

## HEATWAVE PLANNING CHECKLIST

This resource is designed to support neighbourhood houses and other community service organisations to identify ways to support staff, volunteers and community members to stay safe during extreme heat. It should be tailored to suit the specific context of your organisation, considering the community you support and organisational capacity.

The *Heatwave Planning Checklist* should be completed before each summer, with appropriate actions undertaken. The subsequent *Heatwave Plan* is designed to support your organisation to respond effectively once a heatwave is underway. Adoption of this resource may not be sufficient for compliance with legal requirements, including business continuity planning.

### Heat plan review

Review your heatwave plan and amend where appropriate

☐

Ensure the heatwave plan is available to personnel and is backed-up digitally and stored as a physical copy

☐

### Communication

Subscribe to the [Bureau of Meteorology's Heatwave Service alerts](#)

☐

Subscribe to the [VIC Department of Health alerts](#)

☐

- Ensure staff have subscribed to weather alerts

☐

- Determine how you will keep personnel updated of weather events (*note this in the adjacent box*)

- Determine how you will keep personnel updated in an emergency (*note this in the adjacent box*)

Engage with regional emergency preparedness forums and/or summer hazard briefings

☐

Ensure there is an up-to-date list of emergency and staff contacts available to all staff

☐

### Staff management and training

Consider whether personnel have received adequate (heat-focused) first aid training

☐

Provide a training or refresher to personnel on heat-risk, the signs of heat stress, and how to respond to someone experiencing heat-related illness

☐

- Make heatwave information available to personnel

☐

Ensure personal protective equipment is available for personnel required to work outdoors

☐

Ensure personnel are aware of safety measures during extreme heat

☐

- Communicate with personnel that they must make a conscious effort to stay hydrated, even when not thirsty, during extreme heat

☐

- Advise personnel to wear lightweight and light-coloured clothing when it is hot

☐

- Advise personnel -particularly community members at greater risk - to download the Red Cross 'Get Prepared' app

☐

### Resources and equipment

Check the maintenance schedules of cooling equipment

☐

Install a wall thermometer to determine local temperatures and support decision making

☐

Note who to contact if cooling equipment fails

### Electricity and power

Consider whether your cooling equipment will be impacted by a power outage and identify any options to mitigate this risk

☐

Consider whether access to key services and equipment such as water, lifts and doors, and communications technology will be impacted by a power outage and identify any options to mitigate this risk

☐

Back-up or have physical copies of any important information such as your heat plan and list of emergency and staff contacts

☐

Consider how to conserve refrigerated goods that might spoil in a power outage (i.e. eskies and ice packs)

☐

|                                                                                                                                |                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Store charged power banks on-site to ensure availability of communications and support community members during a power outage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|

### Supporting your community

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Revise and confirm any cool spaces that your organisation can provide to the community                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure any 'cool spaces' are recorded and staff are aware of these locations</li> </ul>                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider accessibility, staffing requirements, transport to and from the venue, and what to do in a power outage</li> </ul>                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stock up on food and water in the event of a heatwave and/or power outage                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider capacity to undertake welfare checks via phone or in-person                                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider how to support at-risk community members to transport to and from cool spaces                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stock bottled water and icepacks/cool towels for staff to share with community members                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider what role your organisation will play in client preparedness (i.e. developing emergency plan with client, creating an emergency contact list, providing heat health kits, linking with other services) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have heat safety information printed and ready to distribute to staff and community                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Other considerations

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Develop a <a href="#">disaster plan</a> or business <a href="#">continuity plan</a>                                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the implications of closing your organisation or cancelling services</li> </ul>                                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider how your organisation will respond to bushfire smoke risk                                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to your personnel about the risks of bushfire smoke exposure and control measures to minimise exposure</li> </ul>                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify sensitive personnel – including older adults, people with diabetes, heart or lung conditions, and pregnant people – and discuss strategies to ensure their safety</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check door and window seals</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|                                                                                                                                             |                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make personal protective equipment (PPE) such as N95 masks and eye protection available</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display the <a href="#">working safely when there is bushfire smoke</a> poster</li> </ul>          | <input type="checkbox"/> |



## HEATWAVE PLAN

| Heat event                                                   | Management response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No heat event                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and action <i>Heatwave Planning Checklist</i></li> <li>Subscribe to and monitor <a href="#">Bureau of Meteorology weather alerts</a> AND <a href="#">VIC Department of Health alerts</a></li> <li>Ensure heatwave information and educational material is available, including displaying posters and distributing materials</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Heat health warning issued / Low-intensity heatwave underway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep personnel and community members up-to-date on heatwave warnings and ensure they know how to access official sources of information</li> <li>Ensure adequate first aid trained staff are available for the heatwave period and first aid kits are well stocked</li> <li>Review <a href="#">heat safety advice</a> and remind staff of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and how to respond</li> <li>Consider whether it is safe for staff to work inside or outside</li> <li>Review upcoming programs or engagements and determine whether cancellations are appropriate</li> <li>Distribute heatwave information and educational material and encourage staff and clients to plan ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send reminders via newsletters and social media</li> <li>Ensure water and food (if applicable) are available in the event of a power outage</li> </ul> </li> <li>Prepare cool spaces (Note: Remy can assist with cool spaces resources such as a checklist for venue staff)</li> </ul> |
| Severe or extreme heatwave underway                          | <p><u>Adapt service delivery:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Altered operating hours and locations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

- o Consider your house's infrastructure, operational capacity, and community in determining appropriate altered operating hours and locations*
- Altered programs
  - o Consult with staff and program coordinators to determine when to cancel programs, and record this information here along with who to contact to ensure participants are notified*
- Cool spaces
  - o Refer to checklist to deliver cool spaces*

Adapt your facilities:

- Ensure heatwave safety info is available to staff and clients:
  - o Display posters and physical materials*
  - o Send reminders via newsletters and social media*
  - o Distribute printed materials*
- Ensure water and food (if applicable) are available in the event of a power outage
- Stock icepacks/cool towels for community members in need

Engage your staff:

- Advise staff of altered opening hours, programs, and other relevant changes and remind staff of the organisation's heat plan
- Ensure adequate first aid trained staff are on-site for the heatwave period and confirm first aid kits are well stocked
- Actively monitor and manage the health and safety of volunteers and staff, including reminding personnel to drink enough water
- Consider whether it is safe for staff to work outside, and if so consider shifting work hours to a cooler part of the day and providing personal protective equipment including sun-safe hat, sunglasses, sunscreen

Engage at-risk community members:

- Undertake wellbeing checks (to visitors to the neighbourhood house/via phone/encourage check-ins through established groups/networks)

## After the heatwave

- \_\_\_ Engage at-risk community members to provide a wellbeing check, discuss how to increase preparedness for future heatwaves, and/or refer to health services.
- \_\_\_ Meet with staff to discuss the organisation's response to the heatwave, including:
  - o How well was the heatwave plan put into action?
  - o What went well?
  - o What could have been improved to better prepare for future heatwaves?
  - o The following prompts can be used to guide the discussion:
    - Systems perspective (*How well did the systems and processes work?*)
    - Equipment perspective (*Did the physical infrastructure and assets support staff and community wellbeing?*)
    - Personnel and training (*Did staff feel comfortable implementing the heat plan? Did staff know how to respond to unwell community members?*)
    - Communications (*Do we need to review how we communicate to the community? Among staff and volunteers?*)
- Record any useful learnings, suggestions and recommendations
- If necessary, update the organisation's heat plan

