

WODONGA

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A GREAT LOCATION

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CITY OF WODONGA VIC

Wodonga Heatwave Strategy

Project summary:

- A rural perspective



About Wodonga

- Located on the Victorian/NSW border
- 300km north east of Melbourne
- Bounded by the Murray River
- One of Victoria's fastest growing provincial cities
- Population currently 35,000



About local government



- Working hard for the Wodonga community
- Innovative and sustainable solutions and services
- Doing things better, smarter and more productively
- Partnering with local communities on local issues



About the project process

- Stage One: Project Proposal
- Stage Two: Project Methods
- Stage Three: Project Findings
- Stage Four: Project Evaluation



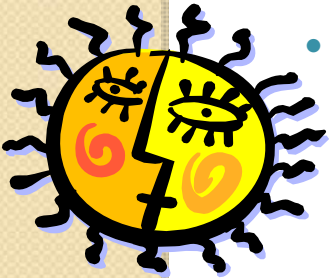
Stage One: Project proposal

Project aim

- To develop a heatwave strategy for Wodonga to assist, educate and alert vulnerable community members of a declared heatwave.

To achieve this

- Be consistent with departmental guidelines and planning frameworks namely the *Guidelines for Municipal Emergency Management Planning*;
- Outline health, community and emergency service actions and response arrangements to heatwave alert;
- Identify vulnerable persons within the Wodonga community;
- Propose a clear communication strategy to initiate alert, response and recovery phases of the plan;
- Describe key stakeholder roles and responsibilities; and,
- Promote a community awareness and education component.



Key question

How can Wodonga Council bring about a sustainable and equitable approach to the planning of an emergency and community response plan to support local communities during heatwave conditions in Wodonga?

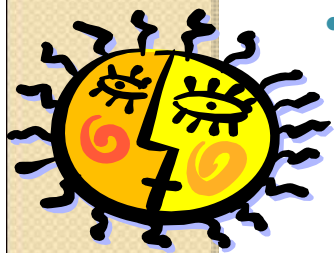
Secondary questions

- What is the current situation in Wodonga?
- What have we already got in terms of existing plans and normal planning processes to identify responses to heatwave events?
- Who are most vulnerable to the impacts of heatwave, and how do we engage with them?
- Who are the key local stakeholders?
- What gaps are there in existing community based interventions?
- What can we do locally with what we now know?



Project partners

- Wodonga Regional Health Service;
- Upper Hume Community Health Service;
- Upper Murray Family Care;
- Border Division of General Practice;
- Rural Ambulance Victoria;
- St John Ambulance;
- Red Cross;
- Department of Human Services (DHS);
- Rural Housing Network;
- Wodonga childcare centres and playgroups;
- Age Concern Albury-Wodonga;
- Senior Citizens' Association;
- Aged accommodation;
- Wodonga pharmacies; and,
- Gateway Tourist Information Centre.



Stage Two: Project methods

Project design

- Survey
- Community forum
- Individual interviews
- Research of best practice models
- Steering committee meetings





Wodonga Heatwave Survey

- Name of group/organisation
- Contact details
- How would you define heatwave conditions?
- How extreme do these variables need to be before a heatwave should be declared?
- What climatic variables affect the users of your service the most?
- In your experience, what are some of the impacts of prolonged periods of heat on the users of your service?
- How are you informed of impending heatwave conditions?
- How do you deal with heatwave conditions so the users of your service are protected?
- Has your organisation any systems in place to prepare for a heatwave?
- Do you have a formal response strategy for a heatwave?
- Do you think you have a role to play in a heatwave response plan?
- What could be done to further protect your clients in an episode of extreme hot weather?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know about the effects of heatwaves on the users of your service?

Wodonga Heatwave Survey

- **Government organisations**

Local government units
DHS

- **Private sector**

Childcare centres
Aged accommodation

- **Service providers**

Primary Care Partnership
Upper Murray Family Care
Upper Hume Community Health Service
Wodonga Regional Health Service
Border Division of General Practice

- **Emergency services**

Rural Ambulance Victoria
St John Ambulance
Rural Housing

- **Community groups**

Salvation Army
Playgroups
Senior citizens
Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation



Wodonga Heatwave Hotpot Forum

- What have we got?
- What is missing?
- What is important?
- What can we do?

Individual interviews

- Red Cross
- PCP

Research

- *Heatwave Plan for England (2008)*
- World Health Organisation's (WHO) *Heat-Health Action Plans (2008)*
- *Garnaut Climate Change Review: Draft Report (2008)*
- Australian Government's *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper (2008)*



Stage Three: Project findings

- Organisations have currently a 'common sense' approach to heatwave planning and response.
- Range plans and normal planning processes exist that indirectly support current responses to heatwave events locally.
- Wodonga requires:
 - The formulation of localised plans and interventions based upon sound research and results of community consultation.
 - The targeting of vulnerable groups and the building of networks within the community.
 - Health promotion and community education.



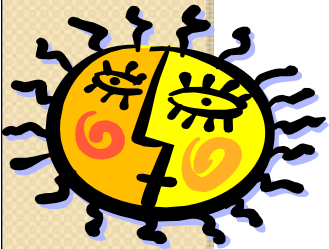
Stage Four: Project evaluation

What worked well

- Setting achievable aims early in the project
- Having an internal steering committee
- Being flexible
- Building partnerships with key stakeholders
- Engaging the media

What could have been done better

- More time for further consultation
- Engaging vulnerable communities
- Gathering more data from focus groups





Project recommendations

- Clearly articulate the purpose of the heatwave project based on local needs;
- Develop and follow a flexible project plan outlining strategies, key activities and timelines;
- Form an internal steering committee to lead the heatwave project;
- Research the demographic profile of the community to identify vulnerable groups;
- Engage external project partners to support the project's implementation;
- Research existing community-based interventions and then build partnerships with targeted key stakeholders;
- Network with neighbouring councils; and,
- Consult with community members and stakeholders using methods aligned with the heatwave project's intended outcomes to identify:
 - What you have got?
 - What is missing?
 - What is important?
 - What can you do?

About the Wodonga Heatwave Plan

Stage One

Pre summer preparation April 1 to November 30

- Implement Heatwave Awareness Campaign (April to Nov)
- Identify vulnerable groups
- Identify cool areas
- Engage key stakeholders

Stage Two

During summer prevention December 1 to March 31

- Implement Heatwave Awareness Campaign (Dec to March)
- Advise key stakeholders of roles and responsibilities
- Set up Heatwave Hotline
- Check BOM reports four times a day

Stage Three

Heatwave response Bureau of Meteorology declared heatwave

- Alert media
- Advise key stakeholders to enact specific actions
- Implement Heatwave Hotline
- Inform Emergency Management Team
- Record BOM reports four times a day



Stage One:

Pre summer preparation

•Heatwave awareness campaign

April

Engage media partner
Build sponsorship package
Negotiate access to community noticeboards and network infrastructure
Partner with Rural Ambulance Victoria to produce fact sheets, stakeholder information sheets and general public leaflet.

October

Hold stalls at Seniors' Week and Children's Fair
Distribute information
Rotate training DVD's, information sheets and checklists around stakeholder organisations and groups
Audit vulnerable clients' homes using checklist

November

City mail out
Heatwave leaflet
Feature story in CityLife

December

Distribute fact sheets and fridge magnets to stakeholders for dissemination to vulnerable groups
General media release

January

General media release

February

Community newsletter article
Felltimber Community Centre, Baranduda Community Centre
General media release

•Buddy promotion



Stage Two:

During summer prevention

- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders



Stage Three: Declared heatwave response

