)

1.5 Disclaimer

No reader should act, based on any matter contained in this publication, without appreciating that it may be the subject of amendment or revocation from time to time without notice. The members of the Horsham MEMPC expressly disclaim all and any liability (including liability in negligence) to any person or body in respect of anything and of the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done by any such person or body in reliance, whether total or partial, upon the whole or any part of this publication.

1.6 Plan aim and objectives

This plan documents the agreed emergency management arrangements for mitigation, response and recovery, and defines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at the municipal level. It supports efficiency and effectiveness on a platform of shared responsibility and interoperability to deliver community centred outcomes.

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The plan seeks to build safer and more resilient communities through dynamic engagement and connectedness with the individuals, groups and broader society that makes up the Horsham Rural City district. It ensures a coordinated and integrated approach with a focus on community involvement in planning in line with the ‘all communities – all emergencies’ approach to emergency management.

2. Municipal district characteristics

2.1 Topography

Horsham Rural City is located on the national highway and rail systems approximately halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide. The section of the Western Highway, which passes through the municipality, is a known fatigue zone. The municipality encompasses a large area of Victoria’s highly productive Wimmera broadacre dryland cropping country in the north, graduating to highly prized grazing land in the southern areas bordering the Grampians National Park. The heritage Wimmera River and several recreational lakes throughout the municipality complement the diverse local topography and pleasant climate.

Horsham is the largest regional centre in the Wimmera area, providing goods and services not only to its residents but those from the surrounding municipalities. It’s location on the junction of the Henty, Wimmera and Western Highways makes it a key hub for the distribution of a range of goods and services across the region, and from the region to ports.

The northern area of the municipality is characterised by wide open clay soils becoming more undulating towards the south as the plains meet the Great Dividing Range in the Grampians National Park. The heritage Wimmera River, as well as the Natimuk Creek system, cut through the wide-open lands as they traverse the municipality. The Glenelg River abuts the southern end of the municipality.

For further information, refer to: [Appendix F: Maps](#) or [Horsham Rural City Community Map](#)

2.2 Climate

The climate in the Horsham area is dominated by warm dry summers and cool wet winters. The bushfire season generally runs from November to April. Weather conditions associated with the bushfire season in the municipality include warm to hot north-westerly winds, high temperatures and low relative humidity followed by cool south-westerly changes. In recent years, there has been a significant decrease in average spring and autumn rainfall.

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2.3 Climate change¹

Climate change projections predict that the municipality can expect:

- Increased temperatures with the greatest increases occurring in summer
- To be drier with greater decreases in rainfall expected in spring
- An increase in the intensity of rainfall but a decrease in the number of rainy days.

With increased temperatures and a decreased amount of rainfall, water will be a key issue in the future for the community, council, primary producers and businesses.

Climate projections suggest that Victoria will continue to become warmer and drier in the future, however, natural year-to-year and decade-to-decade variability mean that relatively cooler periods and very wet years will still occur. Annual rainfall is projected to decrease across the state, due to declines in autumn, winter and spring. When extreme rainfall events do occur, they are likely to be more intense. Areas of the Victorian Alps are projected to see a greater reduction in rainfall than the surrounding areas. Victorian alpine areas are also projected to continue to experience declining snowfall (35–75% by the 2050s under high emissions). A comparison of observations and projections in Victoria suggests that temperature has been tracking towards the upper limit of projections while winter rainfall has been tracking towards the drier end of projections. By the 2050s, if the current rate of global warming continues, Victorian towns could experience around double the number of very hot days each year compared to the 1986–2005 average. By the 2090s, Victoria is projected to warm on average by 2.8 to 4.3°C under a high emissions scenario compared to 1986–2005. This would see Victoria frequently experiencing currently unprecedented high temperatures. Victoria is likely to have a significantly lengthened fire season with the number of very high fire danger days likely to continue to increase. Sea levels along the Victorian coast are also likely to continue to rise.

2.4 Demography²

The total population of the region is 20,429 people. Actual and projected population growth for Horsham Rural City is both lower than the state measures. Horsham has equal or higher percentages than the state population in all age groups other than 0-4 and 20-54. The percentage of people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin is above the state measure and the percentage of people born overseas is among the lowest in the state. Horsham Rural City residents reported significantly greater well-being than all Victorians. Residents gave their wellbeing an average score of 80.6 out of 100, compared with the Victorian average of 77.3.

Localities around the region that make up the rest of the population are Blackheath, Brimpaen, Bungalally, Clear Lake, Dadswells Bridge, Dooen, Douglas, Drung, Duchembeggara, Grass Flat, Green Lake, Greenland Dam, Haven, Jilpanger, Jung, Kalkee, Kanagulk, Kewell, Laharum, Longerenong, Lower Norton, McKenzie Creek, Mitre, Mockinya, Mount Talbot, Murra Warra, Noradjuha, Nurrabel, Pimpinio, Quantong, Riverside, St Helens Plains, Telangatuk East, Tooan, Toolondo, Vectis, Wail, Wartook and Wonwondah, all of which have a population less than 200 people.

¹ https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0029/442964/Victorias-Climate-Science-Report-2019.pdf

² [2021 ABS Census Data \(Horsham Rural City Council\)](#)

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2.5 Vulnerable persons (community organisations and facilities)

The state-wide database for vulnerable people is regularly updated and available via Victoria Police for response agencies in the event or possible event of a major incident. Horsham Rural City Council provides a Vulnerable Person Coordinator who assists other agencies with maintaining their entries in the state-wide database on an ongoing basis.

Facilities including schools, health services and aged care and disability services are listed in the Vulnerable Persons Register and need to be considered as vulnerable facilities, which would require extra care and attention when dealing with evacuation and emergency procedures.

2.6 Municipal location map

For further information about the Horsham Rural City location and boundary maps, refer to [Appendix F: Maps](#)

2.7 History of emergencies

2.7.1 Fires

The municipality has a history of bushfires, in particular within the Grampians National Park, Black Range State Park and Little Desert National Park, which are either within or adjoin the municipality. The extensive use of agricultural machinery and stubble burning are also factors that increase the likelihood of ignition in the broadacre cropping area throughout the municipality. Whilst the frequency of fires within Horsham Rural City is high, the impact is mostly within the public land estate or open farmland and does not regularly impact the townships of the municipality.

Table 1: Major fire summary

Year	Location	Size (ha)	Ignition Source
Dec 2021	Drung	86	Unknown
Dec 2021	Kalkee East Road – Kalkee	100	Grass/scrub
Dec 2020	St Helens Plains	94	Machinery
Apr 2020	Jilpanger	86	Unknown
Dec 2019	Brimpaen	200	Lightning
Dec 2019	Noradjuha	80	Lightning
Dec 2018	Laharum	89	Unknown
Mar 2018	Pine Hills No Two Road - Wombelano	185	Heat
Jan 2015	Rocklands–Rees Road – Brimpaen	4,700	Lightning
Mar 2014	Jung – Darlot Swamp	270	Unknown

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Year	Location	Size (ha)	Ignition Source
Jan 2014	Northern Grampians Complex	55,000	Lightning
Jan 2010	Roses Gap	1,715	Lightning
Feb 2009	Remlaw – Horsham	1,782	Power pole
Jan 2006	Mt Lubra – Grampians	140,000	Lightning
Dec 2007	Little Desert	15,000	Lightning
2005	Fulham	10,000	Campfire escape
2002	Dock Lake – Highway	100	Vehicle/fairy grass
2000	Laharum	1,400	Burn Off
1999	Mt Difficult	6,500	Lightning
1994	Telangatuk	1,500	Burn Off
1991	Jilpanger	500	Lightning

2.7.2 Floods

Flood events from the Wimmera River and smaller tributaries have been a regular feature of the history of Horsham, with large floods occurring most recently in 2010 and 2011. Large floods throughout the Horsham Rural City municipality area generally occur as a result of moderate to heavy rainfall after a prolonged period of general rainfall. The most recent flood event was a minor flood that occurred in September 2016.

Flood events from the Wimmera River have been a regular feature of the history of Horsham, with large floods occurring in 1889, 1894, 1909, 1915, 1923, 1955, 1956, 1960, 1964, 1974, 1975, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1988, 1996, 2010, 2011 and 2016.

The January 2011 event is recognised as the largest recent event.

For further information, refer to:

[HRCC – Flood](#)

[VICSES – Flood Guides \(Horsham Rural City Council\)](#)

2.7.3 Blue-green algae

Blue-green algae (BGA) or cyanobacteria are photosynthetic bacteria. They are a natural part of most aquatic environments and are found in streams, lakes, estuaries and the sea. Significant levels of BGA in water bodies can affect the natural ecosystem and potentially impact human health.

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Blooms are common in the warmer months in Victorian rivers and lakes and can be triggered by a combination of:

- Nutrients in the water
- Low water inflows and storage levels
- Warmer weather conditions.

Several of the water bodies in the Horsham Rural City area, particularly shallow lakes, have a history of regular BGA blooms. BGA blooms are managed by the relevant water body manager in line with the Victorian Blue Green Algae Circular.

For further information, refer to: [GWMWater Blue-Green Algae](#)

2.7.4 Biosecurity

The biosecurity threats assessed by Agriculture Victoria as being a high threat to Horsham Rural City are:

- Plant Biosecurity Threat – Khapra Beetle
- Animal Biosecurity Threat – Anthrax
- Animal Biosecurity Threat - Foot and Mouth Disease.

History of biosecurity emergencies in the Horsham Rural City: Pest plague late in 2010 and early in 2011. A plague of locusts ravaged the state of Victoria impacting greatly on the agricultural industry of the municipality. The occurrence of high summer and autumn rainfall provided an ideal environment for extensive breeding and egg-laying. The Australian plague locust is a native Australian insect and is a significant agricultural pest.

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

2.7.5 Pandemic

Horsham Rural City has been affected, like all Councils in Victoria, by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). The Horsham Rural City Pandemic Plan guides Horsham Rural City Council and other pandemic influenza stakeholders in the municipality to appropriately plan for and effectively respond to pandemic influenza conditions. The pandemic plan is supported by a set of operational documents including Council Pandemic Influenza Response Procedures and Council’s Business Continuity Plan.

2.7.6 Transport

Horsham Rural City has a number of major road networks intersecting the district. These include the Wimmera Highway, Henty Highway and Western Highway, along with the east-west rail corridor between Melbourne and Adelaide. Since 1 January 2000, there have been 49 fatalities recorded by the [Transport Accident Commission](#) in the Horsham Rural City Council area.

On 11 July 2019, at Pimpinio on the Western Highway, a bus containing 41 people crashed into a B-double trailer that had been dislodged from its prime mover. Wimmera Base Hospital treated more than 40 passengers who were travelling on the bus at the time. Four people were flown to Melbourne. No injuries were sustained by the truck driver or his passenger. A relief centre was set up to accommodate passengers for 12 hours whilst waiting for a replacement bus to be arranged.

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2.7.7 Storms

Horsham Rural City is periodically hit by severe weather bands that produce strong winds, causing damage to homes, property and vegetation. The most recent event happened on 7 December 2020 when a Bureau of Meteorology described, tornado, damaged a large number of properties in the northern suburbs of Horsham.

3. Planning arrangements

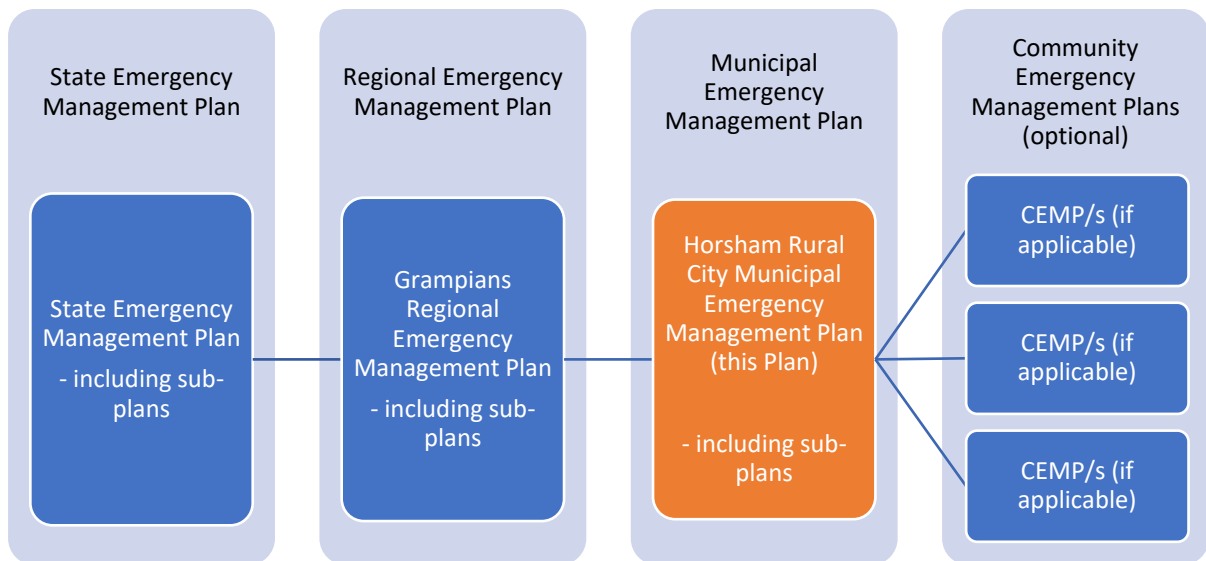
3.1 Victoria’s emergency management planning framework

This plan supports holistic and coordinated emergency management arrangements within the Grampians. It is consistent with and contextualises the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP). The REMP is a subordinate plan to the SEMP, and the MEMP is a subordinate plan to the REMP.

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

Figure 1 outlines this plan’s hierarchy. This plan should be read in conjunction with the SEMP and the REMP.

Figure 1: Plan hierarchy



3.2 The MEMPC, sub-committees and working groups

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

MEMPC Terms of Reference

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It is not the role of the MEMPC to manage emergencies. This is the responsibility of agencies allocated the role due to their expertise and resourcing to manage emergency events as the Control Agency or aspects of them in support of the Control Agency.

Multi-agency collaboration is paramount to good municipal emergency management planning and implementation. Emergency services and recovery agencies work together at the municipal level to plan, prepare, respond and recover for all emergencies, taking a broad risk approach.

Control agencies responsible for each risk area will involve other agencies (including local government) in a support capacity. These relationships work because of:

- Annual exercising
- Identification of trigger points and level of activation
- Communications to stakeholders and the community
- Working together as one culture.

[Appendix B: Membership](#) contains a list of agency 24-hour contact details for the MEMPC.

3.3 Sub-plans and complementary plans

The Horsham Rural City MEMPC emergency services sub-plans may be consistent or have some similarity in wording with those of other municipalities as these agencies operate across MEMPC boundaries. Local government plans and those plans from support agencies, where included, may also be consistent or have some similarity in wording. As far as is practically understood there is no conflict of national, state or local legislation within this MEMPC.

3.3.1 Sub-plans

The MEMPC will determine if a sub-plan is required to detail more specific or complex arrangements that either enhance or contextualise this plan. All sub-plans are multi-agency plans and may be hazard-specific where the consequences are likely to be significant, for example, a municipal flood response sub-plan.

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

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

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans](#) provides a list of sub-plans detailing more specific or complex arrangements.

3.3.2 Complementary plans

Complementary plans are prepared by industries/sectors or agencies for emergencies that do not fall within the [Act](#) Part 6A. They are often prepared under other legislation, governance or statutory requirements for a specific purpose.

Complementary plans do not form part of this Plan and are not subject to approval, consultation and other requirements under the [Act](#).

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

4. Mitigation arrangements

4.1 Introduction

Government and non-government organisations, commercial enterprises and community members are all expected to undertake mitigation measures within their areas of responsibility. For example:

- Private businesses prepare business continuity plans
- Aged care and health facilities have emergency management plans
- Farmers have appropriate fire control measures for harvest and other activities
- Fire agencies conduct strategic controlled burn programs
- Council implements relevant planning, prevention and mitigation measures within its authority, responsibility and policies
- Community members have personal emergency plans
- Organisations and individuals have appropriate levels of insurance.

4.2 Hazard, exposure, vulnerability and resilience

Future vulnerabilities will include larger landholdings managed by consortiums and serviced by contractors leading to declining populations across rural parts of the municipality.

This demographic, combined with an ageing population, has seen previously robust rural communities replaced by smaller, older, more vulnerable communities isolated from services. This shift in the population may reduce emergency services volunteer capacity and resources, potentially leading to delayed and reduced suppression activities in rural areas.

Changes in farming practices have led to increased fuel content (crop residue) being left on the ground throughout the year potentially increasing fire spread due to continuity of fuel load. Hay production is widespread throughout the municipality and there is potential for spontaneous combustion in stored hay, if not properly prepared.

An increase in individuals purchasing property for investment purposes has resulted in more absentee landowners. These landowners tend to have less understanding of fuel and fire management requirements, little engagement with the community and live externally to the municipality. This limits their capacity and ability to undertake regular fuel management works and participate in local community networks.

The Victorian Government's climate change projections predict an increase in temperature can be expected in the future. This escalation in temperature will potentially increase the likelihood and frequency of heatwaves across the municipality. Increased heatwaves in conjunction with an ageing population could be a cause for concern.

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4.3 Risk assessment process and results

Emergency risk management is a systematic process that produces a range of measures that contribute to the community and environmental wellbeing. 'Unexpected' emergencies can affect the community differently as they generally happen without warning or predictability. These may include transport accidents, flash floods, terrorism and structure fires. Due to the 'unexpected factor' of these events, it is difficult to plan all suitable countermeasures at the municipal level.

The Horsham Rural City MEMPC recognises it has a key role in prevention and mitigation activities to reduce the risk or minimise the effects of emergencies that may occur in the Horsham Rural City municipality.

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans](#) provides details of the Horsham Rural City Risk Assessment Plan.

4.4 Treatment plans

Treatment plans are developed at the Council and agency levels to mitigate the risk of hazards that impact the municipality. The hazards and associated risks are recorded in a risk register. Where the risk is of sufficient magnitude, hazard-specific sub plans are developed, which may contain mitigation arrangements. Other sub-plans and arrangements may be developed that:

- Manage specific hazards of a technical nature such as biosecurity risks or pandemics
- Support Control Agencies and their arrangements e.g. resource support arrangements
- Contribute to the overall management of an emergency e.g. Emergency Animal Welfare Support Sub-plan.

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans](#) provides a list of treatment plans.

4.5 Monitoring and review

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

Table 2: Exercised plans

Date	Event	Plan exercised
2020-21	COVID-19	Pandemic Plan
2022	Aerodrome exercise at Warracknabeal	TBC
Annually	Truck rollover	Animal Management Plan
Annually	Single incident house fires Grass fires Scrub fires Vehicle fires	Fire Plan

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5. Response (including relief)

5.1 Introduction

Emergency response focuses on organising, coordinating and directing available resources to respond to emergencies and the provision of rescue and immediate relief services for people affected by emergencies. This includes the provision for requests for physical assistance from regional, state and commonwealth levels of government when municipal resources are exhausted.

The following section outlines the arrangements in place for the activation and implementation of response activities for emergency events impacting the Horsham Rural City municipality, including regional collaborative arrangements to facilitate an effective response to emergency events that impact an area larger than the municipality.

5.2 Strategic control priorities

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) provides key strategic priorities for the State Controller, Regional Controllers and Incident Controllers to consider during the management of any complex emergency. The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery.

The priorities include:

- Protection and preservation of life are paramount, this includes:
 - Safety of emergency services personnel
 - Safety of community members, including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area
- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members to make informed decisions about their safety
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that support community resilience
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that supports individual and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, biodiversity and social values of the environment.

5.3 Event categorisation

Emergency events are categorised using three parameters:

- Operational tier
- Class of emergency
- Classification.

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5.3.1 Operational tier

The operational tier defines the level of management required for the emergency event:

- Incident – managed at the local level by the Control Agency
- Regional – managed at the regional level by the Control Agency
- State Incident – managed at State level by EMV.

Emergency events are managed at the appropriate operational tier until the event may require escalation to a higher level.

5.3.2 Classes of emergency

Classes of emergency as defined in *the Emergency Management Act, 2013*, relate to the type of emergency and are defined in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Classes of emergency

Class	Definition
Class 1 emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major fire; or • Any other major emergency for which the Fire Rescue Victoria, the Country Fire Authority or the Victoria State Emergency Service is the control agency under the State Emergency Response Plan (<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>, section 3).
Class 2 emergency	A major emergency which is not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Class 1 emergency; or • A warlike act or act of terrorism, whether directed at Victoria or a part of Victoria or any other state or territory of the Commonwealth; or (c) a hijack, siege or riot (<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>, section 3).
Class 3 emergency	A class 3 emergency means a warlike act or act of terrorism, whether directed at Victoria or a part of Victoria or any other state or territory of the Commonwealth or a hijack, siege or riot. Class 3 emergencies may also be referred to as security emergencies.

5.3.3 Classification of emergencies

There are three classifications of emergency response:

- **Level one – small scale emergency (less than 24-hour impact)**
A level one incident normally requires the use of local or initial response resources.
- **Level two – medium-scale emergency (more than 24 hours)**
A level two incident is more complex in size, resources or risk than a level one. It is characterised by the need for:
 - Deployment of resources beyond initial response
 - Sectorisation of the emergency
 - The establishment of functional sections due to the levels of complexity
 - A combination of the above.

The Incident Control Centre (ICC) may be activated to coordinate the multi-agency response to the event. The Incident Controller will establish an Emergency Management Team as required.

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- **Level three – large scale emergency (multiple days impact)**

A level three incident is a large scale emergency and is characterised by the levels of complexity that will require the activation and establishment of an ICC. This level of emergency will require forward planning as the emergency continues and will specifically require recovery planning during the early stages of the response phase of the emergency.

5.4 Phases of activation

Response arrangements should be implemented at the earliest possible opportunity if the consequences of emergencies are to be minimised. The phases of activation are as follows.

5.4.1 Alert

Upon receipt of warning or information that an emergency may occur or affect the relevant area of responsibility, the organisation and staff must be alerted to ensure their readiness to act if called upon. Some of the activities that should be considered in this phase are:

- Warning for key personnel
- Testing of communications arrangements
- Establish the flow of information between the municipality and Control/Support Agencies
- Staff ready to deploy if required to respective emergency centres
- Muster resources and prepare equipment and personnel for immediate action
- Identify assembly areas.

5.4.2 Action

This is the operational phase of the emergency when control and support agencies are committed to contain or control the emergency. Some operations may necessitate moving to the "action phase" immediately without the "Alert" phase being implemented. For this reason, it is mandatory that all organisations having a role in this Plan be in a state of preparedness at all times.

Some of the activities that should be considered in this phase are:

- Mobilise personnel/ equipment as requested
- Produce situation reports on a regular basis for higher authorities
- Deploy additional resources as required
- Ensure casual emergency workers are registered.

5.4.3 Stand down

Once "Alert" or "Action" has been implemented, the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) must declare a "Stand Down". The MERC will advise all participating agencies of Stand Down after consultation with the Control Authority and any other relevant agency, and when satisfied that the response to the emergency has been completed.

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5.5 Incident Control Centre (ICC)

Incident management and control will be set up and activated by the controlling agency at a pre-determined ICC. In some cases, it may be initially set up from a police station or predetermined municipal facility.

An Emergency Management Team (EMT) communicates through the ICC when an alert is issued. The team comprises the MERC, Control Agencies and the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO). Its role and function are to assess agency readiness, which includes their capacity for deployment and to determine the extent of resources available locally.

The ICC operates using the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). AIIMS provides a management system that facilitates the coordination of all activities, by all parties involved, in the resolution of any emergency. The nearest ICC (level three) for Horsham Rural City is located in Horsham at the offices of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), also referred to as the Grains Innovation Park, and run and managed by DELWP Forest Fire Management Victoria.

The main ICC is located in Horsham, however, other ICCs may be established that impact the Horsham Rural City municipality such as Mildura in the north or Heywood in the south.

ICC address details are:

- Horsham: Grains Innovation Park, 110 Natimuk Road, Horsham
- Mildura: 308-390 Koorlong Avenue, Irymple 3498
- Heywood: 12 Murray Street, Heywood 3304
- Ballarat: 27 Vickers Street, Sebastopol 3356.

Note: The ICC is not open to the public.

5.6 Command, control, coordination

Victoria bases its emergency response arrangement on the management functions of control, command and coordination.

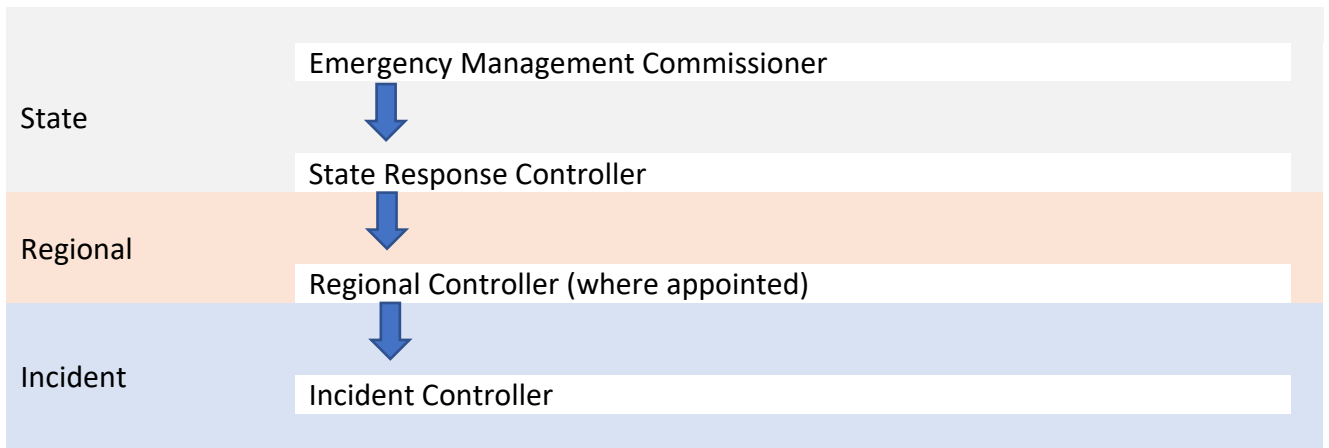
5.6.1 Control

Control is the overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies. Authority for control is established in legislation or an emergency response plan and carries with it the responsibility for tasking other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation.

The 'line-of-control' refers to the line of supervision for those appointed to perform the control function. For the emergencies covered by the scope of this document, the line of control is shown in Figure 2.

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Figure 2: Line of control



5.6.2 Command

Command is the internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency, operating vertically within the agency. Each agency appoints agency commanders to supervise their personnel and ensure they are working safely.

The ‘chain-of-command’ refers to an agency’s organisational hierarchy that defines the accountability of people or positions and identifies the link between individuals and their supervisor. An agency might formally agree for a person from another agency to supervise their personnel for a fixed period during emergencies, however, this does not replace each agency’s responsibility to their own personnel.

5.6.3 Coordination

Coordination is the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure an effective response to and recovery from emergencies.

The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for response coordination at the state tier supported by the Senior Police Liaison Officer, while Victoria Police is responsible for the coordination function at the regional and municipal tiers.

5.7 Local response arrangements and responsible agencies

The SEMP provides arrangements for an integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to emergency management at the state level. The *Emergency Management Act 2013* (EM Act 2013) requires the SEMP to contain provisions for the mitigation of, response to, and recovery from emergencies, and to specify the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management.

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

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emergencies. The VPF identifies 21 core capabilities and subsequent critical tasks for each that Victoria requires to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies. To be effective, the core capabilities are interdependent, coordinated and overlap across mitigation, response and recovery.

The organisations listed in this document are those with either broad or state-wide presence, government organisations, those with a statutory emergency management involvement and some private corporations with specific roles. The Victorian community receives significant benefit from the emergency management contributions of a wide range of volunteer groups and organisations whose operations are either quite specialised and/or available mainly in a specific locality. These groups should be identified in relevant municipal and/or regional emergency management plans, as appropriate.

The tables for the roles and responsibilities commence in [Table 8](#) (tables 1 to 7 are found in the [SEMP](#)) and provide a reference for agency roles and responsibilities for specific emergencies, functions or activities, and indicate the VPF's core capability alignment. See section: Agency roles and responsibilities alignment to the VPF for more information.

5.8 AIIMS (Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System)

As the nationally recognised incident management structure, AIIMS provides a common management framework for organisations working in emergency management roles and/or responding to non-emergency situations. As such, the system enables multiple agencies engaged in incident planning, response and recovery to seamlessly integrate their resources and activities. The Horsham Rural City MEMPC encourages all agencies to adopt AIIMS so that seamless integration of all relevant agencies in emergency management planning, operations and recovery can be achieved.

5.9 Financial considerations

Control Agencies are responsible for all costs involved in that agency responding to an emergency. Government Agencies supporting the control agency are expected to defray all costs from their normal budgets. When a Control Agency requests services and supplies (for example, food and water) on behalf of a number of supporting agencies, the Control Agency will be responsible for costs incurred.

A requesting agency will be responsible for all associated costs for the provision of resources to support the response to an emergency event. Council is able to keep track of resources distributed by recording their provision in Council's emergency operating system Crisisworks.

Municipal Councils are responsible for the cost of Municipal Emergency Operating Centre (MEOC) setup costs and emergency relief services and provisions, however, depending on the magnitude of the emergency, some financial assistance may be available for prevention, response or recovery activities. All expenditure is to be authorised by the MEMO or MRM in accordance with the normal Council financial arrangements and recorded and logged for potential cost recovery.

Municipal employees from other Councils who are asked and authorised to assist during a municipal emergency are to claim staff costs through their Council finance systems which in turn may claim against the Council requesting assistance.

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Depending on the magnitude of the emergency, some government financial assistance may be available for prevention, response and recovery activities through the [Victorian Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Program](#) (NDFFA) and/or [Australian Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements](#) (DRFA) both of which are accessed through the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance by contacting The Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Team (ndfa@dft.vic.gov.au). NDFFA should be contacted as soon as practicable after an event to register a potential application. Further, for biosecurity events, there is funding available under the [Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement](#) for listed animal health emergencies and [Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed](#) for listed plant emergencies.

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

A NSP-BPLR is a place of last resort when all other bushfire plans have failed.

[Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans – Horsham Rural City Neighbourhood Safer Places \(Places of Last Resort\)](#) includes a list of sites.

There are no community fire refuges in the Horsham Rural City.

5.11 Planning for cross-boundary events

Horsham Rural City shares a border with Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera, Northern Grampians and Southern Grampians Shire Councils. Yarriambiack, West Wimmera and Hindmarsh Shire Councils, along with Horsham Rural City Council, operate under the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership and currently have well-prepared plans and protocols in place for capability and capacity.

Industries, notably agriculture and utility services, operate across the South Australian border. Planning and engagement recognising this in risk assessment provide for a more thorough assessment. Emergency response, including firefighting aircraft, operates across the border. Collaboration at state, regional and incident tiers benefits border communities. Mutual arrangements between Victoria and South Australia are in place for fire agency response. Firefighting aircraft arrangements are governed by the National Aviation Firefighting Centre (NAFC). On a day-to-day basis, this is done operationally between the state air desks in the State Control Centre equivalents in each state and approved by the Class 1 State Response Controller in consultation with the EMC. Deployment of resources over and above the first response is also informed by the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC), and interstate deployments must have the approval of the EMC.

Ambulance Victoria, Vic Pol, Vic SES and CFA have current cross border response protocols in place with South Australian Emergency Services. DELWP has a communications plan with the South Australian Country Fire Service.

Note: Please contact the individual agencies for more information on their specific cross border arrangements.

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5.12 Resource sharing protocols

Horsham Rural City Council subscribes to the Municipal Association of Victoria Shared Resource Protocol and has completed stages one and two of the three-stage Council capability and capacity program. Stage three of the program is being worked on at present, primarily under the coordination of the Wimmera Emergency Management Resources Sharing Partnership, which has an established memorandum of understanding in relation to resource sharing.

5.13 Debriefing arrangements

Lessons management involves the identification and learning of lessons captured through assurance activities (including debriefing, monitoring and reviews) occurring before, during and after emergencies.

Learning from the emergency management experience helps the MEMPC to improve both its emergency management practice and community outcomes. The agencies use review and evaluation as tools to extract understanding from experience and assist the agencies to validate and improve operational policy, processes and practices. Reviews and evaluations will vary in scope, according to the size, complexity and outcomes of the emergency.

An After Action Review should follow all emergencies and include all representatives of the MEMPC. This local debriefing process allows groups to learn from an event and address issues as soon as possible, leading to improved performance and communication.

Horsham Rural City MEMPC encourages all partner agencies to conduct debriefs and make the debrief minutes available via the [EM-SHARE](#) online platform.

6. Transition to recovery

The activation process for emergency relief and recovery staff, facilities and services is guided by the Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Plan (WIRRP).

For further information, refer to [Appendix E: Sub plans and complementary plans](#) and the following references:

- Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMPC)
- Grampians Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan
- State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan (SEMP).

Generally, activation will begin when an emergency event occurs and a Control Agency responds. Initial awareness will develop of the need for emergency relief services. The MRM in consultation with the Incident Controller and MERC will assess information to further determine the recovery needs of the affected community.

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7. Recovery arrangements

The WIRRP complements each partner Council's MEMPC. This plan records the municipal level emergency relief and recovery management arrangements that may be utilised in supporting a community impacted by an emergency event. As defined in EMV's [SEMP](#), Local Government (Council) is the lead agency for local emergency relief and recovery.

This plan illustrates how emergency relief and recovery services are coordinated and delivered at the local level by the partner Councils. The plan also describes how emergency relief and recovery service support is escalated to the regional and/or state level when local resources are exhausted.

8. Evaluation and continuous improvement

The Horsham Rural City MEMPC supports the region's commitment to a culture of continuous improvement that is outlined in the [2015 EM-LEARN](#) framework by:

- Utilising the EM-LEARN Framework and the Lessons Management Life Cycle to support the identifying and learning of lessons
- Providing the opportunity to share experiences and learn from others
- Encouraging the sector to share learnings about examples of good practice or areas for improvement
- Utilising assurance activities (monitoring, debriefing and reviewing) to identify learnings
- Focusing on systems of work, rather than the performance of individuals
- Focusing on identifying trends, rather than actioning issues
- Recognising that identifying and implementing sustainable solutions takes time, resources and opportunity.

Lessons management involves the identification and learning of lessons captured through assurance and learning activities (including debriefing, monitoring and reviews) occurring before, during and after emergencies. This process of moving from identifying lessons to learning lessons is guided by the lessons management life cycle within the EM-LEARN Framework, which aims to provide a state-wide shared understanding of what lessons management means for the Victorian emergency management sector.

For the Horsham Rural City MEMPC, lessons management takes the form of the following arrangements:

- After Action Reviews
- Debriefs of officers, teams and agencies
- Review systems of work rather than the performance of individuals
- Reviews of the effectiveness of the coordination, control, consequence management and communications functions
- Public forums including representatives from the relevant community, business and industry groups.

The purpose of debriefing is to identify key observations, learning opportunities and good practice to ensure learning and improvement occurs within the emergency management sector. Debriefing allows participants to, as an individual or group, walk through a series of questions enabling reflection on an experience to uncover learnings in a non-judgemental environment. The outcomes

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of debriefs and other review activities will inform the ongoing cycle of learning and improvement within the sector by validating and evaluating existing doctrine, arrangements, policy, procedure, and incident/emergency management applications. The outcomes will provide evidence to inform a range of activities including training, exercising and briefings.

The purpose of reviewing is to identify key observations, learning opportunities and good practice to ensure learning and improvement occurs within the emergency management sector. A review is a formal assessment of a specific topic generally at the conclusion of an event with the intent of instituting change. The outcomes from reviews will inform the ongoing cycle of learning and improvement within the sector by validating and evaluating existing doctrine, arrangements, policy, procedure, and incident/emergency management applications. The outcomes will provide evidence to inform a range of activities including training, exercising and briefings.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Introduction

An agency that has a role or responsibility under this plan must act in accordance with the plan. The SEMP and REMP outline agreed agency roles and responsibilities, noting that existing duties, functions, power, responsibility or obligation conferred on an agency by law, licence, agreement or arrangement prevail to the extent of its inconsistency with this plan ([Act s60AK](#)).

The roles and responsibilities outlined in this plan are specific to the region and are in addition to, or variations on, what is outlined in the SEMP and REMP. In the case of municipal-specific modifications, these are clearly identified as modifications.

All agencies with responsibilities under the MEMP should provide written confirmation of their capability and commitment to meet their obligations. This can be evidenced by their endorsement of the draft MEMP, including revisions before it is presented to the REMPC for consideration.

This plan details emergency management agency roles and responsibilities for: Mitigation, Response, Relief and Recovery. It also maps agency roles for core capabilities and critical tasks under the [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#) (VPF) for the management of major emergencies.

9.2 Emergency management agency roles and responsibilities

The VPF identifies the core capabilities and critical tasks Victoria requires to effectively manage major emergencies. To be effective, the 21 core capabilities are interdependent, coordinated and overlap across emergency management phases.

These agency activities have been discussed with participating emergency management organisations for inclusion in this document. While these activities are believed to be current at the date of publication, readers are advised to contact the required agency to ensure that functions can still be carried out as expected. In response to an emergency, an agency may be requested to provide support to response activities other than what is listed in the agency role statement. In these cases, the determination of support to these activities will be made by the EMC or relevant emergency response coordinator.

For further information, refer to:

[SEMP - Agency roles and responsibilities alignment to Victorian Preparedness Framework](#)

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10. Appendices

Appendix A: Acronyms

This section contains acronyms that are used throughout this plan.

Acronym	Description
AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
CERA	Community Emergency Risk Assessment
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
EM Act	<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
FFMV	Forest Fire Management Victoria
ICC	Incident Control Centre
MEMO	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MEOC	Municipal Emergency Operating Centre
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
NAFC	National Aerial Firefighting Centre
NERAG	National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines
NRSC	National Resource Sharing Centre
RCC	Regional Control Centre
REMPC	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMT	Regional Emergency Management Team
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SES	Victoria State Emergency Service
TOR	Terms of Reference
VPF	Victorian Preparedness Framework
WEMRSP	Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership
WEMT	Wimmera Emergency Management Team

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Appendix B: Membership

Restricted information

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Appendix C: Restricted information

A short summary of the restricted information is included here, including who the contact point is should the user of this plan seek access to this information.

Summary of the restricted information (including location within the MEMP, for example, page or section number)	Reason for restriction	Agency/ies that hold this information in full	Contact point/s
Appendix B: Membership, page 28	Personal information	Horsham Rural City Council	MEMPC Chairperson Phone 03 5382 9777

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Appendix D: Distribution

The most up to date amended versions of this plan will be distributed by the MEMPC Executive Officer by:

- Loading on to the Horsham Rural City Council website
- Storing in the Horsham Rural City Council document management system
- Distributing electronically by email with a link to the Horsham Rural City Council website
- Legal Deposit with the Victorian State Library in electronic format
- Storing in the Emergency Management Victoria document library
- Sending by Australia Post when requested
- Loading into Crisisworks.

Organisation	Recipient Officer	Distribution Method
MEMPC Members	Attending Officer	Horsham Rural City Council website link
EMV	Authorised Officer	Horsham Rural City Council website link
WEMT	Coordinator	Horsham Rural City Council website link (plus hard copy)

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Appendix E: Sub-plans and complementary plans

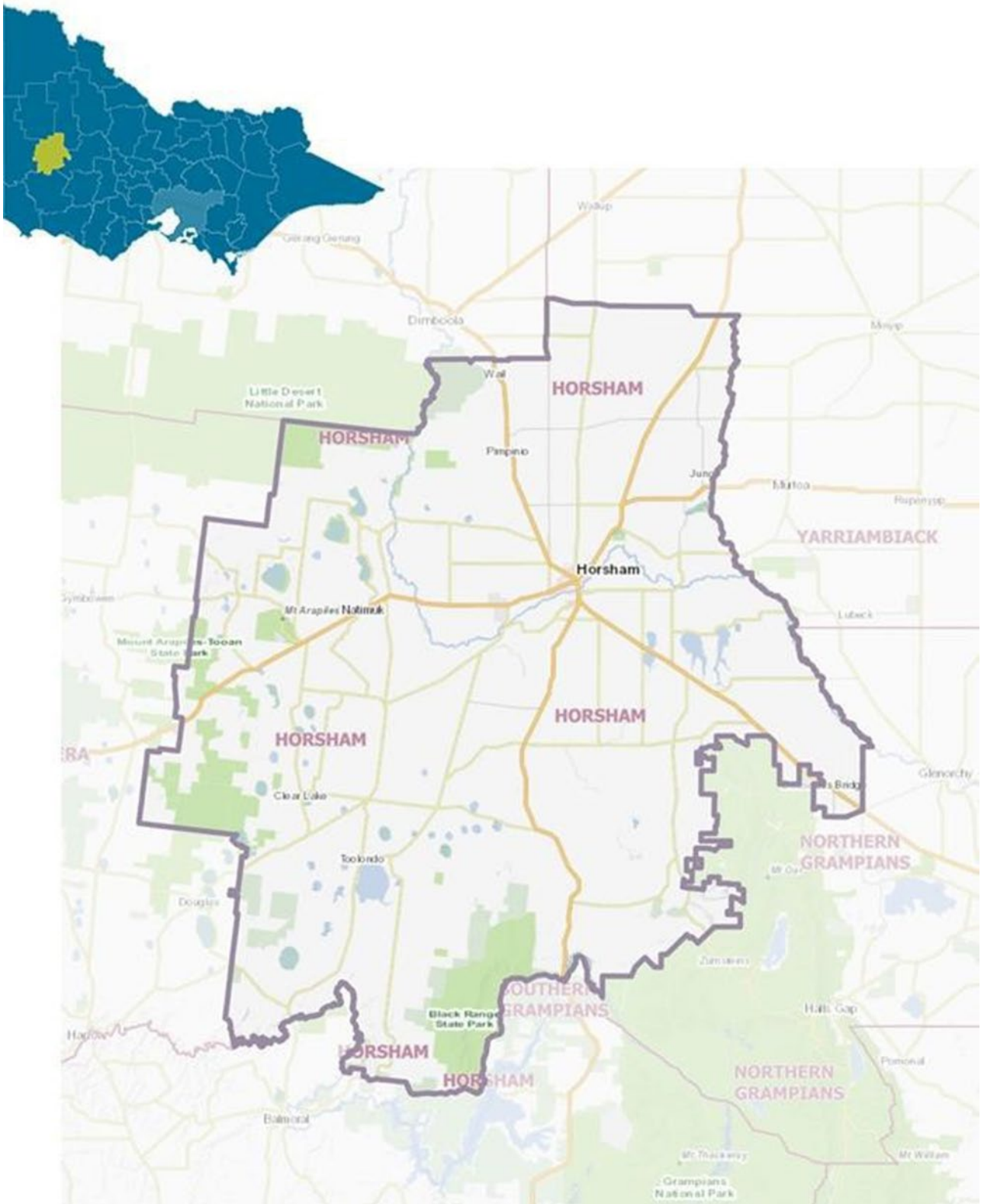
Sub-Plans	Description
Municipal Fire Management Sub-Plan	Horsham Rural City Council website
Municipal Flood Management Plan	Horsham Rural City Council website
Horsham Rural City Risk Assessment Plan - CERA	Horsham Rural City Council website
Horsham Rural City Animal Management Sub-plan	Horsham Rural City Council website
Wimmera Integrated Relief and Recovery Plan	Horsham Rural City Council website

Complementary Plans	Description
Horsham Rural City Council's Pandemic Plan	Horsham Rural City Council website
Horsham Rural City Council Heat Management Plan	Horsham Rural City Council website
Horsham Rural City Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort)	Reassessed by CFA annually https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places
Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre Plan	Horsham Rural City Council website

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Appendix F: Maps

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Appendix G: Amendment register

Version	Author	Update Details	MEMPC Approval Date
1.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Adoption of Version 1.0	July 2013
1.1	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Recommendations from 2014 audit and legislation changes – adoption of Version 1.1	June 2015
1.1	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	VICSES audit review – passed	March 2017
2.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Full review and endorsement, inclusive of 2017 audit recommendations	November 2017
2.0AU	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Administrative updates on pages 11 and 46 and in appendices B and C	February 2020
2.0AU	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	Administrative update on grammatical and formatting errors, Appendix B Contacts update	September 2020
3.0	Wimmera Emergency Management Team	New plan	16 March 2022

- End of Document -

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