Department of Health

health

Heatwave plan review tool

State Government Victoria

Heatwave plan review tool

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October 2011 (1110015)
Print managed by Finsbury Green. Printed on sustainable paper.

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Preface

Summer is often a time for Australians to enjoy the warmer weather. However, extreme heat can negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of clients and community members.

Anybody can be affected by heat, but certain population groups are more at risk than others. These include people aged 65 years and over, people with a chronic medical condition or disability and people living alone.

To minimise the health impacts of extreme heat, the Department of Health has created guidance material to assist health and community service providers to develop a heatwave plan. A heatwave plan outlines what an organisation such as a council, hospital or residential aged care facility will do to:

- prepare for, respond to and recover from heatwaves
- ensure business continuity during heatwaves in order to protect or support clients, staff and the community
- develop partnerships and collaborative arrangements to better respond to heatwaves
- increase awareness of the health impacts of extreme heat in clients, staff and the community.

Like all plans, a heatwave plan needs reviewing periodically to ensure it reflects the capacity of the organisation to protect or support clients and community members most at risk to extreme heat.

To support your organisation's review process, the *Heatwave plan review tool* provides guidance, templates and tools for health and community service providers to assist you in reviewing your heatwave plan.

I encourage you to review your heatwave plans using the templates and tools for the health and wellbeing of your clients, staff and community.

Dr John Carnie
Director, Health Protection
Chief Health Officer

Part 1: Understanding the review tool

The *Heatwave plan review tool* provides health and community service providers such as local councils, hospitals and residential aged care facilities with simple steps to review their heatwave plan. This tool may also be useful for other review processes, as it incorporates elements that are universal to planning.

The purpose of reviewing your heatwave plan is to:

- determine whether the actions occurred as planned
- determine whether services were appropriately adapted
- understand whether the actions will protect clients and community members most at risk to extreme heat
- engage stakeholders and partners who are, or could be, involved in heatwave planning
- ensure it reflects the current demographics and needs of your clients and local community
- consider new legislation, policy or frameworks relevant to heatwave planning
- identify opportunities to improve it.

The review tool guides you through a review process, keeping it appropriate to the scale of your plan. You may use all the suggested tasks and templates within the tool, or just some of them to frame your review process. It can help you to:

- clarify the importance of reviewing the heatwave plan
- determine what is being reviewed and when
- identify who will lead and participate in the review process
- find the required information and the best ways to do this
- determine the resources needed for the review
- gain knowledge to inform future planning and resourcing.

How to use the review tool

The review tool contains:

- templates to identify and collect information required by the review process
- ideas to facilitate discussions with clients, stakeholders and partners to inform the review
- surveys to collect information from stakeholders and partners to inform the review
- scenarios and activities to test your heatwave plan.

The recommendations from this review process should then be used to inform the revision of your heatwave plan.

1.1 Why does your heatwave plan need reviewing?

This review tool aims to assist health and community service providers to maintain a heatwave plan that reflects the current needs of its clients and local community. It aims to provide enough guidance for you to lead the review process, even with limited resources.

Like any plan, the heatwave plan is a living document that requires routine reviewing and revision to:

- reflect the capacity of the organisation to protect or provide services to clients, staff and community members most at risk to extreme heat
- consider current demographics and policy settings.

The heatwave plan may be influenced by numerous pieces of legislation, departmental guidelines and existing planning frameworks relevant to heatwaves. This will depend on your organisation and the services you provide. These may include:

- **legislation**
  - *Aged Care Act 1997*
  - *Climate Change Act 2010*
  - *Emergency Management Act 1986*
  - *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
  - *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
  - Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009
- **departmental guidelines**
  - *Heatwave plan for Victoria*
  - *Heatwave planning guide*
  - *Residential aged care services heatwave ready resource*
- **existing planning frameworks**
  - local municipal emergency management plans (MEMPs)
  - local municipal public health plans (MPHPs).

Victorian legislation can be found at <www.legislation.vic.gov.au>. Commonwealth legislation can be found at <www.comlaw.gov.au>. For information on departmental guidelines, please see the relevant section of the department's website.

1.2 When to review your heatwave plan

Reviews can be carried out:

- early in the summer season, for example, after the first heat health alert is issued
- following a major heatwave event, such as a prolonged period of extreme heat or an emergency-level heatwave
- at the end of each summer.

The review tool suggests practical steps to manage reviews at all stages.

Mini review

Trends show that heat health alerts are likely to be issued once or twice each summer. Currently, major heatwave events occur less frequently, perhaps every few years (though climate experts predict increasing frequency).

This type of review targets specific aspects such as:

- whether you distributed the Department of Health's heat health alert to internal and external stakeholders successfully
- whether your services were appropriately adapted and delivered as planned.

A smaller review could be conducted:

- early in the summer season, for example, after the first heat health alert is issued
- following a major heatwave event, such as a prolonged period of extreme heat or an emergency-level heatwave.

The information gathered from the mini review will typically provide direct benefit in supporting your planning and preparation processes, so you might consider updating the plan immediately rather than waiting until the end of summer.

A tool to complete a mini review is provided as Appendix 1.

Full review

Following summer, you should review your heatwave plan in its entirety. The review should look at how well local processes worked and explore ways of improving your plan.

The review will identify how well your heatwave plan:

- worked with other plans and strategies
- addressed the needs of clients and community members most at risk to extreme heat
- engaged internal and external stakeholders and community partners
- actioned heatwave-related activities before, during and after extreme heat
- adapted services in response to forecasted conditions
- provided key health messages to clients, staff and local community members
- distributed the department's heat health alert to internal and external stakeholders and community partners
- outlined its review strategy.

1.3 Who could lead your heatwave plan review?

The review process could be driven by the person or team leading the heatwave planning process. The organisational area that owns the heatwave plan will most likely assume the responsibility of maintaining and reviewing it. Determining who manages any review process is important for any organisation.

Key responsibilities of those managing the review process can include the following.

1. Planning for the review:
   - locating and reading the heatwave plan
   - gaining support from management and key staff to commence the review
   - ensuring key elements similar to those mentioned in section 2.1.1 are contained in your heatwave plan
   - identifying and gathering the resources needed to drive the review
   - identifying and engaging key stakeholders and partners who contributed to or have responsibilities in the heatwave plan to participate in the review
   - determining who will need to sign off on any recommended changes to your heatwave plan and getting them involved
   - seeing the heatwave plan through fresh eyes.
2. Managing the review:
   - gathering data and information by asking the right questions
   - gathering data and information by using the right methods.
3. Making changes to the heatwave plan:
   - identifying any recommended changes to the heatwave plan
   - gaining support from management and key staff to make the recommended changes
   - revising the heatwave plan
   - sharing the revised plan with stakeholders and partners.

Part 2: Conducting the review

Conducting any review requires an active, purposeful process. The time spent on the process is up to you; you may need more or less time, depending on available resources and past summer experiences. While not prescriptive, the three-stage process outlined below provides practical ideas and guidance. You may use some or all of the suggestions contained within the tasks, templates and supporting appendices.

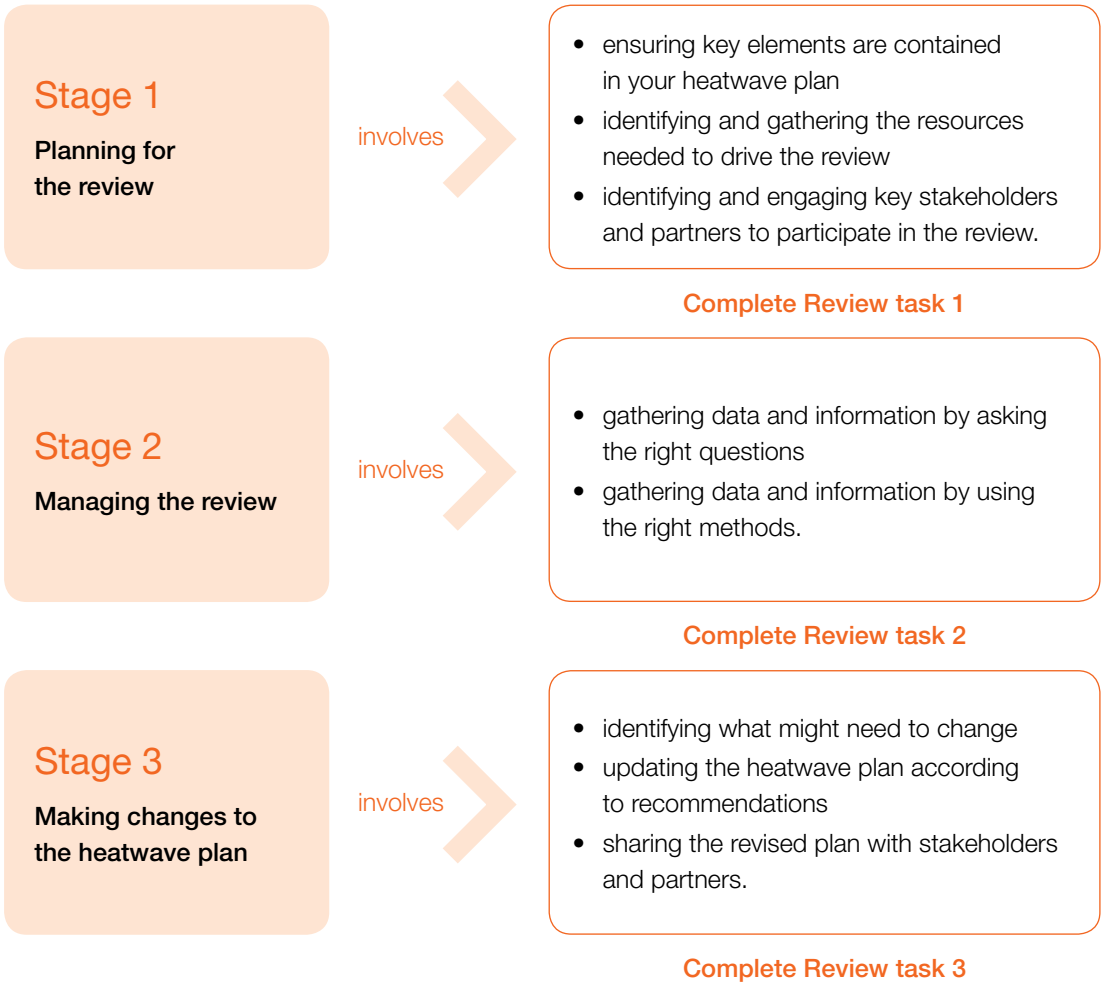
The review process can be broken down into the following three stages.

Stage 1: Planning for the review

Stage 2: Managing the review

Stage 3: Making changes to the heatwave plan

Each stage contains a different template for a **review task** to help organise the review process.



2.1 Stage 1: Planning for the review

Stage 1

Planning for the review

involves

- ensuring key elements are contained in your heatwave plan
- identifying and gathering the resources needed to drive the review
- identifying and engaging key stakeholders and partners to participate in the review.

You can use the template for Review task 1 to assist you in completing Stage 1 of the review process.

2.1.1 Ensuring key elements are contained in your heatwave plan

First, it is important to familiarise yourself with the background of your heatwave plan.

Depending on your familiarity with the document, this exercise may only take a matter of minutes. Some questions to consider include:

- What is the status of the heatwave plan? Has the plan been approved by the appropriate person or people?
- Who led the development of the heatwave plan? Is this person available to participate in the review process?
- Have there been any subsequent reviews? Are the results of these available to you?
- What other plans have links to the heatwave plan? Is there any work currently underway in relation to these plans?

Since the introduction of the *Heatwave planning guide,* and as a result of state and local heatwave planning, some basic elements of heatwave plans have been identified. An initial scan of your heatwave plan prior to commencing the review will help you identify opportunities for further development. Heatwave plans may include reference to the following key elements, which are used throughout this review tool.

Policy context

- How does the heatwave plan fit with other plans and strategies?

Population groups most at risk

- Who, of your clients, staff or local community, is most at risk of the impacts of extreme heat?

Stakeholders and community partners

- Who are the people or organisations that provide services to or advocate for those most at risk?

Action plan

- What are the actions taken before summer, during summer, during a heatwave event and after a heatwave event?
- Which services need to be adapted in preparation for or during extreme heat?
- What actions have been identified to ensure business continuity, for example, in the event of power failure?

Communication strategy

- How are key health messages provided to clients, staff, other services and your local community?

Heat health alert procedures

- What actions are taken when a heat health alert is issued by the Department of Health?

Review strategy

- How is your heatwave plan reviewed and updated?

2.1.2 Identifying and gathering the resources needed to drive the review

Reviewing your heatwave plan will require some time and a commitment from key staff and management. The person or team responsible for the review should consider:

- who will lead the review
- the timeline for the review
- how other work will be prioritised to support the lead person or team
- what other staff resources are available for the review, both within your organisational area and in other areas of your organisation
- what internal funding and resources are available to assist with the review
- who will approve changes to the heatwave plan
- how changes to the heatwave plan be will implemented
- how changes to the heatwave plan will be communicated.

There are certain activities in the review process that may require dedicated staff to complete including:

- engaging internal and external stakeholders and partners
- gathering information and data to support changes to the heatwave plan
- gaining support from the appropriate people or groups that participated in the review
- presenting the recommended changes to the plan to management and those approving the changes
- making the changes to the heatwave plan.

By using the resources column in Review task 1, you can streamline this process and make the most of your local resources.

Completing **Review task 1** will help identify key elements in your current plan, recognising any elements that are missing or need further development.

Review task 1: Identifying the key elements of your heatwave plan

Key elements	Yes	No	Related tasks	Related resources
Does your plan consider **policy context**, noting: • relevant legislation such as the Climate Change Act • other government documents relating to heatwave planning such as the *Heatwave plan for Victoria* and the *Residential aged care services heatwave ready resource* • relationships to other organisational plans and strategies such as the business continuity plan, service continuity plan, organisational plan, MPHP and MEMP • a clear vision and goals.				
Does your plan consider **population groups** most at risk, noting: • up-to-date research and data on local population groups most at risk • information on the likely impacts of extreme heat on these groups and associated risks.				
Does your plan consider **stakeholders and community partners**, noting: • targeted internal stakeholders representative of clients and community members most at risk such as the council aged services manager • targeted external stakeholders providing services to those most at risk such as the local hospital, community health services and neighbouring councils • local community organisations with links to the broader community such as volunteer groups • advocacy groups such as community groups for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds • targeted community partners who have a role in your heatwave plan such as the local Primary Care Partnership and GPs.				

Key elements	Yes	No	Related tasks	Related resources
Does your plan consider an appropriate **action plan**, noting: • before summer activities such as staff awareness and training relating to heat and health, repair or replacement of infrastructure (air-conditioning) • during summer activities such as modifying direct services for clients • heatwave response activities such as providing or encouraging additional fluids to clients, staff or visitors • heatwave recovery activities such as following up with individuals on how they went in the heatwave • business continuity planning such as essential utilities, staffing availability, supplies and IT.				
Does your plan consider a **communication strategy**, noting: • internal communication messages and materials • stakeholder communication messages and materials • general local community messages and materials • different local communication methods.				
Does your plan consider the Department of Health's **heat health alert system**, noting: • the heat health temperature threshold for your region (check <www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave> for thresholds) • two nominated contacts in your organisation to receive the heat health alerts or subscribe to receive alerts on the Chief Health Officer's RSS feed • the requirements of different campuses covered by the plan • an up-to-date local stakeholder distribution list • an up-to-date Department of Health stakeholder distribution list (check <www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave> for the latest list) • local procedures for action.				
Does your plan consider a **review strategy**, noting: • the frequency and types of reviews such as after a heatwave event or at the end of summer • a nominated lead department or role in your organisation to conduct the review.				

2.1.3 Identifying and engaging key stakeholders and partners

The review process will be strengthened by including feedback from relevant internal and external stakeholders and partners. These groups can provide valuable information about whether actions in your heatwave plan occurred within acceptable timeframes and if they were useful and appropriate to targeted groups.

Who are stakeholders and partners?

Relevant internal and external stakeholders and partners who participated in the development of your heatwave plan, or in a subsequent review, are an ideal place to start when thinking about who to include in the review process. These people or organisations are already engaged in heatwave planning and, most likely, have an interest in your heatwave plan.

Stakeholders and partners may have a designated responsibility within your heatwave plan, or could be involved in a number of other ways. They might:

- be on your local heat health alert distribution list
- be responsible for specific actions within your heatwave plan
- be on your emergency planning committee
- distribute heatwave communication materials and resources to clients, staff or the local community, or other involved parties
- provide data about local population groups most at risk to extreme heat that informs your plan
- implement their own heatwave plans that link with yours.

There may be an existing arrangement with your partners that requires review, such as a contract or a memorandum of understanding. This process may work separately or in parallel with the heatwave plan review.

The review process also provides an opportunity to engage new stakeholders and partners in heatwave planning. There may be existing networks or advisory groups that you can engage; tapping into an existing relationship can save time and provide valuable information. For example, a council might engage a local organisation that provides services to or advocates for community members most at risk to extreme heat.

Be sure to think internally and not just externally, as there are numerous areas within your organisation that can contribute to the heatwave plan.

You may want to make a list of those considered to be most at risk and identify potential internal and external stakeholders and partners that can help you reach them. Appendix 2 provides a list of potential stakeholders and partners, which you can adapt for your purposes.

Engaging stakeholders and partners

It is important to consider in advance how stakeholders and partners will be involved in the review process. This will depend upon the type of data and information being collected, as well as their participation in your heatwave plan.

Some examples of engaging stakeholders and partners are:

- a focus group with internal staff establishing what happened and what worked well during a heatwave event
- a survey emailed to external agencies investigating the effectiveness of your local key health messages
- follow-up discussions with your clients or your organisation's contracted service providers finding out if any clients' behaviours changed during summer.

Templates and further suggestions are located in Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6.

2.2 Stage 2: Managing the review

The quality of your review relies upon the strength of the evidence collected by those leading the review process. During this process, reliable and relevant data is gathered.

Stage 2

Managing the review

involves

- gathering data and information by asking the right questions
- gathering data and information by using the right methods.

You can use the template for Review task 2 to assist you in completing Stage 2 of the review process.

2.2.1 Asking the right questions

A number of key questions need to be asked in order to collect the appropriate data and to keep the process on track.

You may like to use some, or all, of the key questions captured in Review task 2 to frame this part of the review. These key questions are suggestions only. They are organised according to the key elements that may form part of your heatwave plan, which are described in Stage 1 of the review tool.

2.2.2 Using the right methods

There are many different ways to collect information for your heatwave plan review. Reviewers tend to choose methods that give the best level of evidence possible, given practical and resourcing limitations. Such methods could include:

- analysing records and documents, including
  - the current heatwave or action plan
  - any new legislation or policies regarding heatwave
  - the number of heat health alerts received
  - service utilisation data (increases/decreases)
  - updated demographic data
  - any records of activities
  - the communication plan
- follow-up discussions either face to face or by telephone with
  - clients affected by planned actions or adapted services during extreme heat
  - stakeholders or partners who provide services to or advocate for clients or community members most at risk

- surveys either by mail or email
  - internal staff
  - external stakeholders and partners
  - clients or residents or their representative
- focus groups
  - questions posed to a group of stakeholders or partners to explore any complex issues, reflecting on the plan and making recommendations
- tabletop scenarios
  - testing and refining actions within the plan using a set of heatwave scenarios.

You may like to use some, or all, of the methods suggested in Review task 2. Supporting material for each method is contained in Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Completing **Review task 2** will help guide the data collection process.

Review task 2: Asking the right questions and using the right method

Suggested key questions	Yes	No	Suggested methods
Policy context • Has there been any new legislation or policy changes over the past year affecting heatwave planning? • Are there any new government documents or plans relating to heatwave planning that need mentioning? • Are there any new international approaches to heatwave planning that should be considered? • Does the heatwave plan still sit within the same area of your organisation? Is this clearly stated in the plan?			Analysing records and documents Check <www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave> for any suggested changes
Population groups most at risk • Who does your organisation care for that is most at risk (such as the elderly or those with a pre-existing medical condition)? • Has there been a change to the demographics of your clients or local community? • Have the priority groups most at risk changed since the last review? • How did extreme heat last summer impact on clients and community groups most at risk? • Have clients receiving direct services from your organisation provided any feedback about the impacts of extreme heat on services provided over the summer?			Analysing records and documents Follow-up discussions with clients (Appendix 3)
Stakeholders and community partners • Are the stakeholders or partners participating in your heatwave plan and review representative of your clients and community members most at risk? • Are there any relevant internal or external stakeholders or partners missing from your heatwave planning and review processes? • Are stakeholder and partner contact details up to date? • Did key stakeholders and partners do what they said they would do? • What would they do differently next summer? • Are there any stakeholder or partner plans that may impact on or be impacted by your heatwave plan?			Stakeholder focus group (Appendix 4) Stakeholder survey (Appendix 5)

Suggested key questions	Yes	No	Suggested methods
Action plan • When implemented, did the action plan or adapted services reach the intended audience? • Were actions implemented according to suggested timeframes? • What factors (both positive and negative) impacted on the implementation of the action plan? • Did responsible service areas do what they said they would do? • Which actions or adapted services worked well? Which did not? • What other actions can be implemented? • Does your plan consider how to maintain essential utilities during a power failure? • Does your plan consider staffing availability during a high fire danger or Code Red day? • Does your plan consider how to manage, receive and distribute supplies during a power failure or Code Red day? • Does your plan consider how electronic information will be accessed during a power failure? • Does your plan consider what would happen during a high fire danger or Code Red day? (This may be detailed in another plan.)			Tabletop scenario (Appendix 6) Analysing records and documents
Heat health alert system • Were the Department of Health's heat health alerts distributed locally in accordance with your plan? • Did everyone on your distribution list receive heat health alerts? • Does your local heat health alert distribution list need updating? • Are the right people receiving the alerts? Is anyone missing?			Analysing records and documents Follow-up discussions with stakeholders (Appendix 3)
Communication strategy • Are all communication resources consistent with Department of Health messages? • Did key messages reach their target audiences? • Which (if any) organisational areas or external organisations assisted you in disseminating communication material/ messages? How well did this work? • Are there other ways of disseminating communication material (via other organisations or methods)? • Did target audiences understand the messages? • What communication materials/resources are needed for next summer?			Analysing records and documents Follow-up discussions with clients and stakeholders (Appendices 3 and 4) Check <www.health.vic.gov.au/ environment/heatwave> for any new resources
Review strategy • Was the plan reviewed in accordance with the review strategy?			Analysing records and documents

2.3 Stage 3: Making changes to the heatwave plan

Heatwave plans are living documents and need to be updated regularly.

It is important that any recommendations resulting from the data and information-gathering stage are used to make informed changes to your heatwave plan.

The review process is complete when your heatwave plan is updated to reflect the recommended changes. This should occur prior to the following summer, so it is ready for implementation when summer arrives.

Stage 3

Making changes to the heatwave plan

involves

- identifying what might need to change
- updating the heatwave plan according to recommendations
- sharing the revised plan with stakeholders and partners.

You can use the template for Review task 3 to assist you in completing Stage 3 of the review process.

2.3.1 Identifying what might need to change

Stage 2 will provide you with feedback about how well the current heatwave plan worked in the previous summer. Once all the information is gathered, you can review it to determine what changes are needed.

You may like to use a simple table, like the one in Review task 3, to identify any proposed changes to your heatwave plan.

Completing **Review task 3** will help identify any changes to the heatwave plan.

Review task 3: Identifying recommended changes to your heatwave plan

To identify potential changes to your heatwave plan, first decide which elements are to be examined. Perhaps you are looking at changes to your action plan, or you could be reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the communication strategy. Make notes on why you have chosen these elements.

From the evidence you have collected, address the following questions:

- What worked well?
- What did not work?
- Where are the gaps?

Consider your responses and make concise, achievable recommendations to improve this part of your plan for next summer.

Key heatwave plan element(s) under review:

For review	Heatwave plan element	Notes
	Policy context	
	Population groups most at risk	
	Stakeholders and community partners	
	Action plan	
	Communication strategy	
	Heat health alert system actions or response	
	Review strategy	

What worked well?	What did not work?	Where are the gaps?

Recommendations for change:

2.3.2 Updating the heatwave plan according to recommendations

Updating your heatwave plan may be a very simple revision or it may require a rewrite to include new information or actions. There may be changes you can implement immediately and others that are long-term goals. It is important that the changes are achievable.

Adopting the recommended changes may require approval through the appropriate channels. You may need to check on your organisation's process for approving any revisions to the heatwave plan and identify which managers, directors, management groups or councillors might need to be involved.

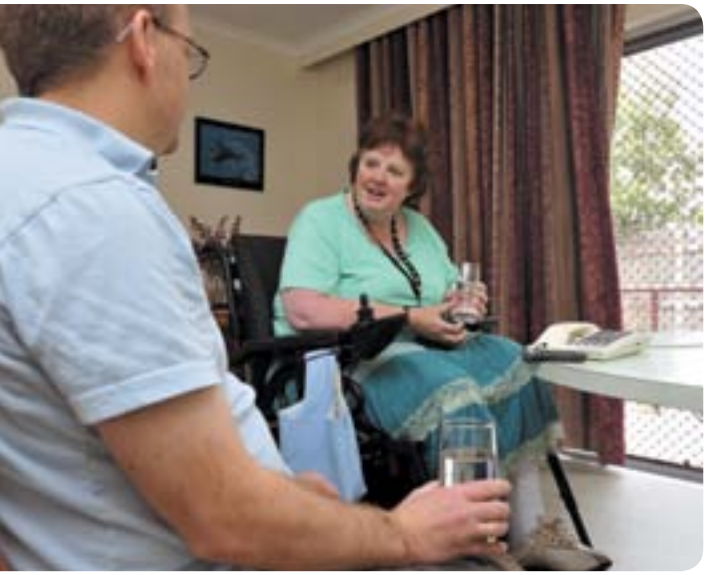
Once the recommended changes are approved, changes should be made immediately into the heatwave plan.

2.3.3 Sharing the revised plan with stakeholders and partners

By sharing the revised plan of the review process with stakeholders and partners, the feedback link between the community and your organisation can be strengthened.

At the end of the review process, updated heatwave plans can be distributed to all identified internal and external stakeholders and partners via a range of mediums including:

- uploading the plan to your organisation's website
- sending hard copies of the plan to stakeholders and partners
- emailing key changes to the plan to those stakeholders and partners on the distribution list
- highlighting changes to the plan at interagency meetings and forums
- informing any affected clients, community groups or residents of the changes and how they may affect services provided by your organisation.



Appendix 1: Template for conducting a mini review

A mini review allows you to use the information gathered early in the summer or immediately after a heatwave event to modify actions straight away and make recommendations to inform the end of summer review.

Key aspects of a mini review include:

- evaluating the local distribution of the Department of Health's heat health alert
- evaluating any variation to local service delivery during the heatwave event.

By using the template below, you can document recommendations for both immediate and end of summer changes to your plan.

Suggested key questions	Yes	No	Notes
Heat health alert system • Was the heat health alert distributed locally according to the procedure outlined in the heatwave plan? • Does your local distribution list need updating? • Are the right people or organisations receiving the alert? • Are the email addresses correct? Did any bounce back? • Is anyone missing out? • Is a nominated person at your organisation monitoring the Bureau of Meteorology website?			
Service delivery • What client services were adapted for the forecasted heatwave? • Were there any unexpected outcomes? • Did responsible service areas do what they said they would do? • Were timeframes realistic? • Was there any feedback from clients or staff about adapted services?			
Other areas to consider:			
Immediate recommendations for change:			
End of summer recommendations for change:			

Appendix 2: Potential local stakeholders and partners

Stakeholders and partners provide services to and engage with clients and community members who are most at risk to extreme heat.

Your own internal partners are a good place to start. Many organisational areas will already have established links with target groups and potential stakeholders. These could include the following.

Potential departments within organisations

Environmental health
Community development
Emergency management
Events
Recreation and leisure
Food services
Maintenance
Aged care and disability services
Family and community services
Communications
Tourism
Assets
Engineering

Local organisations

Aboriginal organisations
Aged care accommodation and facilities
Aged networks and senior citizens associations
Australian Breastfeeding Association
Australian Red Cross – Telecross service
Businesses and chamber of commerce
Caravan parks and motels
Community-based service providers
County Fire Authority (CFA)
Childcare centres
Cinemas
Community health centres
Culturally and linguistically diverse organisations
Disability service providers
Event organisers such as markets
Family day care centres
First aid organisations
General practice clinics
Greenhouse alliances
Homelessness support networks
Hospitals
Leisure centres
Local media
Men's sheds
Neighbouring councils
Pharmacies
Planned activity groups (PAGs)
Playgroups
Religious organisations, such as churches
Residential aged care services
Returned and Services League (RSL)
Rural housing networks
Royal District Nursing (RDNS)
Schools
State Emergency Service (SES)
Shire contractors
Shopping centres
Sporting clubs
St John Ambulance
Surf Life Saving clubs
Tourism information centres
University Of The Third Age (U3A)
Volunteer Coast Guard
Youth councils

Appendix 3: Follow-up discussions

Clients, residents, relatives and staff

Engaging with these groups can provide valuable insights into whether the key health messages and actions actually reached the population groups most at risk to extreme heat in your community.

You should consider who is best to involve in follow-up discussions after summer. This may impact on the way in which you engage them.

If you are finding it difficult to engage directly with clients, you can extract similar information by surveying stakeholders who work with these groups.

Key questions for local clients could include:

- How prepared were you for hot weather this summer?
- Did you do anything differently from last summer? If so, what or who influenced you to do that?
- Did your service provider give you any health information about extreme heat? Did you understand it?
- What could we do better next summer?

Stakeholders and community partners

You should try to engage with internal and external stakeholders and partners during the review process. Please refer to section 2.1.3 and Appendix 2 for more information about stakeholders and partners.

Key questions for local stakeholders and partners could include:

- Are you on our local distribution list to receive the Department of Health's heat health alert?
- Did you receive the heat health alert?
- How did you react to the alert?
- What actions worked well this summer?
- What actions did not work well? How can they be improved?
- Has the summer highlighted any issues that have not yet been addressed by the heatwave plan?
- Are there any other groups at risk of extreme heat that need to be considered?
- Are you able to assist in reaching these groups?
- How are these groups best targeted?
- Do you have any recommendations for next summer?

Appendix 4: Local stakeholder and partner focus groups

You can facilitate local focus groups with stakeholders and partners to gather information for revising your heatwave plan.

In order for focus groups to be effective:

- groups should contain six to eight participants
- meetings should last no longer than one hour
- the key is to facilitate and lead rather than direct
- the purpose is to get everyone involved in conversation and participate in the discussion.

Typically, no direct action will take place at the meeting other than creating a plan to address items identified.

Potential focus group questions:

What are the strengths of the plan? What worked well last summer?

What are the weaknesses of the plan? What did not work well?

What needs to be done to improve the plan?

Appendix 5: Local stakeholder and partner survey

Another option for gathering information from stakeholders and community partners is to provide them with a survey.

You can mail or email the survey to your participants. If you choose to email the survey, consider putting it in the body rather than attaching it to an email. The easier it is for the person being surveyed the more likely they are to complete it.

Also, indicate when you want the survey back and where the completed survey should be sent. This will help you keep to your timeline for reviewing the heatwave plan.

You should consider providing an introduction to outline the purpose of the survey. It might read something like:

> *We are reviewing our local heatwave plan to better support our community to prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme heat. By completing this survey, we will be able to get a better understanding of what happened last summer so that more effective responses can be developed for this summer.*

Suggested questions:

1. What is the name of the group or organisation?
2. What are the contact details for the group or organisation?
3. Of your staff or clients, who was most 'at risk' from prolonged periods of extreme heat last summer?
4. Did any of your client groups not receive or understand heatwave messages?
5. How were you informed of impending heatwave conditions?
6. Did you receive the heat health alert message?
7. Did you understand the heat health alert message?
8. How did your organisation deal with heatwave conditions so your staff and clients were protected?
9. What could be done to further protect your staff or clients in an episode of extreme hot weather? Any extra resources required?

Appendix 6: Tabletop scenario

Below is a suggested agenda for a two-hour tabletop scenario that tests the effectiveness of your heatwave plan. The agenda format and timings can be changed to suit your individual needs and conditions.

Item	Action	Duration
Welcome	Open the session and facilitate introductions as appropriate. Give a general brief on the format, purpose and objectives of the session. Outline the session rules (such as one conversation at a time, follow instructions and mobiles to silent).	5 mins
Exercise briefing	Outline the method and scope of the exercise as: • The group should discuss the information provided to them, and make decisions based on the arrangements documented in the heatwave plan under review. • Decisions should be documented by the table coordinator in the response sheets provided. • Document any issues that need to be noted but cannot be addressed at the time ('parking' issues to deal with later).	10 mins
Issue scenario 1	Issue scenario 1 (see Scenario 1 response worksheet) Allow participants a fixed period to discuss and document their thoughts, issues and actions using the response sheet provided. Discuss answers – utilising the outcomes from one group as a base, with input from other groups by exception.	20 mins
Issue scenario 2	Issue scenario 2 (see Scenario 2 response worksheet) Allow participants a fixed period to discuss and document their thoughts, issues and actions using the response sheet provided. Discuss answers, utilising the outcomes from one group as a base, with input from other groups by exception.	20 mins
Issue scenario 3	Issue scenario 3 (see Scenario 3 response worksheet) Allow participants a fixed period to discuss and document their thoughts, issues and actions using the response sheet provided. Discuss answers, utilising the outcomes from one group as a base, with input from other groups by exception.	20 mins

Item	Action	Duration
Issue scenario 4	Issue scenario 4 (see Scenario 4 response worksheet) Allow participants a fixed period to discuss and document their thoughts, issues and actions using the response sheet provided. Discuss answers, utilising the outcomes from one group as a base, with input from other groups by exception.	20 mins
Debrief	Discuss and document what worked well and what could have been done better.	20 mins
Session closure	Thank all attendees and confirm how the outputs of the session will be utilised.	5 mins

Adapted from *Influenza pandemic planning: tabletop scenario testing kit,* Department of Health, 2009

Scenario 1 response worksheet

Scenario 1

It is early December and things are starting to heat up. While there has been no official heat health alert sent by the Department of Health yet, already there are signs of a hot summer to come. The Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting very hot conditions towards the end of the month, especially around the festive season.

Q1. What are the key tasks that your organisation should undertake at this point, and who will be responsible for implementing each action?

Q2. What management structure is appropriate at this stage to oversee these actions?

Q3. Have you identified any areas for improvement in your plan?

Scenario 2 response worksheet

Scenario 2

A sustained heatwave is on its way. Your community is about to experience a series of temperatures in the mid-forties, far above seasonal norms. A heat health alert has been issued six days in advance. Mean temperatures are to reach and exceed heat health alert thresholds for at least three consecutive days. Neighbouring municipalities in the region have been advised to monitor local conditions and take action in accordance with their own heatwave plans, service continuity plans and OH&S plans. It is the day before Christmas Eve, and your organisation is operating on a skeleton staff. (Thresholds for the heat health alert system can be found at <www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave>.)

Q1. What are the key tasks that your organisation should undertake at this point? Who will be responsible for implementing each action?

Q2. What management structure is appropriate at this stage to oversee these actions?

Q3. Have you identified any areas for improvement in your plan?

Scenario 3 response worksheet

Scenario 3

It is now day five of the heatwave event. There has been a considerable rise in electricity demand and your organisation has been advised of a program of power load-shedding, where power is deliberately shut off in selected areas (also known as rolling blackouts) in an attempt to control the situation. There is a risk of widespread outages across the region. In the coming week, council is planning a large outdoor event that usually attracts close to 2,000 revelers and starts at 10 am with live music and a traditional barbecue.

Q1. What are the key tasks that your organisation should undertake at this point, and who will be responsible for implementing each action?

Q2. What management structure is appropriate at this stage to oversee these actions?

Q3. Have you identified any areas for improvement in your plan?

Scenario 4 response worksheet

Scenario 4

Day seven of the heatwave brings some relief. Temperatures have dropped below the heat health threshold for the region. All looks cool for the next few days, but the Bureau of Meteorology is predicting another event hot on its heels. Members of your organisation and the community are concerned that not enough is being done to protect groups most at risk ahead of the next wave of hot weather.

Q1. What are the key tasks that your organisation should do at this point, and who will be responsible for implementing each action?

Q2. What management structure is appropriate at this stage to oversee these actions?

Q3. Have you identified any areas for improvement in your plan?