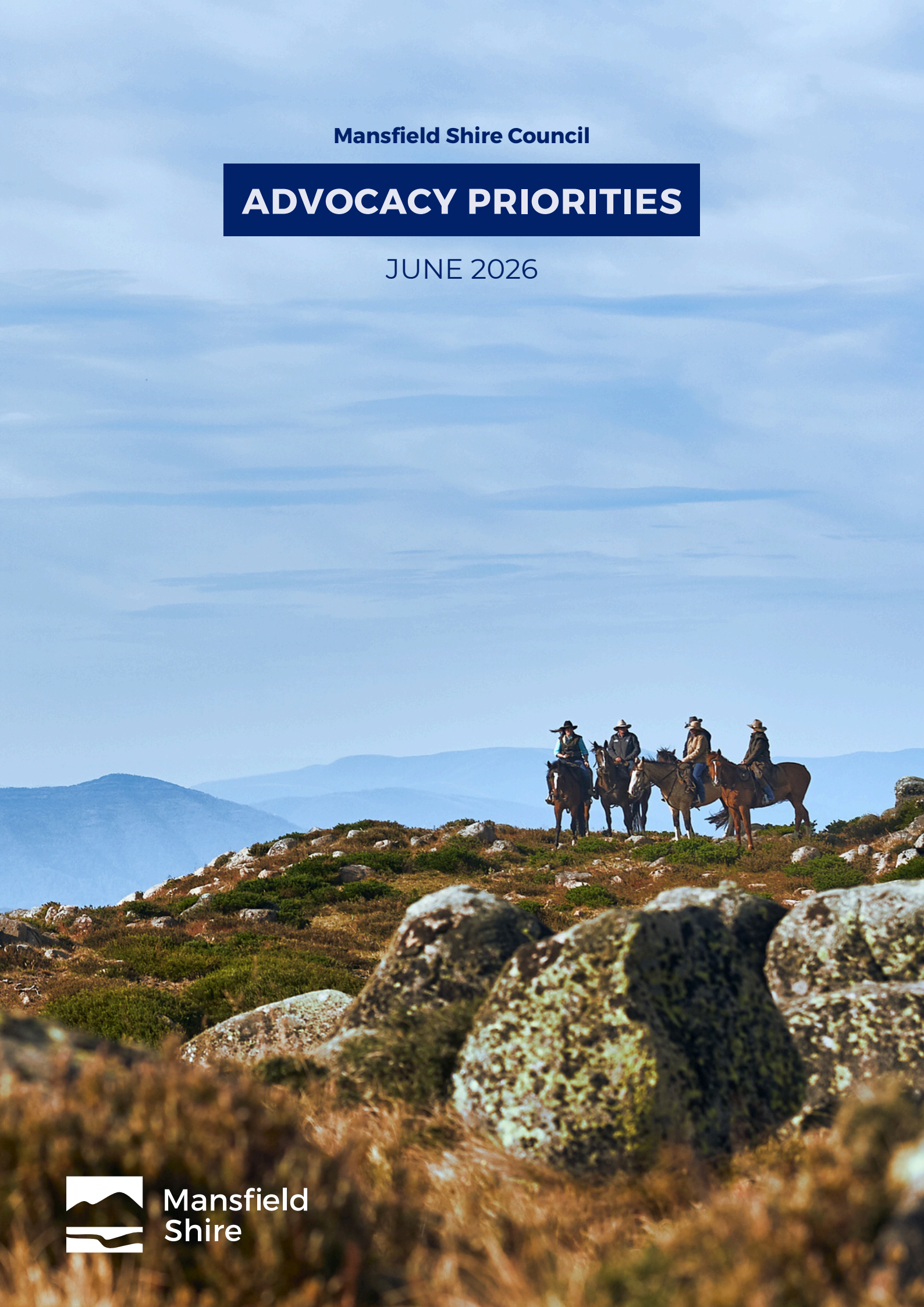


Mansfield Shire Council

ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

JUNE 2026



Mansfield
Shire



Mansfield Shire, at the gateway to the High Country, is home to the most beautiful landscapes in Victoria. Our High Country heritage is founded on a long history of First Nation's presence in the area (the Taungurung are the traditional custodians of the land) and a longstanding country culture in which life is tied to the land through agriculture.

Sitting in the shadow of Mt Buller and on the doorstep of the largest snowfields in the Southern Hemisphere, Mansfield Shire is also a major tourism hub for Melbourne, interstate, and foreign tourists. The region welcomes 600,000 visitors yearly, many of them coming from Melbourne, and that number continues to grow as more people look to holiday in the year-round beauty of the wilderness.

But the wilderness must be respected and a self-reliant community here must be prepared to protect itself and its guests for what nature throws its way. Safety and quality of life are of the utmost importance in Mansfield Shire Council's planned advocacy priorities in 2026.

Our advocacy priorities include:

1. The Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct
2. A safe Mansfield Shire road network
3. The Lakins Road Industrial Precinct
4. The Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve Masterplan
5. Mansfield Shire Emergency Relief and Recovery Hubs and Staging Centres

ADVOCACY PRIORITY

The Mansfield Shire Emergency Services Precinct

Gaffneys Creek Fire 2026



The Mansfield Shire Emergency Services Precinct

The situation

The 2026 Victorian bushfire season captured the state's attention, underscoring the ongoing threat bushfires pose to Regional Victoria - lessons that cannot be ignored.

When the Longwood Berry's Lane fire broke out, much of Mansfield Shire was still recovering from an 18-hour power outage that had also cut telecommunications for outlying communities. Our emergency services operate from outdated, inadequate facilities. Over 1,000 fire-affected residents from Mansfield and neighbouring shires evacuated, sheltering in a gymnasium with no air conditioning through forty-degree summer heat.

We have an urgent need, and long-held plans, to decrease the shire's vulnerability to the fires and floods our region is prone to.

An application for funding has been lodged to the Regional Precincts & Partnerships program.

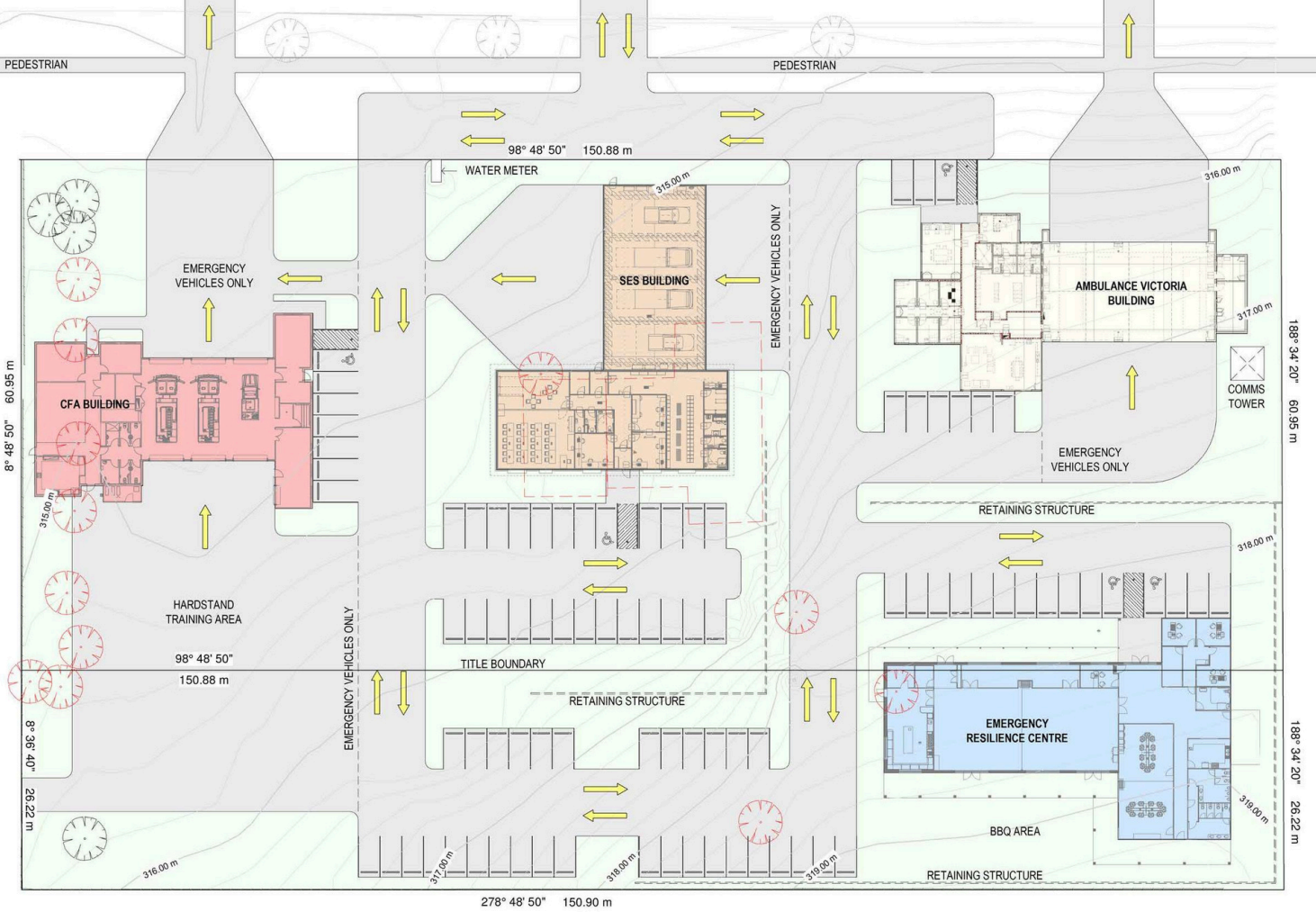
The solution

The **Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct** will deliver a fit-for-purpose, co-located emergency services hub for the Shire.

Stage 1 will construct a Resilience and Recovery Centre co-locating SES and Mansfield Community Radio - the Shire's emergency broadcaster - within a central precinct.

The site will also allow for future co-location of Ambulance Victoria and the Mansfield CFA brigade.

The Centre will provide training, volunteer support and shared administration, enabling coordinated emergency responses and better threat mitigation. It will also shelter evacuees and give the community safe access to relief and recovery services.



The Mansfield Emergency Services Precinct and Emergency Resilience Centre

Funding requirements - Stage 1

- Mansfield Emergency Relief Recovery Centre & Emergency Broadcasting Studio
\$3,834,955
- SES Redevelopment (staged)
\$2,800,714
- Carparks, driveways and landscaping
\$2,557,890
- Project management
\$850,000
- Land Value (1.3ha)
\$4,000,000

Total project cost (ex GST) - **\$14,043,559**



*Mansfield Shire Council has pledged a \$4,000,000 land contribution to the project.

ADVOCACY PRIORITY

A safe Mansfield Shire road network





A safe Mansfield Shire road network

The situation

Mansfield township has been experiencing population growth for an extended period of time prior to 2026. Outside investment in infrastructure hasn't always kept up with the growth. With tourism numbers also rising steadily, there are more cars on Mansfield Shire roads.

Given the state government has now also mandated a target of 3,900 new homes in Mansfield Shire by 2051 to meet this ongoing population growth, we require strategic investment in our road network. We need roundabouts to safely and efficiently manage traffic at ever busier intersections

Council has had some success advocating to state and federal governments for funding to date, but the construction of further roundabouts is necessary.

Solution - Mansfield township

We have identified several strategic locations in which **new Roundabouts** will improve traffic movement and road safety within Mansfield's growing township:

- **Dead Horse Lane and Midland Highway** - applied for through Blackspot Program
- **Mt Buller Rd and Greenvale Lane**
- **Mt Buller Rd and Highton Lane**

Funding requirements

\$7,000,000



ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Unlocking local industry to create job growth



ADVOCACY PRIORITY

The Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve Masterplan





Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve Masterplan

Investing in Bonnie Doon's netballers

Mansfield Shire punches above its weight producing sporting talent that reaches the biggest stages, and Council is committed to enhancing pathways into local sport through modern, accessible facilities for residents of all ages.

Council continues to advocate for upgrades at the Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve. The Dual Upgrade Objective (DUO2) Project, submitted to the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSIF) for the 2026–27 round, will upgrade the Bonnie Doon netball courts, delivering modern, safe and accessible facilities for players, officials and spectators.

The project has received mandatory approval from Netball Victoria and Tennis Victoria, meeting contemporary competition and participation standards.

The DUO2 Project includes:

- Construction of two competition-standard netball courts
- Complete excavation, sub-base, and surface construction
- Advanced drainage installation
- New lighting suitable for evening training and twilight games
- New perimeter fencing with accessible entry points
- An accessible pathway linking the clubhouse and courts
- Team and official shelters

The requirements

We require **\$450,000** to match a \$150,000 community contribution to give Bonnie Doon's Netballers a safe place to play the sport they love.

ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Emergency Relief, Recovery and Staging Centres





New and upgraded

Relief and Recovery Hubs and Staging Centres

The recent fire emergency highlighted the urgent need for upgraded emergency relief hubs across Mansfield Shire.

The **Mansfield Showgrounds** serve as a relief centre for people, pets and livestock, but ageing infrastructure limits its use. During the 2026 bushfire season, nearly 200 people and animals sought refuge there, exposing inadequate amenities and an un-insulated pavilion that was unusable in extreme heat. As emergencies grow more frequent, urgent upgrades are needed to protect community safety. The proposed upgrades includes a new, energy-resilient pavilion and improved shower and toilet facilities.

The **Jamieson Community Hub** delivers an energy-resilient relief and recovery centre - vital emergency infrastructure for the bushfire-prone communities of Jamieson, Kevington, Gaffneys Creek and Woods Point, and the thousands of tourists who camp there each summer.

An application has been submitted to the disaster ready fund.

Funding requirements

- Mansfield Showgrounds Resilience Centre - **\$1,800,000**
- Jamieson Community Hub Resilience Centre - **\$1,800,000**
- Total Funding required - **\$3,600,000**



ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Seeking better value for money and safer roads





The improvement of state government-managed roads

The situation

The state of disrepair of Victoria's state-managed regional roads is well-established. It has led to record levels of investment from the state government in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

But record investment has not, to date, resulted in an improvement of the road surfaces on state-managed roads in Mansfield Shire or wider Victoria.

Band-aid fixes which crumble within months do not represent a good outcome for the taxpayer or the motorists using these roads.

This need for improved safety is highlighted by the fact that 50% of Victoria's road fatalities occur in Regional Victoria despite the fact it accounts for just 25% of the population. We must make our roads safe.

Solution - Mansfield Shire

Mansfield Shire Council is advocating for the state government to review its model of investment in the repair and maintenance of state-managed roads in Mansfield Shire and Regional Victoria.

We believe New South Wales' current practical approach provides better value for money and longer lasting fixes.

We ask that instead of centralising road fixes, that the state government sends the funding to councils to allow local scoping and supervision and a better use of the significant investment.



ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Energy and Telecomms Emergency Resilience





Energy and Telecommunications Resilience

Mansfield Shire Energy Resilience

A longstanding pattern of frequent power outages raises questions about AusNet's ability to service the shire's projected growth in an increasingly unstable climate.

While we acknowledge AusNet's efforts to meet service standards, there is growing concern about Mansfield's energy security, particularly given extreme demand fluctuations driven by seasonal tourism, especially from Mt Buller ski resort.

The 18-hour power outage as the Longwood fire broke out also cut communications for outlying communities. Strengthening our energy infrastructure is key to reducing the community's vulnerability in emergencies.



Mansfield Shire Telecommunications Resilience

Chief amongst all of the lessons learned during and after the Black Saturday Fires, the Black Summer Fires and the 2026 Victorian Bushfire Season, it is that communication saves lives.

And yet still, large areas of Mansfield Shire receive unstable telecommunications coverage.

This results in a lack of critical information, causes panic and makes responsible decisions harder to make. It puts strain on our emergency services and can be the difference between a fire-impacted individual or family leaving safely and being caught behind on the fireground.

The requirements

Reviews into local Energy Resilience from Ausnet and local Telecommunications Resilience from Telstra.

ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Rethinking an unfair tax





Revoke the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Levy and adopt an equitable funding model instead

Desired outcome

We call on the Victorian Government to repeal the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund for legislation that funds emergency services transparently and equitably.



Why is this a priority?

The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund passed into law in 2025 without consulting councils or communities, despite vocal regional opposition.

It places an unfair burden on rural and agricultural communities, whose lives depend on volunteers and emergency services.

Following rises to the Fire Services Property Levy, and more recently the ESVF, money leaving Mansfield Shire's economy to fund statewide emergency services has nearly doubled since 2023 — from just over \$2 million to around \$4 million.

Meanwhile, CFA volunteers attend fires in ageing tankers, and emergency facilities are too outdated to be fit for purpose.

ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Protecting our shire's voice in planning matters





Revoke the “Better” Decisions Made Faster Bill and the Melbourne-centric planning reforms it ushered in

Desired outcome

We call on the Victorian Government to repeal the Better Decisions Made Faster bill in favour of legislation that addresses the housing shortage without a Melbourne-centric system that threatens regional Victoria's rural character and strips local government of planning power.



Why is this a priority?

This bill strips councils of power to protect communities from inappropriate development, and residents of their right to object - legislated without consulting councils or communities.

Our country identity is everything to Mansfield Shire and regional Victoria - the differences between city and country define our communities and draw visitors seeking grass, trees and space over concrete.

The townhouses and cramped subdivisions these reforms allow risk making us indistinguishable from suburban Melbourne, decimating our tourism appeal and the economic impact tourism has on us and similar regional economies across Victoria.

We support the need for housing and will work with government on responsible growth, but ask the state work with us to protect our community's identity.

ADVOCACY PRIORITY

Prevent the destruction of trees in Mansfield Shire





Electrical Line Clearance Regulations

Desired outcome

We call on the state government to commit to reducing electric line clearances to 300mm for low bushfire risk areas in the immediate future.



Why is this a priority?

In a rural shire where tourism keeps the lights on, visual amenity is our greatest asset and must be protected at all costs.

Mansfield’s Alpine Approach and the trees in Mansfield’s urban spaces are so important to our shire that we have implemented Design and Development Overlays in the Mansfield Planning Scheme to preserve them, to preserve our appeal to tourists.

One of the biggest threats to these cherished physical assets is the destruction of street trees associated with electric line clearances.

Other states have introduced reduced clearance distances in urban areas, we implore the Victorian state government to seriously consider doing the same in our state to protect and enhance visual amenity.