Mansfield Shire Policy

Emergency Resilience Policy 2016

Department: *Community Services*	Implemented: *1 June 2016* Review Date: *30 June 2017* Effective From: *1 June 2016* Version: *1* Trim Reference: *E18*	Origin: Initiated by: *Municipal Emergency Resource Officer* Draft finalised by: *Community Services Manager*

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of this policy ensure that Mansfield Shire Council:

- Supports the related Emergency Resilience Framework which details the structure and mechanisms that have been established to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters across social, economic, environmental, and governance elements;

- Applies an "all hazards" approach to emergency management planning and application based on risk management principles and standards;

- Proactively identifies risks inherent in Council's operations as well as in the provision and management of the amenity enjoyed by ratepayers, residents and visitors to the municipality;

- Ensures risk and emergency management practice is embedded across the whole of Council;

- Provides an appropriate governance and management structure to plan for and manage emergency management activities as required by the:
  - *Emergency Management Act 1986*
  - *Emergency Management Act 2013*
  - *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*
  - Emergency Management Manual Victoria
  - other Acts and Regulations relevant to the requirements of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan

The basic governance structure consists of:
  o Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)
  o Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)
  o MSC Emergency Resilience Management Team (ERMT)
  o Sub-committees, working groups and response teams as required/authorised by the MEMPC

- Provides timely and co-ordinated response, relief and recovery activities to assist in community emergencies as defined in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and its supporting Sub-Plans;

- Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to delegate as necessary by appropriate instrument, authority to relevant Council Officers the management of funds and utilisation of Mansfield Shire Council resources to meet the operational requirements of the plans and strategies detailed in the Emergency Management Framework;

- Ensures Council's business continuity and delivery of essential services in the event of an incident that causes disruption to delivery of Council services; and

- Ensures that the community can contribute and participate in emergency management planning and resilience building via an appropriate framework that recognises the local knowledge and needs of the community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Mansfield Shire Council employees, Councillors, contractors and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

Emergency
an event or situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property and/or the environment

Emergency resilience
the capacity of an organisation, community or individual to function well while under stress, adapt to the new situation, be self-reliant and foster strong social capacity (networks and partnerships)

Emergency management
involves the plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the endeavours of government, voluntary and private organisations and communities in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs, including prevention, response and recovery (EMMV)

Risk management
the forecasting and evaluation of a range of risks across social, economic, built and natural environments together with the identification of procedures to avoid or minimise their impact.

All hazards approach   focuses on managing uncertainty in the risk environment by building resilience to a range of hazards

Business continuity   encompasses a loosely defined set of planning, preparatory and related activities which are intended to ensure that an organisation's critical business functions will either continue to operate despite serious incidents or disasters that might otherwise have interrupted them, or will be recovered to an operational state within a reasonably short period.

POLICY STATEMENT

Mansfield Shire Council is committed to supporting the objectives of the Policy and the Emergency Resilience Framework which details the established structures and mechanisms to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters across social, economic, environmental, and governance elements. The Emergency Resilience Framework is an addendum to this Policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Mansfield Shire Council employees, Councillors, contractors and volunteers are responsible for adhering to and implementing this policy.

Adherence to the Emergency Resilience Policy will be overseen by Chief Executive Officer, with any associated procedures implemented by the relevant departmental manager or officer.

Management and employees are to be familiar with, and competent in, the application of this Policy, and are accountable for the delivery of that policy within their areas of responsibility.

The Executive Services unit is the owner of this policy. Any reviews of this Policy must be made in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and relevant departmental managers.

REFERENCES
Emergency Management Act 1986
Emergency Management Act 2013
Country Fire Authority Act 1958
Emergency Management Manual Victoria
Municipal Emergency Management Plan
Mansfield Shire Council Business Continuity Plan
Municipal Fire Management Plan
Mansfield Shire Relief and Recovery Plan
Mansfield Shire Heatwave Plan
Mansfield Shire Pandemic Plan
Mansfield Shire Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is effective from 1 June 2016.

REVIEW DATE

This Policy is to be reviewed by 30 June 2017.

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this Policy at any time.

AUTHORISATION TO IMPLEMENT POLICY

This Policy must be endorsed by the Council.

Signed: _____   Witnessed: _____

              Councillor   Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 17 May 2016

EMERGENCY RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

1.   PURPOSE

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

This Framework establishes a foundation for risk and emergency management planning within Council, through partnerships and across the community.

The purpose of this framework is to:

- Consistently contribute to emergency risk mitigation in Mansfield Shire
- Maximise Mansfield Shire Council's capacity and capability through maintaining well prepared plans and strategies
- Support a partnership approach to emergency management
- Support a community-based approach to building emergency readiness and resilience
- Compliment other local, regional and state planning arrangements
- Ensure Council's business continuity during an incident causing disruption to services
- Embed risk and emergency management into a whole of Council approach

2.   BACKGROUND

This Emergency Resilience Framework encompasses 5 key elements:

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

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

- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) report
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and Sub Plans
    - Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP)
    - Heatwave Plan
    - Pandemic Plan
    - Relief and Recovery Plan
    - Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan
- Business Continuity Plan (BCP)
- IT Disaster Recovery Plan
- Community Development program and Charter

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

- Council Plan
- Community Plans
- Environment Strategy
- Bushfire Season Workplace Policy and Procedures
- Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

3.1 Risk Management Policy and Strategy

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.

This commitment is demonstrated in Council's adopted Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy.

These documents articulate Council's strategic approach to managing risk. The main policy objectives of managing risk are to:

- maintain the highest possible standard for services provided by Council.
- safeguard Council's people, assets, finance and property.
- continuous development of a risk management culture.
- preserve Council's ability to deliver policy and performance objectives in a timely, efficient and effective manner.
- ensure resources and operational capabilities are identified, and responsibly and efficiently deployed.
- ensure Council can effectively deal with and minimise damage or loss exposures through the risk management processes.
- demonstrate transparent and responsible risk management processes which align with accepted best practice and ensure cost effective outcomes.
- improved incident management and reduction in loss and the cost of risk, including commercial insurance premiums.
- ensure Council can effectively manage the risk control process to determine an acceptable risk.
- continually improve risk assessments focusing particularly on Council and strategic risks as identified through the Risk Management Strategy.
- ensuring that adequate risk management training, information and support is provided to all employees.

3.2 Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA)

CERA is a process which aims to reduce risks within a community. This can be done by identifying the risks that a community faces, assessing the vulnerability of the community to those risks and providing options to reduce or eliminate the risks.

CERA has provided the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee with a framework for considering and improving the safety and resilience of the Shire-wide community from hazards and emergencies.

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

The outputs of the assessment process have been used to inform emergency management planning and introduce risk action plans (sub Plans).

4.   COUNCIL'S LEGISLATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OBLIGATIONS

Councils have a role in all of the functional components of emergency management. Councils' key emergency management responsibilities stem primarily from Part 4 of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, which requires councils to:

- establish a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) - *Emergency Management Act 1986* s21(3)
- facilitate the development and maintenance of the municipal emergency management plan (MEMP) by the MEMPC, for consideration and adoption by Council - *Emergency Management Act 1986* s21(4))
- allow the audit of the MEMP - *Emergency Management Act 1986* s21A); and
- appoint at least one Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) to co-ordinate the use of Council resources for emergency response and recovery - *Emergency Management Act 1986* s21 (1)

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* s59(4) and the State Relief and Recovery Plan (Part 4 of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria) also state that councils must co-ordinate relief and recovery efforts and appoint a Municipal Relief and Recovery Manager. While relief is a component of response and only lasts for a short period, recovery planning and action can last for years.

Councils also have a wide range of emergency management obligations that result from provisions contained in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria and other Victorian legislation. These include the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Building Act 1993*, the *Electricity Safety Act 1998*, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and the *Water Act 1989*. These are covered in more detail in section 1.2 in the Local Government Emergency Management Handbook:

http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/emergency-management/Pages/default.aspx.

5.   EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – PREVENTION, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

From the Local Government Emergency Management Handbook, Section 1.1:

"According to the Emergency Management Act 1986, "emergency management means the organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies". It includes a structure that facilitates planning, preparedness, operational coordination and community participation for:

- *Prevention – the elimination or reduction of the incidence or severity of emergencies and the mitigation of their effects*
- *Response – the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue services*
- *Recovery – the assisting of persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.*

Emergency management encompasses strategic planning, operational arrangements and organisational structures required for government, voluntary and private agencies to collaboratively manage a range of emergencies and incidents in a coordinated way.

Preparedness and planning underpin all other activities that are part of emergency management. The three levels of formal planning (state, regional and municipal) each have a complementary role to play.

Prevention
Prevention is defined in the EM Act 1986 as the 'elimination or reduction of incidence or severity of emergencies and the mitigation of their effects'. The Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) recognises that not all emergencies can be prevented and as such, prevention activities are those that minimise or mitigate the impact of an emergency.

Response
Response, as defined in the EMMV, is the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue services. Part 3 of the EMMV, the State Emergency Response Plan, outlines the Victorian arrangements.

Councils have a support role in response. This support role includes the provision of municipal resources at the request of response agencies. A more comprehensive list of council response activities can be found in part seven of the EMMV.
When planning for response, the interface between response, relief and recovery should be considered.

Relief and Recovery
Part 4 of the EMMV outlines the State's emergency recovery and relief arrangements. Recovery is the process of assisting the affected community to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning. The preparedness and resilience of a community will determine how quickly it will recover following an emergency. Other factors can include the speed and quality of immediate relief services (including establishing and operating relief centres), the social capital already existing in a community, the type of emergency and its level of impact.

Planning and preparedness for each of the above elements is critical and is also an essential element of effective emergency management arrangements.

Preparation encompasses the planning activities that are undertaken by councils and emergency agencies before an emergency event. For councils this includes establishing a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) and working with the committee to develop and maintain a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). Part 6 of the EMMV provides planning guidance to MEMPCs.

Preparedness also includes building good relationships with local and regional emergency agency representatives and working with the community to plan for emergencies and build community resilience."
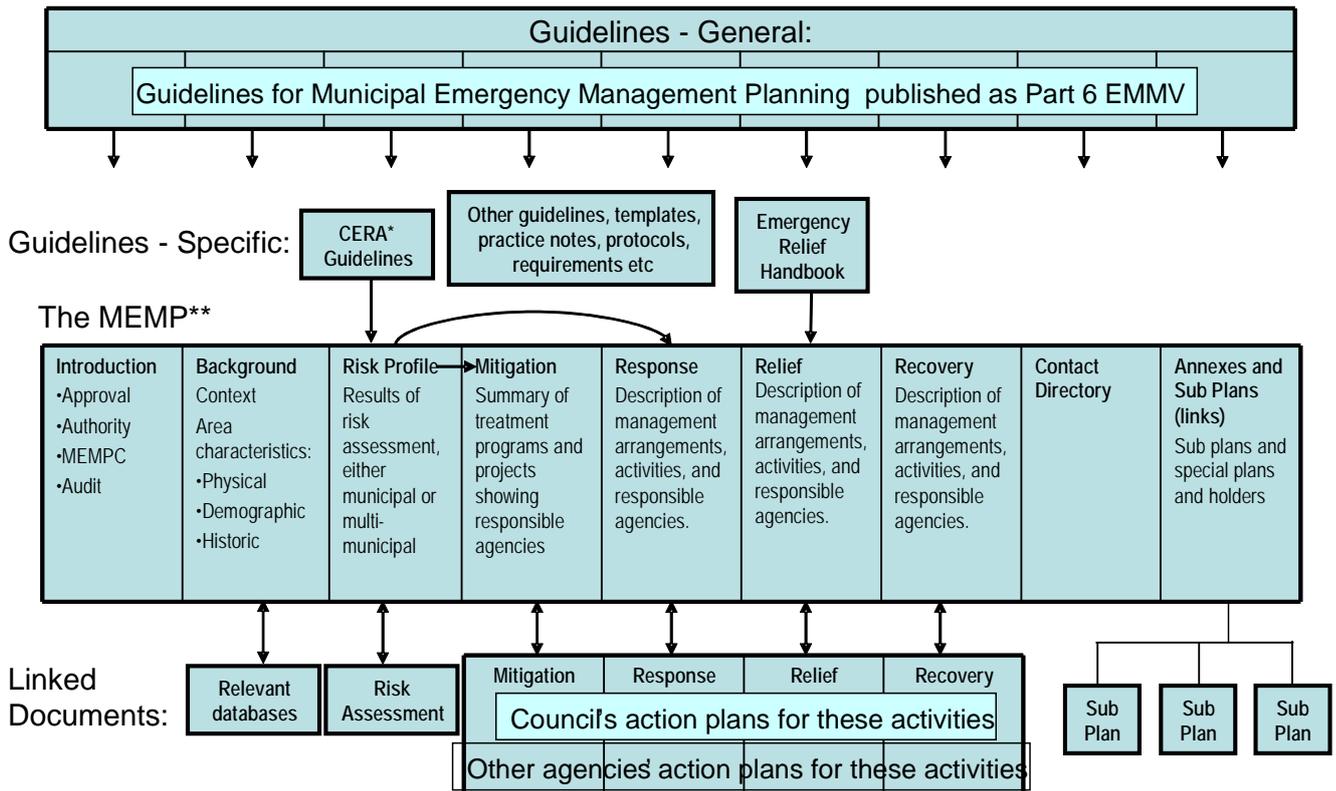
*Community Emergency Risk Assessment
** Confined to multi-agency information

Source: Municipal Emergency Management Plans and Guidelines (EMMV, Part 6)

5.1   Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

The MEMP brings together the prevention, response and recovery arrangements for the Municipality. The MEMP is a multi-agency plan - it is not only a Council plan. The MEMP 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.

6.   BUSINESS CONTINUITY

6.1   Business Continuity Plan

It is prudent and a good governance practice for councils to link municipal emergency management planning to business continuity planning though development of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). This 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.

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 will help 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.

During and after an emergency event, it is vital that the council maintains its critical business operations in accordance with its BCP. The CEO should oversee the execution of the BCP, and work with senior executives, managers and officers to ensure that council's vital services continue to be delivered to the local community.

7.   COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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

Council's activities through the community team are promoting collaborative relationships with communities and building inherent resilience. The community owned Community Plans underpin resilience development in the small communities. Communities are currently being supported to identify the key characteristics of a resilient community so they can build on their strengths and fill the gaps. Community leadership development is an example of this.

Council is also supporting emergency service agencies to engage with communities to educate in risk awareness and individual emergency planning.

7.1   Community Development Charter

The Community Development Charter underpins this work and provides a framework that aims to increase the skills of community organisations, creates more opportunities for community involvement in community planning and action and boost community strength and connectedness within the Shire.

7.2   Framework review

This Emergency Resilience Framework will be reviewed annually to ensure a best practice approach and keep abreast of ongoing policy changes within the emergency management sector and within Council and community.

An annual review will identify and validate existing operational policy, processes and practices applied during this period and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.