



Stage 1: Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct Scoping Study

Report prepared for Mansfield Shire Council

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Executive Summary

The Scoping Study has been undertaken to assist Mansfield Council, local emergency services agencies, interested community members and other stakeholders to understand the need for, benefits of, and options for establishing new and co-located emergency services infrastructure, including possible sites for an emergency services precinct. It will also assist Council and stakeholder agencies to engage with the State and Federal Governments to ensure the region's emergency services needs are met into the future, in a coordinated and sustainable way.

Key findings from the research and consultation include:

- **There is a clear need for improved investment in quality emergency services infrastructure** that is fit for purpose, will reduce the vulnerability of the Mansfield community, and increase its capacity to respond to and recover from emergency situations and the growing resident and visitor populations.
 - The existing emergency services facilities in Mansfield are located across the township and are in varying condition and operational suitability. There has been limited recent investment in infrastructure other than minor recent improvements to the CFA fire station.
 - Most of the emergency services agencies in Mansfield work across a wide catchment extending beyond the township of Mansfield and often beyond the Shire of Mansfield.
 - Consistent and increasing population growth is occurring, particularly in Mansfield township itself, and this is increasing the demand on local services and agencies. Response data from Ambulance Victoria shows the Mansfield Station is one of the lowest performing stations in the state with travel distances, local geography, and patient transfers to Wangaratta and Melbourne all having an impact.
 - Mansfield is at the centre of a region with significant natural assets including the Alpine National Park, Lake Eildon, and vast tracts of land referred to as the 'High Country'. Due to the proximity to Melbourne and major transport routes, Mansfield receives high levels of visitation and has a growing tourism and hospitality sector which underpins the local economy. While the geographic setting is attractive to visitors, it can also present challenges for visitors and the local community because of the topography, in some parts isolation, and the frequency of natural disasters events such as bushfires, storms or floods.
- **There is strong evidence to support the establishment of an emergency services precinct:**
 - The co-location and integration of emergency services and infrastructure is a consistent theme in State Government emergency services policies and plans, and is repeated in the strategic plans for all Victorian emergency services agencies.
 - There is strong interest and support from community members, local agency representatives and regional and head office representatives, particularly Ambulance Victoria, SES and CFA. While there is acknowledgement of the complexities associated with planning for and delivery of co-located and integrated emergency service infrastructure, there are examples where this has been successfully implemented.
 - It will support and foster collaboration between agencies particularly at the local level, assist in delivering efficient and effective public infrastructure, will promote and encourage volunteerism and will contribute significantly to the liveability of the Mansfield community, helping to attract permanent residents and visitors to the region.

- Where co-location and precinct arrangements occur, typically, local circumstances are a major contributing factor including the presence of dilapidated, inadequate, or otherwise not fit for purpose infrastructure, strong collaboration and advocacy by agencies at the local level, advocacy by the local Council or local MPs, and the availability of suitable publicly owned land. In Mansfield, each of these factors are present, along with strong community support for the establishment of an emergency services precinct.
- **The needs and priorities of the agencies for emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield have been established.** The three agencies with demonstrated need and interest in being involved in an emergency services precinct are Ambulance Victoria, the State Emergency Service (SES) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA).
 - **For Ambulance Victoria,** the need is urgent, with existing facilities not fit for purpose, particularly with the move to a 24-hour staffed operation from early November 2021.
 - **For the SES,** the need is short term, with existing infrastructure not meeting service needs.
 - **For the CFA,** the need is medium to longer term but will become more urgent as the population grows and the existing infrastructure ages.

VicPol has advised it has no need to, or interest in relocating from its current site, and DELWP is planning to relocate to a site on Lakins Road and have advised they have no interest in being involved in an emergency services precinct.

The precinct is proposed to include the following:

- New State Emergency Services facility
- New Ambulance Victoria station to accommodate 24-hour operation
- Provision for potential new Country Fire Authority station
- New facilities for Mansfield Community Radio
- Emergency Training and Support Hub to enable delivery of emergency management and community development training programs and to support the community recovery effort
- Storage facilities to assist Red Cross and other community organisations and their community support and recovery efforts

Assessment of possible sites

Three sites have been assessed for their suitability to support an emergency services precinct. They are:

1. The Lakins Road site (south side and west of Midland Highway)
2. The Saleyards site (166 Maroondah Highway)
3. The existing DELWP site (128 Highett Street).

The DELWP site is not considered suitable due to its residential location and proximity to other community and educational facilities.

The assessment of the remaining sites has identified the **Maroondah Highway site as the preferred location**. This site has clear strengths as the preferred site to accommodate an emergency services precinct including it is in public ownership, it allows the emergency services agencies to meet their response time targets, there are no major impediments for its development as an emergency services precinct, and it enjoys significant support in the community, as SES have operated from the site since 1996.

Next steps

The proposed next steps for progressing the Emergency Services Precinct project are:

1. **Provide a briefing for Councillors** covering the findings from the Scoping Study and proposed funding arrangements, timing and scope of the Feasibility Study and Business Case.
2. **Prepare an advocacy plan** to inform and garner support for the project from key decision makers including:
 - State and Federal Local Members;
 - relevant State and Federal Ministers;
 - key State Government departmental senior staff; and
 - emergency services agencies senior staff.
3. **Identify funding opportunities** for the project at the State and Federal level including:
 - State and Federal funding programs aimed at supporting infrastructure provision in regional Australia;
 - State and Federal funding programs aimed at supporting economic and social recovery in regional communities post natural disasters and Covid-19;
 - State and Federal funding programs aimed at supporting emergency services infrastructure to enhance preparedness; and
 - Federal funding programs aimed at preparing communities to be resilient in the face of natural disasters and climate change.
4. **Provide a project briefing for key stakeholders and the Mansfield Shire community** covering the outcomes from the Scoping Study and proposed next steps and using Council's established communication channels. This is to ensure project transparency and to maintain momentum with the high level of community support for the project that is currently present.
5. **Confirm and formalise governance arrangements** with partner agencies and organisations for the Feasibility Study and Business Case phase.
6. **Proceed with the Feasibility Study and Business Case** subject to funding and approval by Council.

1.0 Introduction

For several years Council, local emergency services agencies and interested community members have been exploring options for a sustainable long-term solution for emergency services facilities in Mansfield. This Report presents the findings from Stage 1 of a study to scope and assess the feasibility of establishing an Emergency Services Precinct in Mansfield.

The purpose of the study is to assist Council and other stakeholders to understand the need for, benefits of, and options for establishing new emergency services infrastructure, and for co-locating emergency services agencies including possible sites for an emergency services precinct. It will also assist Council and stakeholder agencies to engage with the State Government to ensure the region's emergency services needs are met in a coordinated and sustainable way.

Stage 1 is the scoping component of the study, and this has concentrated upon:

- Understanding and assessing the policy and community context for emergency services facilities provision and management in Mansfield Shire and the broader region.
- Understanding the provision requirements for emergency services in Mansfield and the broader region.
- Examining like emergency precinct or co-location models to assess their impact on service delivery and emergency response.
- Establishing the needs and priorities of key stakeholder agencies for emergency services infrastructure.
- Identifying the value and benefit of developing new emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield Shire
- Documenting the operating and spatial requirements for an emergency services precinct including opportunities for shared infrastructure and operational efficiencies.
- Establishing agreed criteria and principles to guide the identification and assessment of potential sites to sustain an emergency services precinct
- Assessing potential sites and identifying a preferred site for an emergency services precinct.

Stage 2 of the study will concentrate upon assessing the feasibility of establishing an emergency services precinct, preparing a business case for presentation to government, and identifying how to position the project to secure the necessary funding. Stage 2 is outside the scope of this Report and is subject to agreement by Council and to funding being secured for its completion.

2.0 Existing emergency services infrastructure

All emergency services agencies have an existing presence in Mansfield. That is; VicSES, CFA, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and Forest Fire Management Victoria (DELWP). The agencies have facilities located across Mansfield township and in varying levels of condition and functionality. There has been minimal investment in emergency services infrastructure in recent years, the exception being improvements to the CFA fire station which have prolonged its operational life. Table 1 below describes the current location, condition and functionality of the facilities.

Agency	Address	Land tenure	Location and condition of facilities and amenities
VicSES	Maroondah Highway, Mansfield	Occupancy Agreement with Mansfield Shire Council	<p>Current facility does not meet the needs of the SES and they would like the current site to be redeveloped to meet future needs of the service and community. The SES are leading community advocacy on the proposal to develop an emergency services precinct on the Maroondah Highway site.</p> <p>Have previously advised of a need for 3,000m² for a new facility.</p>
Country Fire Authority	29 Highett Street, Mansfield	Crown Land	<p>The current facility is located in the town centre and adjacent to the Courthouse, CFA fire station and ambulance station.</p> <p>Have advised that modifications and extensions were undertaken to the existing facility in 2018 and as a result, the site is anticipated to meet operational requirements for the next 15 years.</p> <p>Have previously advised of a need for between 3,200 to 3,700m² for future facility needs.</p>
Victoria Police	92 High Street, Mansfield	Crown Land	<p>Currently located in the town centre and adjacent to the Courthouse, ambulance station and CFA fire station.</p> <p>Have advised there are currently no plans to relocate, but are prepared to participate in a project looking at an emergency services precinct and planning for future needs. Proximity to the Courthouse is anticipated to be an ongoing priority.</p>

Agency	Address	Land tenure	Location, condition and fitness for purpose of facilities and amenities
Ambulance Victoria	3 Curia Street, Mansfield	Crown Land	<p>Located in the town centre in a residential street and one street back from the main street (High Street). Adjacent to the Police Station, Courthouse and CFA fire station. Mansfield District Hospital is located a short distance to the south at the corner of Highett and Malcolm Streets.</p> <p>The station is currently a call-out facility only, but it has recently been announced the station will move to a 24-hour staffed operation. The existing facilities are not fit for purpose to support this type of operation.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria has formally advised on a number of occasions, they are interested in participating in a project assessing the feasibility of an emergency services precinct.</p> <p>They have previously advised of a need for 2,400m² for a new facility to meet future needs.</p>
DELWP	128 Highett Street, Mansfield	Crown Land and lease over privately owned land	<p>DELWP operates from a large depot and office site located at the southeastern edge of the township, in a residential area. Further south than Mansfield District Hospital and close to Mansfield Secondary College.</p> <p>DELWP advised they have entered into an agreement with Council to develop a new facility on Council owned Land on Lakins Road to the north of Mansfield township, and which forms part of a larger industrial estate. The facility is planned to include an incident control centre. Development is planned to commence in 2022.</p> <p>The proposed site has good access to the Midland Highway enabling travel north in the direction of Benalla and south to Mansfield township. The total site footprint DELWP require is 3 hectares.</p>

Table 1: Existing emergency services agencies and infrastructure in Mansfield, October 2021

3.0 Catchments and demand for emergency services

The individual emergency services agencies have differing and complementary roles and operating environments. Together, they represent a comprehensive emergency response capability that relies on a mix of professional and volunteer workforces, a hierarchy of facilities and resourcing, and varying service catchments. This information, along with key response data is outlined on the following pages. Key findings which have implications for the future provision of emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield are:

- Most agencies work across a wide catchment which extends beyond the township of Mansfield and often beyond the Shire of Mansfield.
- Demand for services is consistent and, in some instances, growing. With increasing population growth and an increasing frequency of natural disasters, demand will continue to increase.
- Response data from Ambulance Victoria identifies the Mansfield Station as being one of the lowest performing stations in the state i.e. average response time is 30 – 35 minutes. Travel distance, local geography, and patient transfers to Wangaratta and Melbourne are key factors impacting upon this performance. The move to a 24-hour staffed operation is expected to improve this, but complementary and fit for purpose infrastructure will be required to ensure the best outcome.

Included in this section are 2 maps. Figure 1 identifies the location of emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield. Figure 2 identifies the location of emergency services infrastructure in the wider region.

Agency	Mode of operation	Location	Catchment	Response data
Ambulance Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident response function • Professional salaried workforce • High security needs at facilities 	Typically located in larger towns only e.g. Mansfield, Benalla, Wangaratta, Yea and Alexandra.	<p>Operates across a sub-regional catchment.</p> <p>Patient transfers are typically taken to Northeast Health Wangaratta or to Melbourne. This results in staff being absent from Mansfield for extended periods.</p>	Ambulance Victoria’s performance data for the June quarter of 2020/21 shows average response times for Mansfield Shire are 30 – 35 mins. This rate has been constant over the past two years and is amongst the lowest performing areas in Victoria . This is understood to be due to travel distances, local geography, and patient transfers.
Victoria Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident response function • Customer / community facing facilities • Professional salaried workforce • High security needs at facilities 	Typically located in larger towns only e.g. Mansfield, Benalla, Wangaratta, Yea and Alexandra.	Operates across a sub-regional catchment including Mansfield township and surrounding towns and communities, parts of the high country, Lake Eildon and surrounds, and large tracts of farmland and natural areas.	The State Govt. Crime Statistics Agency indicates total criminal incidents across Mansfield Shire were 403 in 2021/22, compared with 325 in 2019/20 (a 24% increase) . In the past 10 years there has been considerable variability in the data. While Covid-19 compliance activities are likely to have affected results in 2020/21, continued population growth and renewed visitation post COVID-19 is expected to increase local policing activities.

Agency	Mode of operation	Location	Catchment	Response data
Victoria SES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident response function Volunteer workforce 	Typically located in larger towns only e.g. Mansfield, Benalla, Wangaratta, Yea and Alexandra.	Operates across a sub-regional catchment, generally encompassing the Mansfield LGA, unless supporting other units. The unit assists Victoria Police and Ambulance on a range of incidents including search and rescue, patient retrieval, fallen tree clearance and road rescue.	Unit leadership advises that they respond to around 300 callouts each year and that this level of activity has been consistent over recent years.
Country Fire Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident response function Volunteer workforce 	Larger units in major towns or cities and smaller facilities in small towns or localities. Mansfield is a large unit, with small facilities in surrounding communities.	Operates across a wide catchment often providing support to smaller stations located in surrounding areas.	Accessibility of the site is affected by proximity to the roundabout on Highbury Street which affects response times. Unit leadership advises that they respond to around 100 callouts each year . This has been consistent over the last 10 years and reflects the number of CFA stations in surrounding communities.
DELWP (Forest Fire Management Victoria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional salaried workforce Customer (community) facing facilities 	Typically located in regional centres or larger towns e.g. Mansfield, Alexandra, Marysville, Benalla, Wangaratta and Wodonga.	Operates across a regional catchment both for emergency response activities and for community facing activities such as registration of interest to hunt pest animals and permits for events on Crown Land.	Data concerning the range and level of activities undertaken and whether that is increasing or changing was not available for this project .

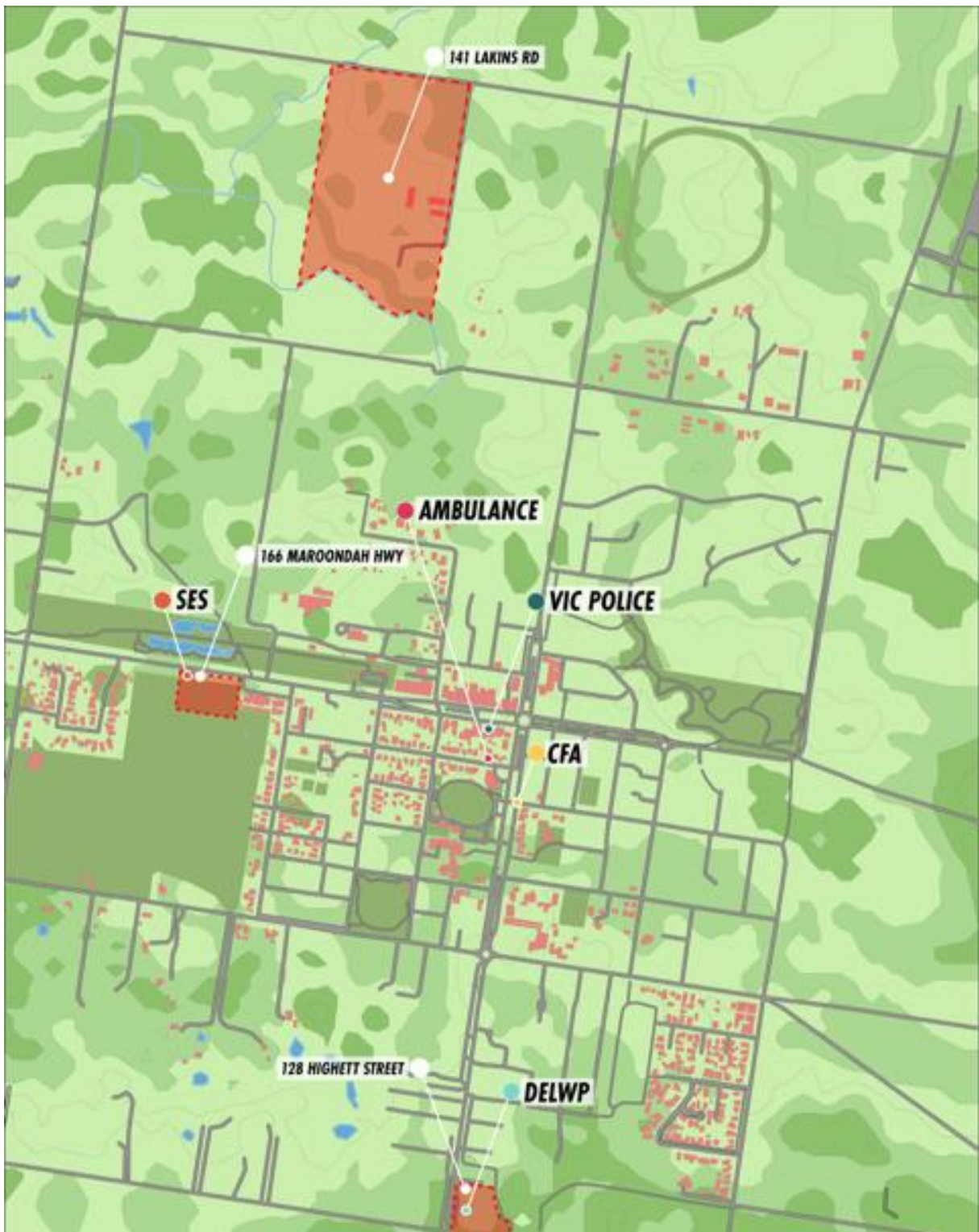


Figure 1: Location of emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield

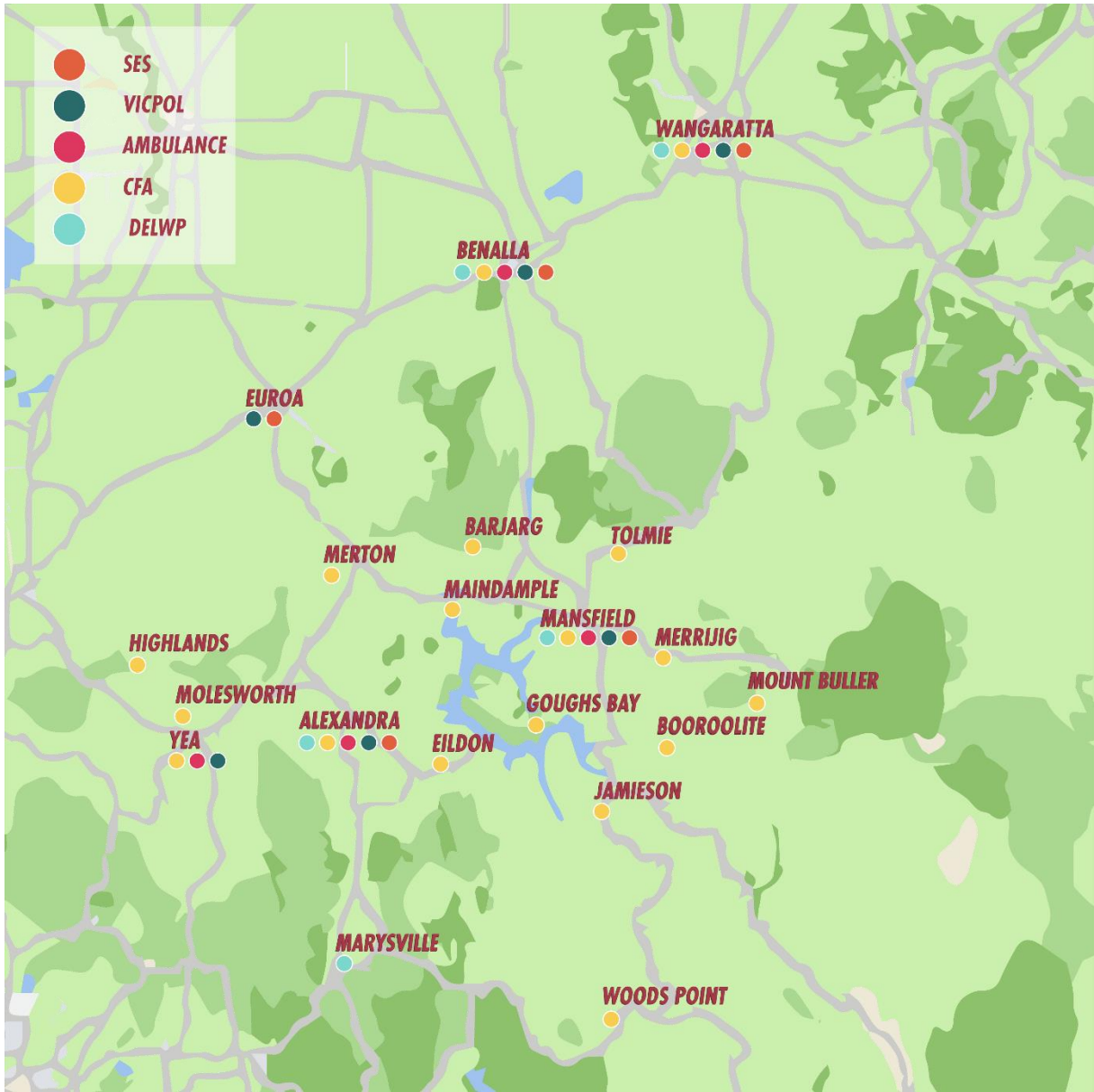


Figure 2: Location of emergency services infrastructure in the wider region

4.0 Policy and planning context

A range of State Government and Council plans and strategies have been examined to establish the planning context for a proposed emergency services precinct in Mansfield including:

- Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Update #3 2018-21
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) terms of reference
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)
- Mansfield Shire Community Vision 2040
- DRAFT Mansfield Shire Council Plan 2021-2025
- Planning Scheme Amendment C48 – currently on exhibition
- Emergency Management Investment and Asset Strategy 2018
- Inspector-General for Emergency Management reports and reviews
- National Inquiries and Recommendations Data Base
- Victoria’s infrastructure strategy 2021-2051, Infrastructure Victoria
- VicSES Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- Ambulance Victoria Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Country Fire Authority Strategy and Outcomes Framework 2020-2030
- Victoria Police Capability Plan 2016-2025
- DELWP Corporate Plan 2021-2025.

Combined, each of the plans and strategies provide a clear policy basis for establishing an emergency services precinct in Mansfield with co-located services and infrastructure. In addition, there is a high level of consistency in sector planning and policy development in relation to the commitment to partnering, shared and joined-up services.

Other key findings and issues identified from the review of key plans and strategies include:

- At the local level, Council and the agencies have an important role in planning for and responding to emergency events.
- Council has a responsive planning framework that captures community aspirations for social connectedness, a safe and secure community, local infrastructure and services to be sustainable and responsive and sustainable economic prosperity.
- Council’s plans reflect an environment characterised by population growth, a significant visitor economy and natural assets of State significance.
- There has been substantial change and reform to the structure and legislative framework for emergency management in Victoria in recent years. The changes respond to population growth and change, technological change, climate change and increased frequency of natural disasters.
- There are many agencies and organisations within the emergency management sector with shared and discrete accountabilities. Figure 1 on the following page outlines the emergency services agencies, organisations, and relevant ministers.

- There are a range of organisational arrangements for delivery of emergency services infrastructure, and which are spread across numerous departments and overseen by several Ministers.
- There is increased support for and recognition of the visitor economy and eco-tourism in Victoria and the region, and the impact this is having upon the demand for emergency services.

More detailed information from reviewing each of the documents can be found in Appendix A.

Responsible Minister	Minister for Justice and Community Safety		Minister for Police	Minister for Ambulance Services	Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
	Jaclyn Symes		Lisa Neville	Martin Foley	Lily D’Ambrosio
Department	Justice and Community Safety			Health and Human Services	DELWP
Portfolio	Emergency Services				Forest, Fire and Regions
Agency	Vic SES	CFA	Victoria Police	Ambulance Victoria	FFMV
Infrastructure Planning and Delivery	CSBA through ESIA	CFA	Victoria Police	VHBA	DELWP

Figure 1: Emergency services agencies, organisations and relevant ministers, October 2021

5.0 Mansfield geography, economy and community profile

5.1 Geography and economy¹

Mansfield Shire is located 2 hours' drive north of Melbourne and is bordered by the Shires of Baw Baw, Murrindindi, Strathbogie and Benalla, and the Rural City of Wangaratta. Mansfield Shire is characterised by a diverse range of agricultural activities and timber related industries and is dominated by the Great Dividing Range including the alpine resorts of Mt. Buller and Mt. Stirling. The Shire's major urban centre is Mansfield which also acts as the regional centre, hosting a range of retail, personal and business services.

There are numerous outlying communities scattered across the municipality and residential populations are dispersed throughout isolated areas. All of the townships and localities have a strong sense of community, characterised by a high level of community involvement and volunteerism.

Natural environment features within Mansfield Shire are the Alpine National Park and the major inland waterway of Lake Eildon. The region has vast tracts of land referred to as the 'High Country' including major river systems, lakes and mountains. Due to the proximity to Melbourne and major transport routes, the municipality is popular for recreation and lifestyle activities which make up a significant portion of the regional economy. Of note has been the move in recent years to promote Mount Buller as a visitor destination year-round, rather than only during the snow season. The impact of this is evident through the increasing visitation to the region.

- In 2019/ 2020 total tourism and hospitality sales were \$74.7 million, the value add to the local economy was \$36.6 million, and the sector employed 384 full time equivalent direct and indirect roles.
- In 2018/2019 there were 1,460,205 domestic overnight visits to Mansfield Shire, compared with 900,331 in 2011/2012. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon domestic overnight visits can be seen in 2019/2020 when visitations declined to 1,275,069.
- Over the 5 years from 2014/15 to 2019/20, 1,641,163 people visited Mansfield Shire for a holiday, a further 341,065 visited family and 125,016 visited for business.

Adding to this, 40 percent of all dwellings in Mansfield Shire are owned by absentee landowners, compared with 16 percent for wider regional Victoria. This means a significant proportion of the housing stock is unoccupied at various times and owners may be infrequent visitors to the community meaning they potentially lack familiarity with road and climatic conditions.

Visitor nights	2011/2012	2015/2016	2018/2019	2019/2020
Domestic visitor nights	900,331	1,115,140	1,460,205	1,275,069
International visitor nights		45,045		

Table 2: Domestic overnight visits in Mansfield Shire 2011/2012 – 2019/2020

¹ Profile.id, Mansfield Shire Council Community Profile and Economic Profile. Accessed 30 September 2021: <http://profile.id.com.au/mansfield/>

5.2 Community profile

The population of Mansfield Shire is characterised by:

- Consistent and increasing population growth.
- A high proportion of people aged 60 years and older.
- Fewer households with dependent children, but there appears to be an increasing number of families with young children, and primary and secondary school aged children moving into the Shire.
- Slightly higher numbers of lone person households compared with regional Victoria.
- Low levels of cultural diversity with nearly 80% of the population born in Australia.
- Lower proportions of the community requiring assistance due to disability compared with regional Victoria.
- High levels of volunteerism (28.9%) compared with regional Victoria (24.3%).
- Relatively low levels of disadvantage (SEIFA index of disadvantage score 1015). Benalla's SEIFA score is 951 this means Benalla is more disadvantaged than Mansfield.

Population size and growth²

The Shire has experienced consistent population growth of around 2% each year since 2012 and in 2020 this increased to 3.2%. This is believed to be in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic which has seen regional communities experience notable population growth as people make the decision to relocate from metropolitan to regional areas.

The permanent population has grown in Mansfield from 6,631 in 2001 to 8,674 in 2016 and 9,474 in 2020. Victoria in Future Population Forecasts prepared by the Victorian State Government, estimate Mansfield Shire will have a permanent population of 10,500 by 2031 and nearly 11,000 by 2036. However, if growth continues as it has for the past decade, the population will grow to this level and beyond within 10 years.

² Profile.id, Mansfield Shire Council Community Profile. Accessed 30 September 2021: <http://profile.id.com.au/mansfield/> and Victorian State Government, 2019, Victoria in Future: Victoria's future population projections. Available online: [Victoria in Future \(planning.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/victoria-in-future)

Catchment	2012	2016	2020	Change 2012 - 2016		Change 2016 - 2020	
				No.	%	No.	%
Mansfield Shire	8,097	8,674	9,474	577	7.1%	800	9.2%
Bonnie Doon and surrounds	1,087	1,172	1,292	85	7.8%	120	10.2%
Jamieson – Goughs Bay – Upper Goulburn	1,179	1,147	1,234	-32	-2.7%	87	7.6%
Mansfield Township	4,358	4,888	5,257	530	12.2%	369	7.5%
Merrijig – High Country -	1,461	1,467	1,690	6	0.4%	223	15.2%

Table 3: Mansfield Shire and small areas, population size 2012 - 2020

Age Profile³

Compared to regional Victoria, Mansfield Shire has similar proportions of people aged 0 -17 years and higher proportions in people aged 60 years or older. Specifically, Mansfield Shire has:

- A *larger* percentage of 'Empty nesters and retirees' (17.2% compared to 13.4%)
- A *larger* percentage of 'Seniors' (12.7% compared to 11.1%)
- A *smaller* percentage of 'Young workforce' (7.7% compared to 10.9%)
- A *smaller* percentage of 'Tertiary education & independence' (5.1% compared to 7.9%)

The most significant changes in the age structure of Mansfield Shire between 2011 and 2016 were:

- The increasing number of people aged 60 years or older
- The increasing number of primary school aged children (5 – 11 years)
- The decreasing number of secondary school aged teenagers (12 – 17 years).

While data is not yet available about how the recent population growth is impacting upon the age profile of the community, there are some key indicators including:

- Increasing demand for early years services including maternal and child health, kindergarten, and childcare services. This suggests there is an increase in young children and consequently families living in the Shire.
- Increasing enrolments at local primary and secondary schools.

³ Profile.id, Mansfield Shire Community Profile. Accessed 30 September 2021: <http://profile.id.com.au/mansfield/>

Service age group	2011		2016		Regional Vic 2016	Change 2011 - 2016	
	No.	%	No	%	%	No.	%
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	485	6.1	433	5	5.8	-52	-10.7%
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	572	7.2	743	8.6	8.7	171	29.9%
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	823	10.4	730	8.5	7.4	-93	-11.3%
Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	429	5.4	442	5.1	7.9	13	3.0%
Young workforce (25 to 34)	675	8.6	662	7.7	10.9	-13	-1.9%
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	1,452	18.4	1,488	17.3	18.1	36	2.5%
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	1,275	16.2	1,317	15.3	13.9	42	3.3%
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	1,241	15.7	1,475	17.2	13.4	234	18.9%
Seniors (70 to 84)	774	9.8	1,093	12.7	11.1	319	41.2%
Elderly aged (85 and over)	167	2.1	207	2.4	2.7	40	24.0%

Table 4: Mansfield Shire population age profile 2011 and 2016

5.3 Implications for the Emergency Services Precinct Scoping Study

There are a number of aspects of the demographic, economic and geographic profile of Mansfield Shire which are and will continue to drive increased demand for emergency services in the Shire. These include:

- Consistent and increasing population growth
- A significant and growing tourism and hospitality sector attracting visitors to the region
- A large proportion of unoccupied housing stock
- A geographic setting which is attractive to visitors but can also present challenges for visitors and the local community because of the topography, in some parts isolation, and the frequency of natural disasters events such as bushfires, storms or floods.

The significance of this increased demand has seen the State Government recently announce additional Ambulance resources to Mansfield so that the station will move from a callout facility to a 24-hour staffed station.

Combined these factors demonstrate there is a clear need in Mansfield for quality emergency services delivered from contemporary infrastructure, that is well located to respond to the growing demand from both the local community and visitors to the region.

6.0 Learning from others

To assist in understanding the contributing factors and local conditions which may support achieving the co-location and integration of emergency services infrastructure, a number of case study examples have been examined across various locations in Victoria. These include:

- Wangaratta
- Bannockburn
- Broadford
- Wendouree
- Echuca
- Kinglake.

Location	VicSES	CFA	AV	VicPol	DELWP	Other
Wangaratta	√	√		√		
Bannockburn	√	√				
Broadford		√	√			
Wendouree		√	√		√	VicRoads testing and vehicle inspection centre. DELWP office. Central Highlands Water.
Echuca	√	√	√			Echuca Moama Search and Rescue.
Kinglake	√	√				

Table 5: Emergency services co-location case studies

These locations have been selected because of the following attributes:

- Locations with SES and Ambulance facilities co-located
- Council involvement in provision of land, leadership and advocacy
- Developments undertaken in recent years
- Settings where facilities were shared or collaboration between agencies is evident.
- Settings that provide a contrast or context for Mansfield.

6.1 Key learnings from others

In reviewing the emergency services facilities located in the communities listed above, a number of factors were identified that have influenced investment decisions by agencies, and provide important learnings for Mansfield:

- The presence of dilapidated, inadequate or otherwise not fit for purpose infrastructure.
- Local conditions that are putting pressure on local emergency response including population growth, significant visitation resulting from the visitor economy and land or infrastructure factors such as the presence of waterbodies, industrial development, inaccessible natural areas and transport infrastructure such as highways or railway lines.
- The frequency of emergency events or natural disasters.
- Collaboration and advocacy by agencies at the local level (Kinglake and Echuca).
- Persistent and informed advocacy by Council and local elected Members (Bannockburn, Echuca and Wangaratta).
- Available public land, including land owned by Council.
- Investments in like or neighbouring communities.
- Development of contemporary CFA infrastructure to ‘anchor’ other agencies (eg. Broadford, Kinglake).

7.0 Stakeholder engagement

Consultation and engagement has occurred with stakeholders to inform the Scoping Study. The purpose of the consultation has been:

- To identify service and operational requirements
- To document local issues that may influence decisions regarding future infrastructure provision
- To identify current collaboration and coordination between agencies at the local level
- To identify provision requirements for emergency services in Mansfield and where relevant the broader region
- To understand agency processes and decision making for infrastructure planning and provision
- To understand agency appetite and support for co-located or joined-up services.

The consultation and engagement consisted of:

- **Workshops with the Project Control Group** including representatives from Mansfield Shire Council and members of the Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct Community Committee.
- **Workshops with the Technical Advisory Group** including representatives from Mansfield Shire Council, Ambulance Victoria, SES, CFA, VicPol and DELWP.
- **A workshop with the Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct Community Committee.**
- **Telephone interviews** with representatives from the various emergency services agencies, and community and health agencies or organisations. Every effort was made to have contact with both local representatives and regional or corporate representatives.

Workshops

Through the workshops, the consulting team sought to develop an understanding of:

- The existing emergency services infrastructure, its condition and fitness for purpose.
- Key factors impacting upon the provision of emergency services in Mansfield and surrounds.
- The extent of interest emergency services agencies may have in participating in an emergency services precinct.
- How effectively emergency services agencies work together at the local level.
- Opportunities for shared infrastructure by both emergency services agencies and other relevant community organisations.
- The specific infrastructure and service needs of individual emergency services agencies.

The workshops were also an important way to share updates about the Study, test ideas and clarify information.

Telephone interviews

The interviews focused on the following questions, and the specific issues discussed reflect the role of the person interviewed:

1. How are facility requirements identified?
2. How are facility designs prepared, are standard designs/templates in place, is there scope to vary designs to meet local needs?
3. How does the group currently work with other agencies in the region?
4. Is there scope to share/co-locate facilities with other complementary agencies and are there examples of this?
5. Is benefit seen in a co-location of joined-up approach?
6. How does project prioritisation and funding work? Approval processes?
7. Is there a priority or forward project list for infrastructure upgrades?
8. Are funds provided by and managed by the agency?

A list of those who participated in the consultation and engagement is outlined below:

Agency	Contact	Role
Emergency Management Victoria	Vicky Kyris	Director Sector Investment and Performance
Victoria State Emergency Service	Dave Pirie	Manager Facilities and Capital Works
	Tom Thoburne	Mansfield Unit Controller
Ambulance Victoria	Renee Shevlin	Project Manager, Property Services
	Stefan Wycisk	A/Operations Community Engagement Liaison Coordinator Hume
Victoria Police	Joanne Hoffman	Director Properties
Country Fire Authority	Stewart Kreltshheim	Assistant Chief Fire Officer District 23
	Rob Gardiner	Administrative Support Officer Mansfield Brigade Group Officer
	Michael Gannon	Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
	Daryl Owen	Commander District 23
Forest Fire Management Victoria (DELWP)	Scott Edwards	District Manager Goulburn Hume Region, Forest Fire Management Victoria
Regional Development Victoria	Matt Nelson	Regional Director RDV, Hume Region
Mansfield District Hospital	Cameron Butler	Chief Executive Officer
Red Cross Mansfield Branch	Peter Tie	
	Gill Bruce	
Mansfield Community Radio	Dallas Daniels	President

7.1 Key findings from stakeholder engagement

The information shared by stakeholders is reflective of their role as either operationally or planning focused, and local or organisation wide. A summary of the key findings from the interviews is outlined below with more detailed information provided in Appendix A.

Key information shared by **community and agency representatives at the local level** included:

- There is a strong spirit of collaboration and cooperation between emergency services agencies at the local level.
- There is a high level of interest and support for the proposal from Ambulance Victoria and SES Victoria at both the local and corporate level driven by the poor condition of their existing infrastructure. CFA also has a strong interest, but their needs are less immediate.
- The role of volunteers is crucial with a total of 150 involved in SES, CFA, Red Cross and Mansfield Community Radio.
- Joint training activities are an important point of contact between volunteers and staff and are highly valued. The outdoor spaces at the SES facility are well used by several agencies for training activities.
- There has been limited recent investment in emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield, other than the CFA fire station.
- Co-location is seen as a valuable approach in assisting joint training initiatives and maximising interaction and co-operation between agencies.
- Current relationships are strengthened by participation on the Mansfield Emergency Management Precinct Committee (MEMPC) and regular attendance at unit level meetings and events.
- There may be opportunity to co-locate Red Cross and community radio as part of an emergency services precinct.

Key information shared by **agency representatives at the organisation or corporate level** included:

- Awareness of the organisational and governance complexities in the sector.
- Awareness of the sector policy priority to promote co-location and collaboration.
- An understanding of the processes to plan for and deliver investments in emergency services infrastructure.
- An understanding of the challenges associated with achieving joined-up services.
- An understanding of the operational challenges in Mansfield and surrounding areas.

8.0 Future emergency services infrastructure needs

The infrastructure requirements of the CFA volunteer firefighting, SES volunteer emergency services, and Ambulance Victoria have been identified through discussions with these agencies and by examining standardised infrastructure provision information for each agency. The requirements for each agency are summarised below.

8.1 Ambulance Victoria

Total estimated footprint required as advised by Ambulance Victoria: 2,450m².

The Design Specification [Ambulance Victoria Branch Design Specification] describes in considerable detail, the briefing requirements for an AV facility. Without repeating the extensive document details here, they can be summarised as follows:

- Administration areas
 - Entry
 - Team Manager’s Office
 - Training Room
 - Study alcove
 - Charging station
 - Communications cupboard
- Living Areas
 - Kitchen and dining
 - Living room
 - Rest/sleeping rooms (x 4)
 - Reliever’s quarters (x 2)
- Personal Care Areas
 - Locker area
 - Vanity room
 - WC and shower cubicles
 - Change rooms
 - DDA compliant facilities (shower and WC)
- Service areas
 - Garage (drive through bays x 5)
 - Medical secure storeroom
 - Delivery room
- Outdoor Areas
 - Vehicle parking (x 14)
 - Outdoor breakout/seating space
 - Hardstand/driveway
 - Fencing requirements
 - Bicycle racks
 - Vehicle wash bays
 - Bicycle racks
 - Other (rainwater storage, flagpoles, letterbox, etc.)

Ambulance Victoria has two official response time targets: Respond to Code 1 incidents within **15 minutes** for 85% of incidents state-wide and Respond to Code 1 incidents within 15 minutes for 90% of incidents in centres with populations greater than 7,500.

8.2 SES volunteer station

Total estimated footprint required as advised by the SES: 3,000m².

The SES have advised that they require a Type D facility, suitable for 35-90+ volunteers. This facility contains the following briefing requirements:

- Six (6) bay vehicle garage, minimum 14 metres deep (four bays) and 16 metres deep (two bays accommodating larger vehicle/trailer room)
- Turnout/WC/Change area
- 3 offices (3 workstations per office)
- Comms room (4 workstations)
- DCC Comms room (4 seats)
- DCC Operations room (8 seats)
- A LARGE ROOM WITH OPERABLE WALLS DIVIDING IT:
 - First Training room with DCC overflow space, operable wall connection to:
 - Second training /operations room, operable wall connection to:
 - Kitchen and lounge
- Separate general WC
- Cleaner's store
- Laundry
- Circulation etc.

Additional requirements identified by the SES include outdoor training space (not all concrete) and secure space for outdoor road rescue training including 2 donor vehicles and a truck.

The SES has an 8-minute response time to call outs i.e. they must be on the road within 8 minutes of receiving a call out.

8.3 CFA volunteer firefighting station

Total estimated footprint required as advised by the CFA: 3,500m².

The CFA have advised that they require a Type 2B volunteer fire station design. This is the largest station solely manned by volunteer fire fighters who provide emergency management services for Mansfield and district.

This type of station comprises:

- Motor Room with 3 or more 12-metre-long ‘drive-through’ vehicle bays for emergency appliances (e.g., hazmat, rescue or other smaller support vehicles) with external concrete apron and direct access to the road.
- Preferably dual vehicle access.
- Operational support areas including workshop, store, drying room & laundry areas, and BA servicing room.
- Provision of turn-out areas for fire fighters.
- Brigade office and Brigade support office. It may include an office for the local Group
- and 2 additional offices to allow for Local Command Facility (LCF) if required.
- Meeting room with adjacent kitchen and associated ablution areas.
- Driveway to training yard at rear, on-site car parking and communications tower.
- Landscaping provided to Council requirements
- When required for safety reasons traffic management measures are provided to Vic Roads requirements.
- Total building area: 530m² (typical 3 Motor Room bay facility – LCF not included)
- LCF (Local command facility) is an additional room of 5 x 6 metres.

Additional requirements identified by the CFA include adequate drainage (civil) and a hose drying tower.

The CFA has a 6-minute response time to call outs i.e. they must be on the road within 6 minutes of receiving a call out.

8.4 Combined facilities

Cooperation ‘on the ground’ between agencies has been amply demonstrated in consultation, anecdotally, and with specific incident management examples. There is a clear opportunity to ‘stitch together’ some aspects of facility design, potentially in the form of a shared ‘training hub’ and support spaces, while maintaining the distinctive and separate functions of each agency.

Co-location on a given site will go a long way towards the shared organisational objectives of ‘cooperation and integration’, with the close proximity of services operating in a way that makes cross-fertilisation possible. The opportunity and practicality of actually sharing facilities through a form of ‘full integration’, is less likely to be achieved, as each agency needs to operate independently. Co-location, however, brings them together in a literal and practical sense.

Having considered the operating and facility needs of each agency, we have identified an opportunity for a stand-alone combined facility containing multiple functions in a flexible format. The primary function would be for cross-agency training, with flexible spaces capable of hosting formal and informal training at specific times, and social/breakout space at other times. Support facilities such as kitchen and bathroom facilities are a logical addition to such a space.

In addition, complementary tenants could be easily accommodated at the sites under consideration, particularly as there is a sufficient space without resorting to multiple level buildings. The local Community Radio Station, and the Red Cross which play a role in during emergency situations, have been discussed as potential complementary tenants of a joint facility.

Opportunity: Telecommunications and alert systems

Command and control systems is another opportunity for integration. Consideration of facilities to support this warrants further investigation.

9.0 Precinct framework

The emergency services precinct framework brings together an understanding of the project background and context, review of demographic and economic data, assessment of best practice examples and consultation with stakeholders. The framework responds to this context and outlines a case for investment in emergency services infrastructure to ensure emergency management services in the district are responsive. The framework also recognises the community interest and energy in ensuring the resilience of Mansfield Shire.

Appropriate and responsive emergency services support liveability and underpin economic prosperity. They keep communities safe and provide certainty. A framework has been developed for an emergency services precinct in Mansfield which responds to a community aspiration for increased resilience, facilitates an integrated approach to emergency management and positions services to better meet current and emerging threats and challenges. A governance model is also discussed to ensure that the potential operational and community benefits of the precinct are realised. The framework has six dimensions:

A resilient Mansfield:	A vision for a safer and more resilient community, working together and confident about the future.
The case for investment in emergency services infrastructure	Clear evidence supporting the need for investment in emergency services infrastructure to reduce the vulnerability of the Mansfield Shire community to emergency situations and be prepared to meet the future needs of the community.
An integrated approach:	A proposal for an integrated precinct promoting collaboration and coordination of effort, will position services for the future and harnesses community energy. Efficient provision of infrastructure enabling shared use, fosters closer relationships and underpin a seamless emergency services response.
Proposed components:	SES, Ambulance, CFA, Community Radio, Emergency Training and Support Hub, and community storage facilities for emergency response and recovery organisations.
Precinct outcomes and benefits:	The proposal is consistent with State Government policy, delivers a demonstration project to inform sector reform and will support continued community and economic recovery.
Proposed governance model:	A coordinating body is proposed with representatives from all agencies and organisations based in the precinct. This will be complemented by a memorandum of understanding between agencies.

9.1 A resilient Mansfield

Mansfield Shire is a proud and united community with a strong history of volunteerism and enduring interest and support for emergency services agencies. The region has experienced a large number of major natural disasters and emergency events including fires, floods, and land and water search and rescue activities. The momentum for the proposal to establish an emergency services precinct in Mansfield derives from and reflects this community context.

The Mansfield community understands that collaboration and coordination of effort across the emergency services sector in the planning for, response to and recovery from emergency events will contribute to safer, more resilient communities.

It is the community's vision to:

- **Advocate for investment in emergency services infrastructure** that will meet the current and projected future challenges facing the community and the region.
- **Maintain, encourage, and harness community interest** and support for emergency services.
- **Build confidence and resilience** in the Mansfield community as a safe place to live and to visit.
- **Foster and facilitate coordination between agencies** through the establishment of an emergency services precinct with shared infrastructure.
- **Communicate the strong, collaborative relationships between agencies at the local level** as evidenced by joint training programs, regular attendance and interaction at unit meetings, and activities and sessions designed to ensure awareness of each agencies operating systems and equipment. This assists interoperability and a seamless emergency response.
- **Promote community awareness of the challenges for the region** posed by natural disasters and emergency events.
- **Through development of an emergency services precinct in Mansfield**, demonstrate to other communities and the agencies at the state level, the benefits and positive community outcomes to flow from collaboration, resource sharing and a joined-up approach.

9.2 The case for investment in emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield

The case for increased investment in emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield has been established through a strategic review of the factors impacting upon emergency management services, a review of the policy context for emergency management, and stakeholder consultation. There is clear and tangible evidence of the need for improved emergency services infrastructure in Mansfield and this is demonstrated through the following.

- **Emergency management infrastructure in Mansfield is characterised by a lack of investment**, with Mansfield CFA station the only facility that has received investment in recent years, to address operational issues.

- **The facilities are spread across Mansfield with each service experiencing challenges** in relation to infrastructure or location, potentially leaving the community **vulnerable** during emergency situations.

SES	Located on a Council owned site in a dated building that is not disability access compliant.
CFA	Located on a constrained central township site with access challenges due to proximity to the roundabout on High Street.
Ambulance	Located in a building that does not support current ambulance operating models and cannot support the recent announcement of moving to be a 24-hour station. The Mansfield service is identified as being amongst the lowest performing in the State.
VicPol	Located on a land locked central township site.
DELWP (Forest Fire Manage't Victoria)	Located in a residential area with insufficient space for current or future operations.

- **Natural and man-made assets in the region are significant generators of emergency situations.** Features such as large waterbodies, the high country, a growing and dispersed population, a very high proportion of absentee landowners, major road network, large inaccessible areas and industrial and mining activity, mean that **Mansfield Shire is vulnerable to emergency situations.** In addition, **climate change** is expected to increase the severity and frequency of natural disasters in the area.
- **As a geographic setting, Mansfield is very attractive to visitors but can also present challenges for visitors and the local community alike** because of the topography, in some parts isolation, and the frequency of natural disaster events such as bushfires, storms or floods.
- **Mansfield Shire has experienced consistent population growth** each year since 2012 (2% PA) and in 2020 this increased to 3.2%. It is projected the population will reach 11,000 in 2036 but with the current growth rate, this is likely to be reached within 10 years.
- **The strong visitor economy as evidenced by 1,460,205 domestic overnight visits** to Mansfield Shire in 2018/2019. This underpins local economic prosperity for the Shire and the wider region. The promotion of Mount Buller as a year-round destination has significantly increased visitations.

9.3 An integrated approach

The establishment of an emergency services precinct is proposed for the following reasons:

- There is a well-developed planning and policy environment at the local and state level that provides a **clear policy basis** for establishing an emergency services precinct in Mansfield with co-located services and infrastructure. There is a high level of consistency in sector planning and policy development in the **commitment to partnering, collaboration and joined-up services.**

- **To enable shared use of spaces and facilities**, and support and foster collaboration and closer relationships between the emergency services agencies. Joint training and operational activities are just two examples of how collaboration can be strengthened.
- There is a **high level of support and interest** in the proposal from Ambulance Victoria and SES Victoria at the local and corporate level.
- There is a high level of community pride with strong and enthusiastic **collaboration and coordination by emergency management agencies at the local level**.
- **Appropriately zoned publicly owned land is available** to sustain an emergency services precinct.
- It represents an **efficient way to provide public infrastructure**.
- It will deliver a highly visible focus for emergency services which has the potential to **promote and encourage volunteerism**.
- A key liveability attractor to encourage people to move to the area is the accessibility of services and supports including emergency services. **Strong and collaborative emergency services will build confidence in Mansfield as a safe and liveable community**.

9.4 Proposed components of an emergency services precinct in Mansfield

A precinct approach is proposed to enable consolidation of Mansfield emergency services infrastructure as much as possible on one site. The precinct is proposed to include the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New State Emergency Services facility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Ambulance Victoria station to accommodate 24 hour operation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for potential new Country Fire Authority station
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New facilities for Mansfield Community Radio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Training and Support Hub to enable delivery of emergency management and community development training programs and to support the community recovery effort.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage facilities to assist Red Cross and other community organisations and their community support and recovery efforts

This configuration reflects the urgent need for a new ambulance station, the current location of Mansfield SES on Council land, the potential to develop shared training and support facilities and the need for improved and permanent facilities for Red Cross and Mansfield Community Radio. The CFA have advised their current facility meets operational requirements, but there is potential for the service to relocate to the precinct in the future, and provision should be made for this.

DELWP and Victoria Police are not proposed for inclusion in the precinct as:

- DELWP (Forest Fire Management Victoria) is planning to develop a new facility on industrial land located on Lakins Road, north of Mansfield township adjacent to the Midland Highway.
- Victoria Police have indicated they have no current or future need to relocate. In addition, development of a precinct to provide dedicated and shared infrastructure for SES, CFA and ambulance, will free up publicly owned land in the precinct around the existing Police Station and Magistrates Court, enabling future improvements to the Police Station.

9.5 Precinct outcomes and benefits

The Mansfield emergency services precinct will incorporate spaces and facilities to support the efficient and effective delivery of services by emergency services agencies. This includes a combination of facilities dedicated to the specific activities of individual agencies, and shared spaces and functionality to promote and facilitate collaboration and the achievement of joined-up services. The key benefits of investing in an emergency services precinct and infrastructure in Mansfield are:

Fit for purpose infrastructure:	Delivering emergency services infrastructure for communities that is fit for purpose and positions the agencies for the future.
Responsive to the local environment:	Infrastructure to sustain services that respond to the challenging local and regional operating environment e.g. increasing population size and distribution, increasing tourist visitation to the region, natural and manmade assets, and the frequency and nature of natural disasters.
Reduce vulnerability and enhance preparedness:	Provision of integrated contemporary infrastructure where services are supported to work together, will enhance preparedness for emergency situations and strengthen the resilience of the community.
Support joint initiatives:	Will provide the capacity to deliver joint training, educational and operational activities.
Nurture community interest and confidence:	<p>Responds to and nurtures community interest, support and involvement in emergency management and volunteering at the local level.</p> <p>It will strengthen confidence in the liveability of Mansfield, supporting continued growth in the residential population and visitors to the region.</p>

Support community and economic recovery:	Investment will support both current and future community and economic recovery from natural disasters in the Mansfield area. It also provides an opportunity for existing CFA and Ambulance sites to be made available to support the continued revitalisation of the Mansfield town centre.
Demonstration project:	Investment represents a demonstration project to promote and ‘bring to life’ the state policy agenda for collaborative and joined-up services.
Stronger relationships:	Stronger relationships between community organisations and emergency services agencies will assist planning, response, and recovery efforts.
A seamless and collaborative approach:	A precinct approach reinforces the focus of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee on having a seamless and collaborative approach to emergency response.

9.6 Proposed operational governance model

A governance arrangement is proposed for the operation of the emergency services precinct. A co-ordinating mechanism is proposed, with all precinct based agencies and organisations represented, along with some community representatives. It is proposed this group be complemented by Memorandum’s of Understanding with agencies at the local level, and be led and facilitated by Council.

The purpose of this coordinating group is to:

- Lead and develop operating protocols for use and access to the shared facilities in the precinct.
- Develop a plan of initiatives to maximise the collaboration opportunities offered by the precinct and establish a process of ongoing review.
- Develop a plan to attract, retain and recognise the contribution made by volunteers.
- Develop a plan to activate the Emergency Training and Support Hub and engage with community support organisations, environment groups and local schools.
- Provide regular updates to Council and the community on progress in implementing the planned initiatives.
- Identify opportunities to promote community awareness of the ongoing operational and community outcomes and benefits from the precinct.

10.0 The potential sites and criteria for assessing sites

Potential sites for an emergency services precinct have been assessed against agreed criteria to determine the suitability of the sites to accommodate this type of function and activity.

10.1 Potential sites

Three sites have been discussed and considered in the community at various times. They are:

1. The Lakins Road site (south side and west of Midland Highway)
2. The Saleyards site (166 Maroondah Highway)
3. The existing DELWP site (128 Highett Street).

The existing DELWP site is located in a residential area, opposite Mansfield Cemetery and in close proximity to Mansfield Secondary College, Bindaree Retirement Hostel and the Steiner School and Kindergarten. While the site is of sufficient size to successfully accommodate the proposed combined agencies and may be available when DELWP relocate to Lakins Road as planned, the urban context and setting, proximity to future residential development, extended emergency response times, and uncertainty about when the site will be available, mean it has been eliminated as a possible site.

Consequently, the detailed site assessment has focused on two options: Lakins Road and the Maroondah Highway site.



Figure 3: Lakins Road site

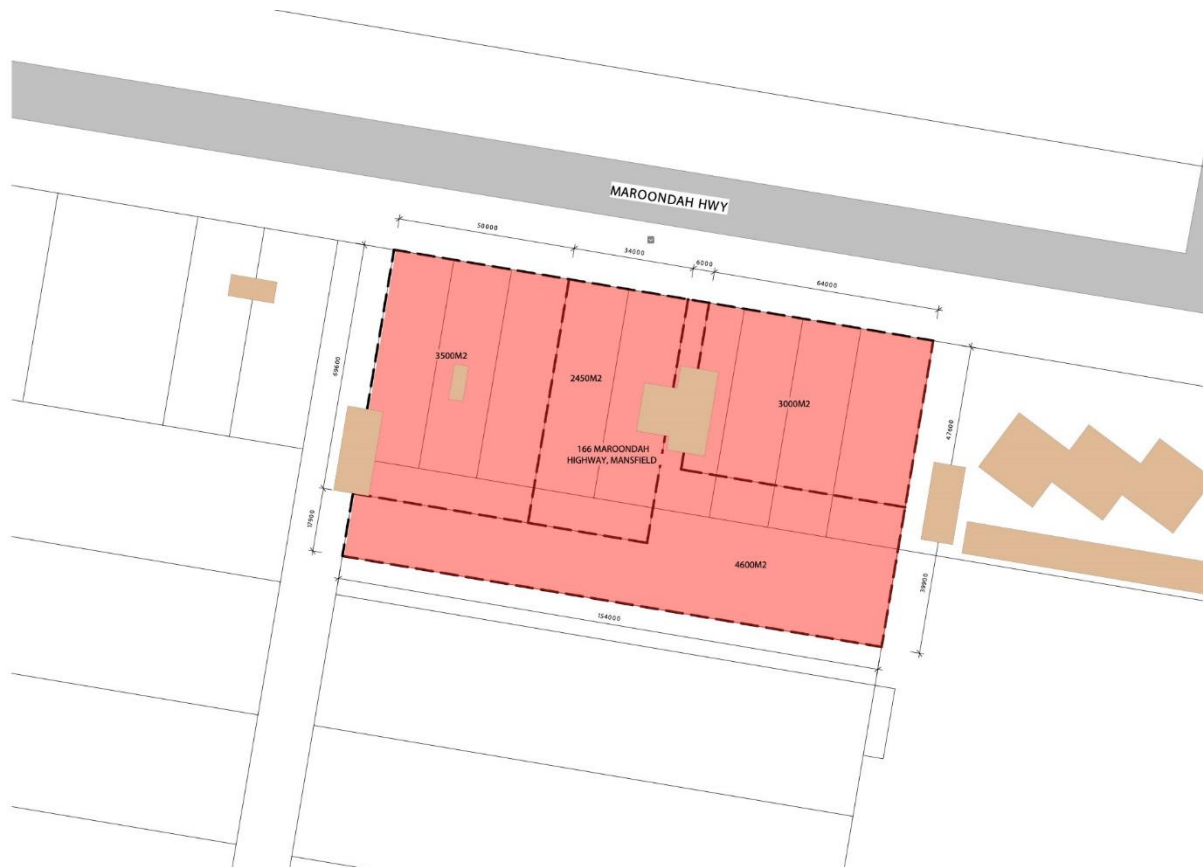


Figure 4: Maroondah Highway site

10.2 Site assessment criteria

Broadly an emergency services precinct requires a large area for dedicated and shared spaces, must integrate appropriately into the surrounding area and be of sufficient layout and complexity to meet the region's emergency services needs. The criteria used to assess possible sites has been:

Primary

- Land is in public ownership and available for emergency services infrastructure and activity.
- The existing planning controls support the use and development of the site for emergency services infrastructure and activity, are adjacent land uses compatible, has a CHMP been prepared
- Dispatch response time from (and returning to) the site for each of the emergency services agencies can be met
- The site is big enough to accommodate ALL proposed requirements (internal/external)
- Access or use of the site is not impaired by flood events.
- Access or use of the site is not impaired by fire events.

Secondary

- There is good street frontage access potential.

- Arrangements in relation to traffic arterials, etc. ie. immediate connection into road network, appropriate traffic speed zoning, suitability for heavy vehicles, suitable sightlines, etc.
- Site services (electricity, water, sewer) are readily available – specifically, no major upgrade is required to support the services.
- Environmental factors, ie. are significant environmental assets present, has a flora and fauna study been undertaken, is a watercourse nearby, etc?
- Ground conditions, ie. are difficult ground conditions known to be present including contamination, has a geotechnical study been undertaken for the site or in the general proximity?

Tertiary

- Physical context: is the context appropriate for semi-industrial emergency facilities (eg. urban design and neighbourhood character)?
- Potential of site to bolster community cohesion/pride (qualitative).
- Potential of site to support the objective of attracting volunteers.

A detailed analysis of each option has been undertaken against each criteria and a high level summary provided. The high-level summary provides a colour coded indication of the outcomes from the analysis, as well as a written summary. The colour coding system has been applied as follows:

Green	This site will fully or almost fully address the criteria.
Orange	This site will partially address the criteria.
Red	This site will not or is unlikely to address the criteria.

10.3 Summary of detailed site assessment

A detailed assessment of the Maroondah Highway and Lakins Road sites against the site selection criteria can be found in Appendix D. A high-level summary of the findings from the assessment can be found in table below. It shows:

- Both sites are in public ownership, available for development as an emergency services precinct and appropriately zoned. Adjacent land uses are also compatible.
- The **Maroondah Highway site is the preferred location for an emergency services precinct because** it allows the emergency services agencies to meet their response time targets, there are no major impediments for its development as an emergency services precinct, and it enjoys significant support in the community, as SES have operated from the site since 1996.

Consequently, it is recommended that the Feasibility Study and Business Case focus on the Maroondah Highway site given its suitability for an emergency services precinct.

Assessment Criteria	Maroondah Highway	Lakins Road
Primary		
Land is in public ownership and available for emergency services infrastructure and activity.		
The existing planning controls support the use and development of the site for emergency services infrastructure and activity, are adjacent land uses compatible, has a CHMP been prepared.		
Dispatch response time from (and returning to) the site can be met.		
The site big enough to accommodate ALL proposed requirements (internal/external).		
Access or use of the site is not impaired by flood events.		
Access or use of the site is not impaired by fire events.		
Secondary		
There is good street frontage access potential.		
Arrangements in relation to traffic arterials, etc. ie. immediate connection into road network, appropriate traffic speed zoning, suitability for heavy vehicles, suitable sightlines, etc.		
Site services (electricity, water, sewer) are readily available – specifically, no major upgrade required to support the services.		
Environmental factors, ie. are significant environmental assets present, has a flora and fauna study been undertaken, is a watercourse nearby, etc?		
Ground conditions, ie. are difficult ground conditions known to be present including contamination, has a geotechnical study been undertaken for the site or in the general proximity?		
Tertiary		
Physical context: is the context appropriate for semi-industrial emergency facilities (eg. urban design and neighbourhood character)?		
Potential of site to bolster community cohesion/pride (qualitative).		
Potential of site to support the objective of attracting volunteers.		

11.0 Next steps

The proposed next steps for progressing the Emergency Services Precinct project are:

1. Provide a briefing for Councillors covering the findings from the Scoping Study and proposed funding arrangements, timing and scope of the Feasibility Study and Business Case.
2. Prepare an advocacy plan to inform and garner support for the project from key decision makers including:
 - State and Federal Local Members;
 - relevant State and Federal Ministers;
 - key State Government departmental senior staff; and
 - emergency services agencies senior staff.
3. Identify funding opportunities for the project at the State and Federal level including:
 - State and Federal funding programs aimed at supporting infrastructure provision in regional Australia;
 - State and Federal funding programs aimed at supporting economic and social recovery in regional communities post natural disasters and Covid-19;
 - State and Federal funding programs aimed at supporting emergency services infrastructure to enhance preparedness; and
 - Federal funding programs aimed at preparing communities to be resilient in the face of natural disasters and climate change.
4. Provide a project briefing for key stakeholders and the Mansfield Shire community covering the outcomes from the Scoping Study and proposed next steps and using Council's established communication channels. This is to ensure project transparency and to maintain momentum with the high level of community support for the project that is currently present.
5. Confirm and formalise governance arrangements with partner agencies and organisations for the Feasibility Study and Business Case phase.
6. Proceed with the Feasibility Study and Business Case subject to funding and approval by Council.

Appendix A: Detailed findings of planning and policy context review.

Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Update #3 2018-21

The SAP provides guidance at the statewide level on strategic priorities and is the primary document guiding the State Government’s vision of safer more resilient communities. The Plan has a number of priorities regarding legislation, roles and responsibilities in the sector, leadership, workforce development and governance. Of relevance to the proposal to establish an emergency services precinct in Mansfield is the priority about services and systems. It states, the objective is to “formalise an integrated emergency management service delivery model that facilitates community safety and self-reliance, and supports the people and systems to deliver them in an integrated and coordinated manner”. The outcome sought is an emergency management service delivery model that provides coordinated services for and with the community.

Actions proposed include:

- Review of service delivery models and methods;
- Development of common practices, workflows and platforms;
- An investment plan that identifies shared procurement and co-infrastructure; and
- Research, best practice models and promotion of interoperability.

A further objective focuses on “improved connectivity and inter-operability between first responders. Improved communication between first responders, support services and the community to improve decision making” and further reinforces the vision of a seamless emergency services sector. Actions include:

- Further consolidation of a single communication plan;
- Delivery of common principles, standards, definitions and systems of work; and
- Development of existing common definitions in terminology, symbology and data for public information and warnings.

Municipal Emergency Management Planning

Emergency Management in Victoria is led by **Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)** which is the agency responsible for the design and operation of emergency management in the state. EMV drives the integration of policy, strategy, operational coordination, planning and investment across Victoria’s emergency management sector, contributing to safer, more resilient communities.

Within this framework there are a range of agencies with both shared and discrete roles in the planning for, response and recovery from emergency events. Integrated arrangements are in place at the state, regional and municipal level.

At the local level, a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) is established for the purpose of emergency management planning for the municipality. The Committee comprises

membership from all relevant agencies and the Council. A key role for the MEMPC is to prepare and maintain a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

The Plan addresses the prevention and mitigation of, response to and recovery from emergencies within the Mansfield Shire. The aim of the MEMP is to detail the agreed arrangements and/or operational activities that will be managed or undertaken for the prevention and mitigation of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur across Mansfield Shire.

The MEMP comprises three parts to address the three phases of emergency management:

- Before - preparedness and planning for emergency events;
- During – the response to specific events; and
- After – a community-led recovery.

In light of the close collaboration between agencies, Council staff and community members participation on the MEMPC and in planning for and responding to emergency events, a high level of cooperation and support is typically evident at the local level. This is clearly the case in Mansfield Shire. The following documents have been reviewed to establish whether there are any implications for the project. Themes and issues addressed in the documents are consistent with others and no items of specific relevance to Mansfield were identified.

- **Emergency Management Investment and Asset Strategy 2018**
- **Inspector-General for Emergency Management reports and reviews**
- **National Inquiries and Recommendations Data Base**

Infrastructure Victoria: Victoria’s infrastructure strategy 2021-2051.

The strategy guides and supports State Government decision making. It makes recommendations to help achieve Victoria’s long term objectives including enhancing productivity, building resilience, responding to climate change, and meeting the social and economic needs of Victorians so they can build flourishing, meaningful, and prosperous lives.

The recommendations aim to better use existing infrastructure, manage demand on it, and help plan the timing and location of required and necessary new infrastructure.

Planning for an emergency services precinct in Mansfield is consistent with the key directions in the Strategy, and in particular:

- Infrastructure provision to meet the challenges of population growth;
- Recommendations for planning for multi purpose community facilities;
- Recommending better asset management of community infrastructure;
- Preparing for the effects of climate change; and
- The need to resource communities to sustain nature based tourism.

Infrastructure Priorities for the Regions – Key findings to inform Victoria’s 30-year infrastructure strategy update.

To support the Strategy a detailed study was undertaken of infrastructure needs in the regions. The study acknowledged long-term trends such as changes to local economies, urbanisation, population growth and decline, and climate change as affecting the regions in new ways. The 2019-20 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic are seen to have caused major disruption and accelerated the pace of change in the regions.

Demographic changes, such as an ageing population, are affecting the scope and mix of services councils need to provide. Smaller rural councils have a relatively small ratepayer base which is further constrained by declining populations and lower average incomes.

These pressures mean that regional councils need to be flexible and innovative in their approach to service provision, and to the facilities and infrastructure which support this. The need for facilities capable of supporting the complex and changing needs of local communities was one of the themes most consistently raised during the consultation for Infrastructure Priorities for the Regions.

Recommendations of particular relevance are:

- **Recommendation 08:** Plan for future investment in regional nature-based tourism infrastructure. In the next five years, develop a Victorian nature-based tourism strategy to guide industry development and prioritise further investments.
- **Recommendation 19:** Support regional councils to update, repurpose or retire outdated community infrastructure. Fund regional councils in the next five years to update, repurpose or retire outdated community infrastructure for better service delivery. This will provide targeted support for councils where service planning demonstrates facilities are no longer fit for purpose.
- **Recommendation 20:** Create climate-adapted facilities for rural communities in the next five years, fund local governments to plan and help deliver a network of designated, accessible climate adapted community facilities, to manage the health impacts of extreme heat and bushfire smoke. Existing community facilities such as libraries and community centres can be retrofitted to be made fit for purpose as cool and cleaner air facilities – ensuring they are in safe locations, have suitable air conditioning and filtration, back-up power and comfortable amenities like cooking facilities and internet access.

VicSES Strategic Plan 2018-2022

VicSES is a volunteer based organisation, governed by a Board and responsible to the Minister for Emergency Services. It is acknowledged as a significant contributor and leader in emergency management and has a focus on strengthening relationships and partnerships in “developing a resilient Victorian community”.

The mission of the organisation is stated as:

Partner with communities, government, other agencies and business to provide timely and effective emergency management services, building community preparedness, disaster resilience and

contributing to risk prevention.

The Plan has three goals supported by key initiatives. A relevant key initiative is to develop and implement a strategic facilities management plan to support operations. This aims to deliver best practice in facility management. Another relevant initiative is to build alliances with partners to better support community and service delivery needs and increase resilience-based collaborations.

Ambulance Victoria Strategic Plan 2017-2022

The Strategic Plan identifies the key role played by Ambulance Victoria in emergency services in Victoria. The Plan focuses on people and culture, processes and continuous improvement, technology and patient care.

The Plan notes that the policies and strategies of health and emergency services partners are more important now “given we are facing increasing demand for services, increasingly complex health needs and more frequent emergency events”.

The Plan is structured around four key outcomes.

Outcome 2 is *Partnerships that make a difference*. Priorities identified include:

- Working with communities to deliver local emergency health care solutions.
- Collaborating with our partners to improve health outcomes.

Outcome 4 is *A high performing organisation*. Priorities identified include:

- Embracing innovative ideas, systems and technology.
- Improving our integrated service model.

Country Fire Authority Strategy and Outcomes Framework 2020-2030

The Framework provides the structure for the CFA’s operation, performance and improvement over the next ten years. To support the longer-term strategy, the agency prepares an annual plan which sets out short term initiatives and priorities to deliver on the Framework.

The Framework is structured around the current and projected future operating context, goals and outcomes and areas for future focus. Initiatives relevant to the emergency services precinct proposal for Mansfield are:

- A commitment to form strategic partnerships to assist meeting strategic goals and provide broader benefit for Victorian communities.
- Sharing of knowledge and expertise with the sector and delivery partners.

Victoria Police Capability Plan 2016-2025

Victoria Police operates under the Victoria Police Act 2013 which directly governs the powers, obligations and activities of the force. The Act does not codify or require the force collaborate or partner with other emergency services agencies.

Victoria Police has a strategic plan, Victoria Police Capability Plan 2016-2025: Capability Framework, that seeks to guide transformation of the agency to be an agile, responsive, people-focused and connected organisation.

The Plan is focused on the role, obligations, capability and performance of the Police force with little reference to the force’s role in the broader emergency management structure or relationship with other agencies. There is however mention of the importance of partnerships across the Victorian public and not-for-profit sectors to meet the challenges of difficult social problems, demanding an integrated and co-ordinated approach between Victoria Police and other government and non-government agencies.

DELWP

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Corporate Plan 2021-2025 provides a coordinating framework for the wide range of functions, agencies and accountabilities comprising the Department. DELWP’s key priorities include:

- Major reforms in the energy, planning and waste sectors;
- Implementing Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy;
- Enabling Aboriginal self-determination;
- Improving the health of Victoria’s waterways and catchments; and
- Bushfire management and supporting recovery from natural disasters.

In the Mansfield region, DELWP manages state forests, coasts, and other public land, and delivers programs, projects and services with local communities and other partners. The Department also provides advice to government on forest, fire and emergency management, and has a lead role in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from fire and other emergencies, to reduce impacts on people, property, and the environment.

Several elements of the Corporate Plan are relevant to the proposal to develop an emergency services precinct in Mansfield. In its Community Charter the Department commits to “a place-based community focus” and “adapting its approach according to local needs”. The Department also commits to working with Councils to “plan for growth, support sustainability and prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters and other emergency events”.

In relation to emergency management, the Plan outlines DELWP’s approach in relation to emergency management. The Plan foreshadows land and fire agencies working in partnership with local communities to manage bushfire risks and protect the things that communities value the most. It is suggested that the Department’s “integrated approach to bushfire planning and management also helps to make communities safer and more resilient to the impacts of climate change before, during and after bushfires”.

Mansfield Shire Community Vision 2040

In early 2021 Mansfield Shire Council initiated a process to prepare a Community Vision. This is a new requirement of Victorian Councils following adoption of the new Local Government Act in 2020.

The process that Council supported involved a wide range of opportunities for community input and involvement and ultimately the Vision describes the community's aspiration for the future and what the community wants Mansfield Shire to be in 2040.

There are several elements of the Vision that provide context for the community led proposal to develop an emergency services precinct. These are:

- A vision for an engaged and active community
- A desire for the community to be collaborative and work towards common goals
- A vision for a safe and secure community
- Local infrastructure and services to be sustainable, robust and responsive
- Shire prosperity that is resilient
- Local infrastructure and services that are holistic and people-centred.

This is the Mansfield Shire community's vision for the future. The proposal to develop an emergency services precinct derives from and is consistent with this shared vision.

Draft Council Plan 2021-2025

Council has prepared a new Council Plan for the period 2021-2025. The Draft Plan sets out Council and the community's aspiration and priorities for the next four years. It has been prepared in the context of the Community Vision 2040.

The Plan has three themes:

- Theme 1: Connected and Healthy Community.
- Theme 2: Vibrant Liveability.
- Theme 3: A trusted, Effective and Efficient Council.

The Plan has a focus on partnerships and collaboration, developing the capacity of the community and planning for the future.

Priorities and initiatives that are relevant for assessing the feasibility of an emergency services precinct include:

- Strategies to strengthen and develop the visitor economy which will increase visitation to the region.
- Ensuring infrastructure provision keeps pace with the demands of growth and responds to climate change.

- Advocacy for the delivery of the emergency services precinct and other key community projects.

Planning Scheme Amendment C48 – Mansfield Town Approaches

Council currently has on exhibition Planning Scheme Amendment C48 Mansfield Township Approaches. This Amendment is relevant to the Maroondah Highway site currently occupied by VicSES and under consideration for the emergency services precinct.

The amendment applies to four highway approaches around the Mansfield township, being:

- Approach 1: Maroondah Highway approach on the western side of Mansfield.
- Approach 2: Mount Buller approach on the eastern side of Mansfield.
- Approach 3: Midland Highway approach on the northern side of Mansfield.
- Approach 4: Mansfield Whitfield Road approach on the northern side of Mansfield.

The amendment is required to implement the *Township Approaches Planning Controls and Guidelines Study, Mansfield*, June 2018 with objectives to:

- Identify the preferred future character of the four (4) township approaches.
- Ensure future development makes a positive impact on the amenity and environment within the township approaches.
- Ensure future development within the four (4) township approaches have regard to their local context and reinforces the valued character of the township.
- Clearly define township approaches through built form and landscaping treatments within the private realm.
- Provide clear, logical and useful guidelines for all – including, but not limited to developers, residents, Council officers and Councillors.

Appendix B: Detailed findings from looking at emergency services precincts in other communities.

Wangaratta

Wangaratta is located 250km north east of Melbourne and has a population of around 20,000 and is the main urban centre of the Rural City of Wangaratta. The town supports a hinterland comprising of smaller towns, villages and agricultural production. There are also National Parks and other natural areas, major waterways and public highways in the area. The north east receives significant tourist visitation to Mount Buffalo and Lake Hume and is an entry point to the Murray River corridor. Wangaratta and the other townships in the hinterland are experiencing moderate population growth.

The CFA, SES and Victoria Police facilities are co-located in a precinct arrangement in Handley Street on the southern edge of the town centre and with good main road access. The site has somewhat of a high profile being close to Tone Road and the town centre. The facilities have all been constructed in recent times having been relocated from various sites in the town centre where opportunities for expansion are limited. The Police Station was developed around 20 years ago, the CFA 12 to 13 years ago and the SES facility has been recently completed and is not operational yet. This represents a significant investment in the region's emergency services capability. Numerous other CFA units are located in townships and villages across the district.

The ambulance station is a standalone purpose built facility located in a commercial area on the main southern entrance to the town and with excellent main road access to travel north or south. The Magistrates Court is located in the town centre (Faithfull Street), the Police station had formerly been adjacent to the Magistrates Court.

Emergency services infrastructure

- VicSES – co-located with CFA and Victoria Police.
- Ambulance – located at 123 Tone Road (old Hume Highway).
- CFA – co-located with VicSES and Victoria Police.
- Vic Police – Co-located with VicSES and CFA.
- DELWP – located at 62-68 Ovens Street in the town centre and adjacent to VicRoads.



Bannockburn

Bannockburn is located 89km south west of Melbourne and 27km west of Geelong. It is a township with a population of approximately 7,300 and is the main township in Golden Plains Shire. It is classified as being peri urban in nature. The Shire population is currently growing at an annual rate of 2.6%. Major nature reserves are situated to the west of Bannockburn; Inverleigh Nature Conservation Park and Bannockburn Flora/Fauna and Recreation Reserve. The district is predominantly agricultural land with extensive grazing activity.

The CFA and SES Units are co-located on Council owned land in the town centre within a large basic shed facility located at 25 High Street, Bannockburn and close to the corner of Milton Street. There is a large unsealed carpark at the rear of the site and a large sealed carpark located behind the adjacent property to the south west (27 to 29 High Street) which is a Council owned community facility, Bannockburn Community and Cultural Centre.

Since 2013 Council has been endeavouring to relocate the CFA and SES units to a purpose built facility outside the town centre. Council is seeking to develop the current site as part of the Bannockburn heart project, an open space village square type development. To facilitate relocation, Council entered into a lease for a parcel of land controlled by VicTrack. A feasibility study was undertaken and support gained from senior CFA and SES leadership. Leadership at the local level is not supportive due to concerns regarding the proposed new location. Given the elapse of time and subsequent residential development, particularly in the corridor towards Geelong, the location may have to be reviewed.

Infrastructure planning for both CFA and SES does not identify Bannockburn as a priority for investment and so funding support by the agencies in the short term is not anticipated. Council's advocacy efforts are focused on local State and Federal members and election cycles.

Emergency services infrastructure

- VicSES – co-located with CFA.
- Ambulance – no local service.
- CFA – co-located with VicSES.
- Vic Police – located at 51 High Street, southern approach to town centre.
- DELWP – Barwon South West office located in Geelong and offices at Anglesea and Colac



Broadford

Broadford is a township located in central Victoria in Mitchell Shire. It is approximately 73km north of Melbourne and accessible via the Hume Freeway and Melbourne to Sydney rail line. It has a current population of approximately 5,300 and is located in a peri-urban area. The population across the Shire is experiencing rapid growth with annual growth rates of over 5%. This is especially evident in areas south of Broadford and concentrated around Wallan and Beveridge.

There are significant natural areas in the district including Colin Officer Flora Reserve, Mount Piper Nature Conservation Reserve, Broadford Bushland Reserve, Dabyminga Creek Bushland Reserve and many watercourses. Tallarook State Forest is situated 22km to the east and comprises 5,100ha of largely inaccessible terrain.

Ambulance and CFA are co-located centrally, in Hamilton Street, and in new purpose built facilities. The fire station constructed in early 2020 and the ambulance station shortly after. This is the first ambulance station in Broadford, previously ambulances would have travelled to Broadford district from Kilmore and Wallan in the south and Seymour in the north.

The new ambulance station features a four bay garage for ambulances, 4 rest and recline rooms, training facilities, security and on-site car parking. The fire station also has a four bay garage. Funding for an ambulance station and new fire station was announced by the former Coalition State Government and subsequent advocacy by community members and Mitchell Shire Council was successful in having the facilities funded and delivered by the incoming government.

Emergency services infrastructure

- VicSES – supported by Kilmore Unit that serves the wider district.
- Ambulance - co-located with CFA, opened in 2020.
- CFA - co-located with Ambulance, opened in 2020.
- Vic Police – located at 156 High Street, northern approach to town centre.
- DELWP – located at 1-5 Mollison Street, on northern edge of town.



Wendouree

Wendouree is located in Ballarat’s north western suburbs. Ballarat is a large regional city with a population of over 100,000, it is the administrative and service centre of the Grampians region and located 116km to Melbourne’s west and a similar distance to Geelong. In addition to a significant residential population, emergency services in Wendouree have a catchment which includes Ballarat city centre, major tourist attractions, industrial estates, major freeways and natural areas including Creswick Plantation, Enfield State Park and Scarsdale Plantation. There are also several water bodies including reservoirs and watercourses.

Ambulance and CFA stations are co-located in the major Wendouree retail and commercial area. In addition the VicRoads office including testing and vehicle inspection centre is adjacent to the ambulance station. The facilities have excellent main road access in all directions.

Ballarat CFA station is situated in the eastern suburbs, Sebastopol fire station is situated in the southern suburbs and Fire Rescue Victoria has a facility located in the city centre at 1120 Sturt Street. The CFA is also present in close by towns including Creswick, Mt Clear, Buninyong, Newlyn-Dean, Haddon, Miners Rest and Cardigan Windemere.

Victoria Police has a major facility in the city centre and a more recent addition at West Ballarat. The DELWP office is also located in the city centre.

Wendouree is a relatively new development area and contemporary approaches to planning have assisted through provision of land for civic and community infrastructure which has enabled these facilities to be sited adjacent to the Wendouree retail and commercial area.

Emergency services infrastructure

- VicSES – located in Alfredton industrial area south west of city centre.
- Ambulance – co-located with CFA.
- CFA - co-located with ambulance.
- Vic Police – located in the city centre at 20 Dana Street and in West Ballarat in Delacombe commercial area.
- DELWP – offices located at 402 Mair Street in the city centre.



Echuca

Echuca is a major town on the Murray and situated some 220km north from Melbourne. Echuca is the major settlement, retail and services centre in Campaspe Shire and its current population is around 15,000. The Echuca hinterland contains a diversity of agricultural activities and is serviced by an irrigation scheme which supports agricultural and horticultural activity of higher intensity. The area is subject to frequent flooding. There is significant tourism activity in the area and in particular the Murray River is a major attractor for water based recreation and camping.

Major transport routes including the Murray Valley Highway, Northern Highway and the Echuca-Bendigo railway line. The proximity to the NSW border also poses cross-border cooperation and coordination issues for local services.

Emergency services agencies including CFA, VicSES, Ambulance and Echuca Moama Search and Rescue are co-located in a precinct structure. Constructed on Crown Land zoned Public Use Zone, the facilities are on a centrally located and large parcel of publicly owned land and is located on Murray Valley Highway which affords excellent east and west travel. The precinct is adjacent to a major community precinct comprising Echuca South Recreation Reserve, Echuca South Netball Complex, Echuca Basketball Association, Echuca Bowls Club.

The new CFA station and Deakin Group Headquarters was opened in 2017 with a significant local financial contribution and replaced the 48 year old former building. New ambulance in 2017 \$1.3M involved significant financial contribution from the brigade and the District Operations manager encouraged to look upon the facility as a “community station”. A new Police station was developed in the town centre in 2017 and is located 500m from Echuca Magistrates Court. The new station replaces the former one which was 50 years old. There was insufficient land available in the emergency services precinct to accommodate Victoria Police.

Emergency services infrastructure

- VicSES – co-located with ambulance, CFA and Echuca Moama Search and Rescue.
- Ambulance - co-located with SES, CFA and Echuca Moama Search and Rescue.
- CFA- co-located with ambulance, SES and Echuca Moama Search and Rescue.
- Vic Police – located at 150 Anstruther Street.
- DELWP – nearest office situated in Swan Hill.



Kinglake

Kinglake is situated 56km north east of Melbourne. It has a current population of around 1,500 and is located on the southern most boundary in Murrindindi Shire which is a sparsely populated municipality covered vast areas (3,879km²) of significant natural assets including National Parks, Toolangi State Forest and Cathedral Range State Park. Kinglake is situated in an isolated location, surrounded by substantial natural areas and with limited road access.

The Black Saturday fires of February 2009 caused widespread damage and loss of life in Victoria. In the Kinglake area 120 died, entire towns and settlements were destroyed, and large areas of National Parks and State forests burnt. The subsequent Royal Commission was the catalyst for renewed investment in emergency services infrastructure and in Kinglake, community advocacy played an important role in attracting funding for the development of new facilities.

Constructed in 2012, a new CFA fire station and SES unit were constructed in the main street of the township. This large facility includes shared road entry and carparking and separate buildings, communications and associated facilities. CFA fire stations are also found in surrounding townships including Kinglake West, Strathewen, Toolangi, Dixons Creek, Glenburn and Flowerdale. Current advocacy is concentrated on the rebuilding of Kinglake West fire station. Council is assisting the local services through provision of 100,000 litre steel water tanks installed in strategic locations around the district.

A new Police station has also been constructed in the town centre, some 500 metres from the CFA fire station and SES unit. It is located adjacent to municipal facilities including Kinglake Library, Kinglake Ranges Health Centre, public open space and local playground.

Emergency services infrastructure

- VicSES – co-located with CFA at 2983 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road
- Ambulance – nearest stations at Mernda, Diamond Creek and Healesville
- CFA - co-located with VicSES at 2983 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road
- Vic Police – located on Whittlesea-Kinglake Road, opposite Robertson Road
- DELWP – located in the region at Alexandra, Marysville and Broadford



Appendix C: Detailed responses from stakeholder interviews

Emergency Management Victoria

Vicky Kyris - Director Sector Investment and Performance

- EMV sits over the top as the coordinating body for emergency management in the state. Infrastructure is the responsibility of the respective agencies and the arrangements they put in place for that purpose.
- Has observed that there are several current instances where SES are being asked to vacate as a result of Councils wanting to use facilities for another purpose of CFA changing arrangements (where the space is shared).
- The Community Safety Building Authority has a 10 year forward infrastructure plan which picks up corrections, Courts and VicPol.
- Bannockburn is cited as an example of a co-location with CFA and SES.
- Volunteer Fire Fighters Union is heavily political, the sector overall is heavily unionised.
- There is a State Budget bid process for allocations for works and specific projects.
- Shared facilities and services are acknowledged to generate efficiencies. However, most are simply shared driveways.
- There is a Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution (GAIC) that provides an infrastructure funding contribution – focused on peri-urbans.
- The governance structure makes for funding complexities.
- Integration – operationally the services are joined up but separate outside of that. Separate statutory entities and effectively their own ‘fiefdoms’. Believes need to be collaborative but can’t force that.
- Cost of land an increasing barrier.
- DJPR could play a broker role and there is benefit in using local groups for advocacy direct to Ministers.

Victoria State Emergency Service

Dave Pirie - Manager Facilities and Capital Works

- Looks after the property function for the agency including land, leases, property and acquisition
- Deals with equivalent at CFA and works with regional SES staff closely.
- SES has 6 regions closely aligned with DHHS regions.. Head office for Hume region is located in Benalla.
- There is currently some planning across the Justice portfolio and in that they are pursuing co-location objectives and strategies. Notes some SES units are under pressure from Councils.
- SES has 150 units across the state with 7-8 new ones planned in growth areas. There are 23 on CFA land or co-located.

- Local government is seen as the strongest partner for SES in the regions. MOU with MAV supports and recognises SES and partnership.
- Larger capital projects are delivered by CSBA on SES behalf. ESIA now part of CSBA and part of Justice.
- Acknowledges that Mansfield SES facilities are in poor shape
- Assessment done in 2018 across ES and SES seen as in the worst condition/fit for purpose

Facility designs

- Standard designs for different size facilities and a structure process to change them
- Aim to fit the land available
- Developed up by combined team, varied locally and amended to meet local needs
- Important factor is how many vehicles the unit has

ESIA

- Skilled up in-house design and construction group
- Project governance
- Combined PCGs
- Funding allocation for projects varies from year to year, eg 19 projects in 21/22
- Some smaller projects funded through fundraising and grants
- Facilities typically cost between \$1 and \$6 million.
- Response/travel times – each SES unit has a coverage area for storm/flood and road crashes.
- 104 of the 150 units are the road crash rescue lead agency where response time is critical
- All units do flood/storm, search and rescue assistance (led by VicPol)
- Specialist units also do road/crash rescue and swiftwater rescue (some metro, some reg)

Working together

- Police have a very different role with firearms, lock-up, etc
- Challenges to this: culture, governance, funding streams, response areas, Vol/prof, Unionised, media, etc
- Pros: policy, easier in remote areas
- EMV have a role in siting ICC across the state

Tom Thoburne – Mansfield Unit Controller

- The Mansfield Unit currently has 41 active volunteers and is a very active unit. It is the second largest unit in the north east (Wodonga has 42 active volunteers). The unit has around 300 callouts each year.
- The district has some challenging conditions including large water bodies (Lakes Eildon and Nillahcootie).

- The unit is involved in land searches with VicPol, supporting work at crime scenes and road rescue.
- Also assist ambulance when they are called out to the bush as the unit has a special stretcher on wheels (Mule) to retrieve patients.
- Also involved in searches in the high country – alpine searches.
- There used to be water police in Wangaratta but not any more so the Mansfield SES unit has 2 boats.
- Assist CFA and DELWP with tree clearance and VicPol and MSC with tree clearance across roads.
- Storms and floods
- Landslips – VicSES is the control agency for landslides.
- The existing building has a training and communications room upstairs. The building was at one point an ICC.
- The unit has 3 vehicles, 2 boats, enclosed storm trailer and numerous other equipment items.
- Some equipment is stored for the local Red Cross branch.
- There are also amenities, work benches and 2 shipping containers as storage.
- Joint training is conducted with CFA. CFA also undertake their own training on the SES site on a frequent basis due to the space available there. CFA also occasionally use SES building for training. A lot of training is claimed to be ‘common’. Joint training days with other agencies too.
- Do a fire burnover each year at the start of the fire season with CFA.
- There is a helipad at the airstrip on Jamieson Road which is used by CFA and DELWP.
- Sessions held with ambulance to ensure familiarity with equipment (2 p.a.). Often at jobs there is only SES and 1 ambulance member.
- SES is represented on MEMPC.
- Training held each Wednesday night from 7.30 to 9.30pm.
- If were located together there would/could be more engagement and joint training.
- AT the time of big fires SES have someone at the ICC.
- Current site:
- Exit to highway excellent
- Site not subject to fire or flooding
- Security lighting
- Location is regarded as being ‘ideal’
- Response times – if code 1 response time must be 8 minutes from pager going off. Response times get reviewed and rated each year – Mansfield get good results. Not many callouts in township most on Highway, Bulla Road, Merton area and Jamieson/Woods Point.

- DELWP site – could make it work from an access and travel perspective. In a residential area and training events may be an issue. Also, all equipment needs to be started up every 3 months – noise!
- Lakins Road – drainage problems, road sealed from Midland Highway to just past depot, is a new bridge at Black Creek but crossing still low. Would affect times – response, and have tested it!

Ambulance Victoria

Renee Shevlin - Project Manager, Property Services

- The current site is on Crown Land and is subject to a Crown Lease, ie. proceeds of sale would go back to Treasury in the normal circumstances.
- The Mansfield branch is acknowledged as one of the worst in the state in terms of condition and functionality.
- Lakins Road site is believed to not be good for response times and would prefer to be on the Buller side of town. The Maroondah Highway site is thought to be appropriate and workable.
- Recent announcements have been made regarding an increase in resourcing to a 24 hour station which will necessitate different facilities. Some community advocacy was involved in achieving that outcome.
- Transfers are taken to Wangaratta or Melbourne Hospitals. Wangaratta is 1 hour away which leaves a major service gap in the local area.
- A change was made in 2018 to infrastructure delivery so that it is implemented through DHS (VHBA).
- Av has standard designs for facilities. Locational aspects are critical in terms of access and egress, safety and on-site secure parking. There is potential for local input to ensure that designs meet local needs/circumstances.
- Looking for 2,650m² with a 500m² building, 3 X bays and 4 X “bedrooms”.
- Functional audits are undertaken by head office to review facilities.
- Forward infrastructure capital list is informed by age and condition, layout and current operating models. Mansfield believed to be high on the list.
- Capital is allocated to DHHS for AV requirements/projects.
- Believed that community advocacy would be necessary to achieve the vision of an emergency services precinct.

Stefan Wycisk - A/Operations Community Engagement Liaison Coordinator Hume

- AV has been supportive of the precinct proposal in the past.
- Ambulance infrastructure is funded through DHHS and so in some respects AV is at arms length from decision making. Projects are then delivered by VHBA on AV’s behalf.
- The current Mansfield facility does not meet current needs and the layout does not match current operating models. Recent announcements have been made that Mansfield Station will

go to a 24 hour station from an on call branch. This increases the number of vehicles and staff and changes the amenities required in the building.

- Is rare to see facilities shared between agencies. Says the needs of respective agencies are acknowledged as being different. Have different operating systems, rosters, etc.
- Benefits of co-location in a new facility in Mansfield
- Purpose built facilities
- Work closely with others now
- AV relies on other services a lot so working and training together helps a lot. Need to know each others equipment.
- Strengthens relationship with emergency services communities.
- Qualitative benefits

Victoria Police

Joanne Hoffman - Director Properties

- Victoria Police makes decisions on infrastructure based on :
 - Location
 - Condition
 - Growth in population
 - Business case
- VicPol delivers it own projects, some leases on sites
- Co-location
- VicPol has explored co-location before with limited benefit identified
- Funding streams not coinciding – most small funding allocations
- In terms of VicPol, they think joined-up approaches work best with Health: victims of crime, family violence, sexual assault, links to courts too – some Police activity in courts
- Barriers – thinks not so much culture but more limitations of funding models – not agencies fault
- Comfortable with Mansfield facilities overall but land locked and in town centre

Country Fire Authority

Stewart Kreltszheim - Assistance Chief Fire Officer District 23

- Based in Wangaratta
- Wangaratta has been successful in getting VicPol, SES and CFA all together. Ambulance out on Tone Road on southern entrance to Wangaratta.
- Is aware of works in recent years to improve Mansfield fire station

- Says difficult otherwise to find examples of co-location or collaboration
- Some advantages acknowledged in joint training programs

Michael Gannon – Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery

- Reiterated the planning requirements for CFA infrastructure.
- Confirmed that CFA is not presently considering further improvements to or relocation of the Mansfield station.
- Indicated that where possible dual access to sites to enhance access and egress and avoid time delays was desirable.
- Confirmed the facility requirements captured in the draft report and previously circulated.
- Confirmed the response requirements for fires and incidents in urban areas.

Rob Gardiner - Mansfield Brigade Administrative Support Officer

- There are different categories of fire stations. A is fully staffed and B (Mansfield) is a volunteer based station. The Unit has a large number of volunteers, some/many are not involved in active fire fighting but in other support activities.
- Thinks that requirements will be met for the next 10 to 15 years with recent works undertaken. Thinks rate of population growth may hasten the timeframe though. Around \$250k was spent on improvements and works. They had been chasing investment for around 10 years as they had 4 vehicles and a 3 bay station.
- Currently located in the town centre and the roundabout at High Street is problematic. Traffic commonly builds up and they can't get trucks out onto the road. The central location is a positive though. Volunteers are scattered in all directions so a central locations works.
- Response area covers the whole Shire and the larger Mansfield brigade assist the smaller units in surrounding towns.
- Joint training is conducted with the other agencies on at least an annual basis. CFA volunteers know the SES and DELWP people very well. Police not so much due to frequent changes in staff.
- Currently have 69 active volunteers

Benefits of co-location

- Would assist dealing with major incidents
- Not much difference day to day
- Sharing of facilities
- Thinks that training and meeting rooms could be shared
- Current facilities
- 4 X bays for 4 vehicles
- Parking on site for 10 to 15 cars and on-street capacity too
- Thinks that equipment will get larger and have more over time

- Has the impression that planning is typically undertaken in Melbourne and not a lot of scope for local input.

Forest Fire Management Victoria (ELWP)

Scott Edwards - District Manager Goulburn Hume Region, Forest Fire Management Victoria

- Based in Mansfield
- Current facility located on Crown Land
- Proposed to relocate to Lakins Road site; still some work to do though! Facility is on state priorities list.

Work with others

- Don't have a lot of response with ambulance or SES
- Support agency for search and rescue
- Work with CFA on readiness and response, potential benefits in co-location
- Major incidents controlled by Vic Police, eg traffic control and evacuation
- SES invited as logistical support
- Normally meet more but Covid has affected that
- Are differences in training needs
- Co-location acknowledged as being good for training needs

Regional Development Victoria

Matt Nelson - Regional Director RDV, Hume Region

- DJPR can play a supportive role in advocating for Councils and the broader region.
- DJPR have grant programs but they don't focus on emergency services infrastructure they are properly funded from other sources.
- Would be happy to attend a PCG to brief himself on the proposal and provide advice re advocacy strategy.
- Suggests promoting the employment outcomes as a potential strategy.
- Suggests maybe need an "anchor" tenant
- No talk of Gov hubs any more
- Potential advocacy by Jaclyn Symes – a Member for Northern Vic

Mansfield District Hospital

Cameron Butler – Chief Executive Officer

- The Red Cross community transport vehicle is stored at the Hospital and it would be appreciated if it could be stored elsewhere.
- Hospital currently involved in collaborating or cooperating with all agencies.

- SHERP is the State Hospital Emergency Response Plan –
- The State Health Emergency Response Plan (SHERP) describes the arrangements for the management of health emergencies in Victoria.
- This plan is used by people working in emergency services, such as paramedics, doctors, nurses and people working in public health, to help them effectively coordinate health services for the community during emergencies.
- This is carried out using an integrated approach with a shared responsibility for health emergency management between the Department of Health, the emergency management sector, the health system and the community.
- In the context of the plan, a health emergency relates to incidents that require significant and coordinated effort to ensure that the health system can respond effectively, while easing any adverse health consequences for communities.
- Hospital participates on the MEMPC but doesn't believe that they have a substantial role.
- Hospital has been participating in a masterplanning process – timing of implementation unknown. Early versions incorporated ambulance but not now.
- Questions what efficiencies would be delivered as agencies operate independently but when needed they all work together.
- During bushfires were represented at ICC. Believes Taungurung community could be involved.
- Community service organisations have an important role to play. Not aware that St.Johns is still functioning.
- SES seen as very active in Mansfield.
- A more collaborative approach could have been helpful during pandemic. Testing has been problematic as it has moved between sites.
- Hospital produces delivered meals for Council and meals during emergency events.

Red Cross – Mansfield Branch

Peter Tie

- Fundraising
- Activities of the local branch have been difficult during Covid-19.
- Membership is old and the branch is not really functioning.
- Fundraising normally held at Farmers Market, with raffles, etc as well.
- Is a separate community transport group.

Gill Bruce

- Community transport
- Have around 5 active volunteers
- Housing has been difficult for transport vehicles - lost one to Alexandra

Mansfield Community Radio

Dallas Daniels – President

- Have been operating since 1997
- Have members of all ages
- Can staff radio 24 hours if have to
- 82 hours of local programs produced each week
- Have 30 presenters and 40 sponsors
- 35 active volunteers including presenters
- Have an excellent relationship with all agencies – Mt Buller too
- Discussion about potential for community radio to be involved in a precinct.

Pros

- A great opportunity
- Increase profile of agencies and as emergency broadcaster
- Develop closer relationships with agencies
- Value of proximity
- A permanent home would be highly valued
- Is aware Mayor and Councillors are very supportive of the group.
- Transmitters cover the whole Shire including Tolmie, Maroondah Highway and Frenchmans Gap.

Cons

- Unsure of the reaction of the agencies if community radio was included.
- Hard to determine and depends on design and layout, security, etc
- Don't want to be in the way
- Not sure how not being in the town centre would affect things
- Role in an emergency
- Put out announcements
- Represented on MEMPC
- Produce daily bulletins that are issues by Vic Emergency and Incident Controller
- Can broadcast interviews and links
- Other community radio stations are at bright, Alexandra, Shepparton, Benalla and Wangaratta.

Appendix D: Detailed assessment of potential sites against site assessment criteria

Potential sites for an emergency services precinct need to be assessed for suitability and will involve assessment of nominated sites against defined criteria. An emergency services precinct would require a large area for dedicated and shared spaces, needs to integrate appropriately into the surrounding area and be of sufficient layout and complexity to meet the region’s emergency services needs. The proposed criteria are outlined below.

Broadly speaking, the criteria are divided into ‘hard’ and ‘soft’. Hard criteria are objective assessment factors such as response time from a given site, street frontage access, sufficient quantity of available site area, logistical considerations, zoning etc. Soft criteria are equally important, but more qualitative/judgement based – for example, the potential of a given site to support volunteer recruitment, to signify community solidarity (for example, by being at the ‘gateway’ of the town) and other urban design factors which are important but more qualitative.

Assessment Criteria	Maroondah Highway	Lakins Road	Comment
Primary			
Land is in public ownership and available for emergency services infrastructure and activity.	Owned by Mansfield Shire Council.	Owned by Mansfield Shire Council.	Both sites are owned by Council and available.
Planning controls: Do the existing planning controls support the use and development of the site for emergency services infrastructure and activity, are adjacent land uses compatible, has a CHMP been prepared?	Currently zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z). Mansfield SES have operated from the site since 1996.	Currently zoned Industrial 1 Zone (I1Z). The site has a Cultural Significance Overlay which necessitates preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.	Both sites are appropriately zoned and existing and proposed adjacent landuses are compatible.

Assessment Criteria	Maroondah Highway	Lakins Road	Comment
<p>Dispatch response time from (and returning to) a given site.</p> <p>The SES has an 8-minute response time to call outs i.e. they must be on the road within 8 minutes of receiving a call out.</p> <p>The CFA has a 6-minute response time to call outs i.e. they must be on the road within 6 minutes of receiving a call out.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria has two official response time targets: Respond to Code 1 incidents within 15 minutes for 85% of incidents state-wide, and Respond to Code 1 incidents within 15 minutes for 90% of incidents in centres with populations greater than 7,500.</p>	<p>Advice from local and regional agency personnel is that the site meets response time requirements. Of the two options, this is the most appropriate due to response times.</p>	<p>Advice from local and regional agency personnel is that the site does not meet response time requirements due to its location outside the town centre.</p>	<p>The Maroondah Highway site meets response time requirements. The Lakins Road site does not.</p>
<p>Quantity of available area: is the site big enough to accommodate ALL requirements (internal/external)? The Scoping Study has identified immediate interest from SES and Ambulance Victoria and potential future involvement by CFA.</p>	<p>Site comprises 10,000m² which would adequately support three agencies in addition to a community facility. (CFA, SES and Ambulance VIC would fit on this site – not DELWP).</p>	<p>Site is very large. It comprises 13.67Ha across several parcels which would sustain emergency services infrastructure and related activity for all agencies.</p>	<p>The Maroondah Highway site can sustain all interested agencies with the exception of DELWP that is planning to move to an adjacent site in Lakins Road. Victoria Police have a preference for a location adjacent to Mansfield Court House.</p>
<p>Flood event impacts: is access or use of the site impaired by flood events?</p>	<p>The 2014 Flood Mapping project identifies that the site is not within the 1 in 100 flood level.</p>	<p>The 2014 Flood Mapping project reveals that the 1 in 100 flood level for Ford Creek extends across Highett Street between High Street and Dead Horse Lane and extends across an extensive area in the southern part of the site. A new culvert structure has been constructed on Lakins Road where Black Creek crosses the road. Anticipated to still be subject to inundation.</p>	<p>The potential for inundation of Highett Street presents access and egress challenges which are unacceptable for emergency services. Inundation of the southern part of the Lakins Road site limits its development potential and largely eliminates this site in a single criterion.</p>

Assessment Criteria	Maroondah Highway	Lakins Road	Comment
Fire event impacts: is access or use of the site impaired by fire events?	The site is located in an urban setting with development to the east and west, Mansfield Golf Course to the south and lightly vegetated open space on the northern side of the Highway.	The site is surrounded by sparsely treed grazing land. Grass fires should be considered as a risk for this site.	No significant fire risks have been identified for the Maroondah Highway site.
Secondary			
Street frontage access potential.	Site has a wide street frontage enabling immediate road access for up to two agencies. Indicative site planning suggests that one of the three would transit to Maroondah Highway from the rear of the site via a wide laneway. This has been tested with the Technical Advisory Group and is considered acceptable.	Layout of industrial estate is yet to be determined. The street frontage is somewhat compromised due to the need for an access road to the estate. Emergency services agencies would need to be located at or close to Lakins Road to assist access and egress.	The configuration of the Maroondah Highway site enables acceptable access and egress for up to three agencies.
Arrangements in relation to traffic arterials, etc. ie. immediate connection into road network, appropriate traffic speed zoning, suitability for heavy vehicles, suitable sightlines, etc.	Site is located on a public highway with good access to east and west travel in particular. South and North arterials link to this east-west transit corridor.	Access is via Midland Highway. A roundabout is proposed for the intersection of Dead Horse Lane and Midland Highway. The road is not currently sealed beyond Council Operations Depot (prior to proposed site); road would have to be sealed to ensure compliant access.	Maroondah Highway site has immediate access to public highway, excellent links to all points and is already sealed.
Site services (electricity, water, sewer) infrastructure assessments – specifically, is a major upgrade required to support the services?	All services are currently available to the site.	Water, electricity and sewer not currently available to the site.	Significant investment will be required to connect services to the Lakins Road industrial estate. It is anticipated that this will take place when significant development is proposed.
Environmental factors, ie. are significant environmental assets present, has a flora and fauna study been undertaken, is a watercourse nearby, etc?	This site is developed land and the SES have occupied part of the site since 1996.	The undulating site is currently pasture with mature indigenous Eucalypts sparsely dotted across the site. Ford Creek passes through the southern portion of the site.	The environmental factors would need to be determined for the Lakins Road site. No environmental factors are present on the Maroondah Highway site.

Assessment Criteria	Maroondah Highway	Lakins Road	Comment
Ground conditions, ie. are difficult ground conditions known to be present including contamination, has a geotechnical study been undertaken for the site or in the general proximity?	No known impediments relating to ground conditions are known. However, the site was a Council depot site until the mid 1960s which may have resulted in residues.	No known impediments relating to ground conditions are known.	A geotechnical study would need to be undertaken as part of a feasibility study to progress the proposal.
Tertiary			
Physical context: is the context appropriate for semi-industrial emergency facilities (eg. urban design and neighbourhood character)?	High profile main road township entry location. Council has prepared a Planning Scheme Amendment (C48) to encourage and guide appropriate character for Mansfield town entrances and for future development to make a positive impact on amenity through built form and landscaping. The agencies are a source of community focus and pride. Co-locating at this important interface is in keeping with the expression of the identity of Mansfield.	This site is for a proposed industrial estate so semi-industrial emergency services facilities would be compatible with the built form and use. However, no community focus is achieved by agencies occupying the Lakins Road site.	Development of the Maroondah Highway site would need to have regard for specific requirements for built form and landscaping at Mansfield town entrances. Successfully meeting these requirements at this site will actively support the central mission of the community focus and service for the agencies.
Potential of site to bolster community cohesion/pride (qualitative).	High profile main road township entry location.	Site does not have a public profile.	The Maroondah Highway site is in a highly visible location.
Potential of site to support the objective of attracting volunteers.	High profile main road township entry location. Highly visible and prominent to both the community and visitors.	Located in a proposed industrial estate on the northern edge of township. Not visible, not prominent to either community or visitors.	The Maroondah Highway site is in a high profile location and is associated with emergency services given occupancy by SES since 1996.

The assessment indicates that the Maroondah Highway site is most suitable for establishment of an emergency services precinct to accommodate infrastructure and activities. Both sites are in public ownership, available for development as an emergency services precinct and appropriately zoned. Adjacent landuses are compatible.

The Maroondah Highway site is highly visible, being located at a major town entrance, meets current requirements for agency response times and is not subject to inundation - being outside the 1 in 100 year flood plain. The Maroondah Highway site is well served by services and utilities infrastructure whereas significant investment and time is required to get the Lakins Road site capable of sustaining development.

The assessment has identified the Maroondah Highway site as the preferred location. This site has clear strengths for an emergency services precinct, no major impediments are present for its development for such a purpose and it enjoys significant support in the community, given that SES have operated from the site since 1996.

It is recommended that the Feasibility Study and Business Case focus on the Maroondah Highway site in light of the detailed site assessment which confirms its suitability for an emergency services precinct.