

OFFICIAL

Mansfield Shire Council

Emergency Management Framework

Endorsed
October 2025



Mansfield Shire

Mansfield Shire Council **Emergency Management Framework**

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Mansfield Shire Council **Emergency Management Framework****Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ARV	Alpine Resorts Victoria
CERA	Community Emergency Risk Assessment
CFA	Country Fire Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEECA	Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DJSIR	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
EM	Emergency Management
EM Act	<i>the Emergency Management Act 2013</i>
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMLO	Emergency Management Liaison Officer
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ERV	Emergency Recovery Victoria
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
GVW	Goulburn Valley Water
ICC	Incident Control Centre
MEMO	Municipal Emergency Management Officer
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Victoria Police)
MFPO	Municipal Fire Prevention Officer
MFMP	Municipal Fire Prevention Plan
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan

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Executive Summary

This framework details the structure and mechanisms that are established to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters; covering social, economic, environmental, and governance elements.

The purpose of this **Emergency Management Framework** is to:

- ▶ Maximise Mansfield Shire Council's (Council's) emergency management capacity and capability through development and maintenance of well-prepared plans and strategies.
- ▶ Support a partnership approach to municipal emergency management.
- ▶ Support individual and a community-based approach to building emergency readiness and resilience.
- ▶ Complement other local, regional and state planning arrangements.
- ▶ Support Council's business continuity during an incident causing disruption to routine service delivery.
- ▶ Embed risk and emergency management into a whole of Council approach.

The Mansfield Shire Council Emergency Management Framework comprises 5 key elements:

1. Council's legislated emergency management obligations
2. Risk management
3. Provision of emergency management - mitigation, response and recovery
4. Business continuity
5. Community resilience

Each of these elements is supported by a range of strategic documents including:

- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Emergency Management Policy
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Risk Management Policy, Framework and Procedures
- ▶ Community Emergency Risk Assessment report
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- ▶ Mansfield – Mt Buller Integrated Fire Management Plan
- ▶ Woods Point and Surrounding District Community Safety Plan
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Heatevent Plan
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Pandemic Plan
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Flood Plan
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Relief and Recovery Guidelines
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Business Continuity Plan (includes IT Disaster Recovery Plan)
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Community Development Program and Charter

Other strategic documents that could be referred to during times of emergency include:

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- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Environment Strategy
- ▶ Bushfire Season Workplace Policy and Procedures
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- ▶ Local Emergency Action Plans

Emergency Management Approach

The focus under this Framework is to take an all-hazards approach to managing risk holistically by mitigating and planning for emergencies resulting from natural (e.g. bushfire, storms or floods), technological (e.g. cyberattack or malware) or malicious (e.g. sabotage or terrorism) hazards. This doesn't mean that there is a need to plan for every eventuality – to the contrary, all hazards planning focuses on developing capacities and capabilities that matter when an emergency hits.

Adopting an all-hazards approach puts the focus on the consequences of disruption (e.g. Loss of amenity to people, businesses and community), rather than the cause of the disruption. This can provide a cost-effective solution as it means that specific risk treatment measures can be adjusted to address multiple foreseeable risks and help build resilience against unanticipated risks.

It is recognised that emergencies can put additional stress on relationships and families. As part of the all-hazards approach, Council will plan and collaborate with other service providers to address this risk as one of the consequences of disruption.

Endorsement and Review

This Framework was endorsed by Council on 21 October 2025.

This Framework will be reviewed in October 2028 in line with Council's Emergency Management Policy.

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1. Council's Legislated Emergency Management Obligations

Municipal councils have a role in all the functional components of emergency management. The key emergency management responsibilities for councils are detailed in the ***Emergency Management Act 2013*** and the **State Emergency Management Plan**.

The *Emergency Management Act 2013 (the EM Act)*, states that councils must form and chair the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, enable community participation in emergency management and appoint one or more municipal emergency management officers and municipal recovery managers:

For the purposes of emergency management planning, the functions of a **municipal council** under this Act include -

- (a) facilitating emergency management planning for emergencies in relation to its municipal district by establishing a **Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee**; and
- (b) in collaboration with other agencies and by the establishment of a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee for its municipal district, **enabling community participation** in emergency preparedness, including mitigation, response and recovery activities; and
- (c) nominating one of the following persons to be the **chairperson** of the **Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee** for the municipal council's municipal district—
 - (i) in the case of a body taken to be a municipal council under section 5(2)(a)(i), (ii) or (iii) of the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997, an employee of that body; or
 - (ii) in any other case, the Chief Executive Officer of the municipal council or a member of the municipal council staff nominated by the Chief Executive Officer; and
- (d) appointing one or more **municipal emergency management officers** under section 59G; and
- (e) appointing one or more **municipal recovery managers** under section 59H.

Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)

Section 59G describes the duties of municipal emergency management officers:

- (1) *A municipal council must appoint one or more municipal emergency management officers for its municipal district.*
- (2) *A municipal emergency management officer is responsible for—*
 - (a) *liaising with agencies in relation to emergency management activities for the municipal district; and*
 - (b) *assisting in the coordination of emergency management activities for the municipal council.*

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Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

Section 59H describes the duties of municipal recovery managers:

- (1) *A municipal council must appoint one or more municipal recovery managers for its municipal district.*
- (2) *A municipal recovery manager is responsible for—*
 - (a) *coordinating, in consultation with agencies, the resources of the municipal council and the community for the purposes of recovery; and*
 - (b) *liaising with any municipal emergency management officer appointed for the municipal district in relation to the use of the municipal council's resources for the purposes of recovery; and*
 - (c) *assisting any municipal emergency management officer appointed for the municipal district with planning and preparing for recovery*

Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)

The CFA Act 1958 states that:

- (1) *Each municipal council, the municipal district or part of the municipal district of which is in the country area of Victoria—*
 - (a) *must appoint a person to be the fire prevention officer for that council for the purposes of this Act;*
 - (b) *may appoint any number of persons it thinks fit to be assistant fire prevention officers.*
- (2) *A fire prevention officer may, by written instrument, delegate to an assistant fire prevention officer, either generally or as otherwise provided in the instrument, any power or duty of the fire prevention officer under this Act or the regulations except this power of delegation.*

The functions of the MFPO in the country area of Victoria include issuing permits to burn during the fire danger period, serving fire prevention notices, providing the CFA a list of neighbourhood safer places and fire refuges in the municipality annually, and sitting on the municipal fire prevention committees.

Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

The MEMPC constitutes a core membership (determined by the EM Act) and additional members determined by the core group. The MEMPC members are drawn from:

- ▶ emergency services (CFA, SES, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria)
- ▶ government agencies (DFFH, DEECA, DJPR, GVW, GMW, ARV)
- ▶ non-government organisations (Red Cross, Victorian Council of Churches)
- ▶ community (individuals, Radio Mansfield)

The MEMPC is required to be chaired by a senior officer of Council. The Mansfield Shire MEMPC is chaired by the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO).

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The committee meets three times a year or as required and is responsible for the preparation and review of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan. The MEMPC reports to the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee which in turn reports to the Emergency Management Commissioner.

More information can be found at the following link:

www.mansfield.vic.gov.au/residents/community/emergency-management/emergency-management-overview

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) names municipal councils as the tier coordinator for relief and recovery at the local level.

Councils also have a wide range of emergency management obligations that result from provisions contained in Victorian legislation. These include the *CFA Act 1958* (fire prevention), *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, *Building Act 1993*, *Electricity Safety Act 1998*, *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and *Water Act 1989*.

Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

The EM Act requires that each municipal district or Alpine Resort has a municipal emergency management plan (MEMP) that is consistent with the relevant regional emergency management plan (REMP) and the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). Guideline materials direct that municipal plans should not replicate the regional plan. Rather, they should provide specific information tailored to the municipality's context and risk.

The MEMP brings together the prevention, response and recovery arrangements for the municipality. The MEMP is a multi-agency plan. that documents the outcomes of the planning process conducted by the municipal emergency management planning committee.

The MEMP is the overarching emergency management plan for the Shire and provides information to emergency services, other organisations and the community on how risks will be dealt with and the management arrangements for emergencies, to promote community safety.

The broad objectives of the MEMP are to:

- ▶ Implement measures to prevent or reduce the causes or effects of emergencies.
- ▶ Manage arrangements for the utilisation and implementation of municipal resources alone or in association/liaison with other nominated departments or agencies in response to emergencies.
- ▶ Support or manage support that may be provided to or from adjoining municipalities.
- ▶ Assist the affected community to recover following an emergency.
- ▶ Complement other local, regional and state planning arrangements.

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2. Risk Management

Mansfield Shire Council is committed to proactively managing all risks inherent in Council's operations. This commitment extends to the provision and management of the amenity enjoyed by all ratepayers, residents and visitors to the municipality.

Internal Context

Council's commitment is demonstrated in Council's adopted Risk Management Policy and the Risk Management Framework and Procedures. The Policy articulates Council's strategic approach to managing risk across 9 areas:

- ▶ Reputation
- ▶ Service Delivery
- ▶ Assets, Infrastructure and Projects
- ▶ Financial
- ▶ Governance
- ▶ People
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Technology and Cyber Security
- ▶ Risk aversion

Risks are reported and monitored through Council's Risk Register.

External Context

The MEMPC conducts a municipality-wide risk assessment process to assess and mitigate risks to the community, business and environment using the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) tool and methodology.

The CERA is an "all hazards", "all agencies" integrated risk assessment approach designed to systematically identify hazards, determine risks and prioritise actions to reduce the likelihood and effects of an emergency.

The outputs of the assessment process are used to inform the municipal emergency management planning and ensure that communities are aware of and better informed about hazards and the associated emergency risks that may affect them.

Whilst there are always other risks, the five major risks identified in Mansfield Shire are:

- ▶ Bushfire
- ▶ Flood
- ▶ Heat event
- ▶ Pandemic
- ▶ Major events (crowds)

The CERA approach aims to understand the likely impacts of a range of emergency scenarios upon the people in a community, the assets, values and functions. As such, it provides an opportunity for multiple community impacts and consequences to be considered enabling

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collaborative risk treatment plans and emergency preparedness measures to be described.

Other resources such as the Victorian Fire Risk Register and the Hume Region Regional Risk Assessment are used to inform municipal emergency risk management.

Other Influencing Factors

Emergencies can put additional stress on relationships and families and may result in individuals behaving in ways they didn't before; or adverse behavior may start to increase or escalate.

Council's emergency management framework seeks to avoid and reduce the stress associated with emergencies by planning and collaborating with other community services. This includes being alert to the possibility and reducing the risks and impacts of family violence. Counselling services will be offered as appropriate.

Council's Emergency Management Policy and Framework have had a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) completed and are compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

3. Emergency Management – Mitigation, Response and Recovery Measures and Priorities

Emergency Management: Includes a range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment; the organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. Emergency management involves the plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs including prevention, response and recovery (COAG 2011).

In Victoria, the SEMP recognises that building safer and more resilient communities is the shared responsibility of all Victorians, not just the emergency management (EM) sector. Shared responsibility refers to the collective obligations and accountabilities held by a range of actors. A commitment to shared responsibility recognises that no single actor can be responsible for emergency mitigation, preparedness, response or recovery. Individuals, communities, businesses, all levels of government and the not-for-profit sector all have a role to play.

The State Emergency Management Priorities underpin and guide all decisions during a response to any emergency. Local emergency management planning aligns with these principles. The priorities are:

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

Council's Role in Brief:

Through the State Emergency Management Plan, Council has a range of responsibilities to deliver during all phases of emergency management. These are detailed in the Emergency Management Framework and include:

- ▶ Provision of available municipal resources to response agencies.
- ▶ Provision of available facilities for emergency services' staging areas.
- ▶ Partial/full closure of areas to exclude the public from dangerous areas.
- ▶ Partial/full local road closures and determination of alternative routes.

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Council is responsible for the coordination of local relief activities and is the lead agency for:

- ▶ Establishing and managing emergency relief centres (ERCs) to shelter members of the community displaced by an emergency.
- ▶ Arranging emergency shelter and accommodation for displaced households.
- ▶ Provision of immediate needs for people affected by a disaster.
- ▶ Coordination of Secondary Impact Assessment.
- ▶ Coordinating clean-up activities, including disposal of deceased animals (domestic, native and feral).
- ▶ Coordinating the housing of lost/stray companion animals.

Council is responsible for the coordination of local **recovery** activities and are the lead agency for:

- ▶ Forming, leading and supporting Municipal/Community Recovery Committees.
- ▶ Establishing and managing recovery centres to provide recovery information to the emergency impacted community.
- ▶ Co-ordination of post emergency needs assessment to determine long term recovery needs.
- ▶ Surveying and making determinations regarding occupancy of damaged buildings.
- ▶ Overseeing and inspecting rebuilding/redevelopment.
- ▶ Undertaking the assessment, restoration, clearing and rehabilitation of public buildings and assets (e.g. roads, bridges, sporting facilities, public amenities) where the municipal council is the owner/manager of that building or asset.
- ▶ Providing and managing community development services and activities where necessary.

Mitigation - Planning and Preparedness

The guiding principles for mitigation of emergency impacts are based on management of risk and on improving the resilience of governments, businesses and the community to respond to acute shocks and evolving stresses.

Council's responsibilities and activities may include:

- ▶ Risk management (addressed in previous section).
- ▶ Performing risk mitigation functions under local government, fire, health, building, and planning legislation eg. planning schemes, building permits, food safety inspections, and building, operating and maintaining infrastructure.
- ▶ Community engagement to build resilience to, and awareness of, risks and promote protective actions.
- ▶ Infrastructure construction and maintenance eg. stormwater drainage systems (engineering standards and strategy).
- ▶ Municipal level planning, partnerships and networks (MEMPC, REMPC, MFMPC) to share information.

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Response

Response is the action taken immediately before, during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing, and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs.

'Shared responsibility' does not mean 'equal responsibility' and command, control and coordination arrangements will be in place during the response phase. The purpose of the command, control and coordination arrangements is to ensure sufficient resources are deployed, coordinated and responding to an emergency, and that consequences are being managed. During this phase, control agencies and support agencies are identified and have defined roles. Council has a support agency role during response except for the delivery of relief services where Council is identified as the lead agency at the local level.

Municipal level arrangements for the response phase of an emergency are documented in the MEMP.

In brief, Council may be requested to provide support to the incident and/or regional control centres through:

- ▶ Provision of available council-managed resources to the Control Agency in line with capacity, capability and contractual constraints.
- ▶ Support with emergency warnings and information dissemination.
- ▶ Provision of available facilities for emergency services' staging areas.
- ▶ Partial/full closure of council-managed areas to exclude the public from dangerous areas.
- ▶ Partial/full local road closures and determination of alternative routes.

Council may also be required to:

- ▶ Coordinate clean-up activities, including disposal of deceased animals (domestic, native and feral).
- ▶ Support DJPR and DEECA in providing animal welfare (other than wildlife) support services.
- ▶ Coordinate the housing of displaced and lost/stray companion animals, with support from the Victorian Farmers Federation, Australian Veterinary Association and RSPCA.
- ▶ Support DELWP to provide relief drinking water to eligible households in non-reticulated areas.
- ▶ Clear blocked drains and local roads.
- ▶ Disseminate public health advice.

Relief

Council is required to undertake coordination of the following local level relief activities to:

- ▶ Provide local relief information to public and media.
- ▶ Establish and manage emergency relief centres to shelter members of the community displaced by an emergency.
- ▶ Provide community relief support referrals to relevant agencies.
- ▶ Support DFFH in arranging emergency shelter and accommodation for displaced households.
- ▶ Provide public health advice.

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- ▶ Assist with management of spontaneous volunteers and donations.

NOTE: It is recognised that small councils such as Mansfield Shire Council will rapidly run short of resources in the event of a major emergency and consideration is required for relief arrangements for Council staff. Arrangements are in place, including the **Inter-Council Resource Sharing Protocol**, to support affected Councils. Council is a signatory to the Protocol as are neighbouring municipalities.

Financial

Council staff with delegations such as the MEMO and MRM will appropriately allocate and track all expenditure during an emergency event.

Any resource or financial allocation during an emergency by either the MEMO or MRM must be approved by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) from Victoria Police before it is allocated. This is to ensure compliance with Emergency Management Victoria's (EMV) Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Resource provision is documented in Council's emergency management platform (Crisisworks) and payments recorded and made via established Council procedures.

Recovery

When an emergency transitions from the response phase to the recovery phase, Council will be required to undertake detailed impact assessments to inform recovery planning, to report to state government and for evidence for financial support with recovery.

Emergency Recovery Victoria is the recovery coordination agency at the state and regional levels, with municipal councils at the local level.

Recovery is undertaken across four environments - social, economic, built and natural. This provides a framework within which recovery can be planned, reported, monitored and evaluated. Within the four environments, there are 15 areas of activity. These activities are interrelated across the recovery environments and describe a community need. Each activity has recovery services including programs, services and products that assist in community recovery.

Council responsibilities during recovery, which can last for years, include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Formation, leadership and support of municipal recovery committees.
- ▶ Provision and staffing for recovery/ information centres and support disseminating information and advice on how to access recovery services.
- ▶ Assistance with distribution of community needs (e.g. stock fodder, asbestos kits).
- ▶ Coordination of volunteer support (e.g. rebuilding fencing).

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Staffing and Training

Throughout the year training is required for identified and volunteer staff for roles in an emergency management response and ongoing recovery. Roles that staff may have to take include Emergency Management Liaison Officer (EMLO) in an incident control centre, emergency management relief centre staff and communications officers. Council maintains a suite of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines to support staff taking on these roles.

During an emergency response, Council's HR team will create rosters to ensure staff are taking the required breaks and time off. Regular debriefs will be held to ensure staff are coping and to address any issues. Staff who may be impacted by the situation will have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Record Keeping

Accurate record keeping is essential when responding to an emergency and during the ongoing recovery phase. Council subscribes to an online emergency management platform – Crisisworks. Crisisworks records all incoming and outgoing activity, allocates tasks, provides reports and creates case records.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

All phases of emergency management provision in Mansfield Shire Council are conducted in an environment of continuous improvement. Post response debriefs are conducted, plans and procedures are regularly exercised, reviewed and updated with the learnings and monitored for their effectiveness.

4. Business Continuity

It is a good governance practice for councils to link municipal emergency management planning to business continuity planning through the development of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). Whilst intrinsically linked in its nature to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan, a BCP is a separate approach which is different in its practical application. The BCP is a structured planning process that aims to minimise disruption to the provision of critical council services in the event of business disruption or disasters and ensures an orderly and effective response to any incident that significantly disrupts Council operations and service delivery.

Business continuity management is an integral part of Council's risk management framework and is adopted as a core obligation of good governance utilising the methodology specified in the AS/NZS 5050:2010 'Business Continuity – Managing Disruption Related Risk', AS ISO22301:2020 'Security and Resilience – Business Continuity Management Systems - requirements' and AS/NZS 31000:2018 'Risk Management –Guidelines'.

The objectives of Council's BCP are to:

- ▶ Ensure that maximum possible service levels are restored as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Minimise the effect on the public, staff and Council.
- ▶ Be reasonable, practical and achievable.

Critical functions are those of which non-delivery may result in:

- ▶ Legislative/regulatory fines or penalties.
- ▶ Adverse impact on safety, health and wellbeing of community members.
- ▶ Major legal repercussions.
- ▶ Significant damage to Council's reputation.

Council's BCP identifies the critical services and workarounds or alternative arrangements to ensure continuity of the service. Emergency management needs to be supported as a critical service during emergencies, along with other identified critical council services. Not all council services will be available during an emergency, but forward planning helps take some of the guesswork out of what services can be provided, depending on the circumstances. Where possible, effective business continuity planning includes temporarily diverting available resources from other non-critical council services to support critical services.

Arrangements with neighboring Councils and through formal agreements such as the Inter-Council Resource Sharing Protocol may provide external resources to support Council while responding to an emergency as well as maintaining critical services.

5. Community Resilience

Community resilience can only be defined in the context of the particular community, however from an emergency perspective, it means the capacity of a community to respond positively to crises.

While never looking the same, a resilient community will have similar core characteristics including:

- ▶ Strong leadership, networks and relationships with authorities.
- ▶ The ability to communicate effectively.
- ▶ Access to information and knowledge.
- ▶ Understanding of local context, risks, needs and solutions.
- ▶ The ability to learn and adapt.
- ▶ Self-reliance.

Communities can strengthen their lifelines by better connecting and working together with appropriate support from organisations, especially the local Council.

Building community resilience is a core capability in the **Victorian Preparedness Framework**.

The *Emergency Management Act* requires municipal councils to collaborate with other agencies and the MEMPC to enable community participation in emergency preparedness, including mitigation, response and recovery activities. In addition to working directly with Mansfield Shire communities, Council supports emergency service agencies to engage with communities to educate in risk awareness and individual emergency planning.