

Wakefield Regional Council Emergency Management Plan 2021



WAKEFIELD
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the Wakefield Regional Council area. We acknowledge the Kaurna, Ngadjuri and Narungga people as the traditional custodians of the land. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal peoples to Country. We also pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal peoples visiting or attending from other areas of Australia.

This document was prepared by the LGA Emergency Management Support Unit to support the delivery of the Council Ready Program and builds upon the Council Emergency Management Plan template developed by the Local Government Association of South Australia and SA State Emergency Service in 2017.

Council Ready received funding support under the Natural Disaster Resilience Program by the South Australian State Government and the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs, and from the LGA Mutual Liability Scheme.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	5
Purpose	5
Link to related Council plans.....	5
Scope and exclusions.....	6
Context	7
Community profile	7
Council and community values	9
Emergency Management	10
Emergency management – a shared responsibility	10
Emergency risk assessment	11
Emergency Management Plan	12
Disaster risk reduction	12
Incident operations	13
Recovery	14
Implementation arrangements	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emergencies can occur at any time with little warning, rapidly spread over designated boundaries and cause diverse and widespread impacts across affected communities. In recent years, the Wakefield Regional Council area has experienced the devastating Pinery bushfire (2015) and the state-wide extreme weather events (2016) that included property damage in Blyth, Wakefield River flooding and damage to infrastructure and properties.

Council understands new threats will emerge due to changing social, environmental and economic conditions. It is anticipated these may include increased extreme weather events such as storms, coastal inundation, flooding and bushfires.

Wakefield 2030 – the Council and community plan for the coming years – seeks to create ‘a great place to do business and a great place to belong’. Emergency events pose a risk to these aspirations. Through our Emergency Management Policy, this plan and operational arrangements, Council seeks to reduce the risks posed by emergencies.

Council will work in partnership with the community, businesses and industry in emergency management, as it strives to keep the community safe and healthy.

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) articulates the roles and responsibilities Local Government may play in emergency management planning. As well as the roles under the SEMP, the Local Government Emergency Management Framework (LGEMF) sets out roles for councils in areas of disaster risk reduction, incident operations and recovery.

Council has considered these in adopting its Emergency Management Policy. This plan supports the Policy by setting out Council’s emergency management priorities for disaster risk reduction, incident operations and recovery. These priorities are:

Disaster risk reduction

- Understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks
- Integrate disaster risk into existing plans and decision-making (e.g. strategic plans, risk frameworks, asset management plan, climate change plans)
- Partner with local stakeholders in addressing priority emergency risks
- Strengthen disaster resilience in communities through community development

Incident operations

- Develop a locally relevant risk-based suite of incident operational arrangements
- Build capability of council to participate in the Local Government Functional Support Group
- Participate in incident operations in accordance with the i-Responda operating platform

Recovery

- Provide leadership, co-ordination, and advocacy when the community is impacted by disasters
- Plan for recovery to establish the principles, structures, partnerships, and approaches that will guide Council
- Secure grants and other funding assistance to support disaster recovery

INTRODUCTION

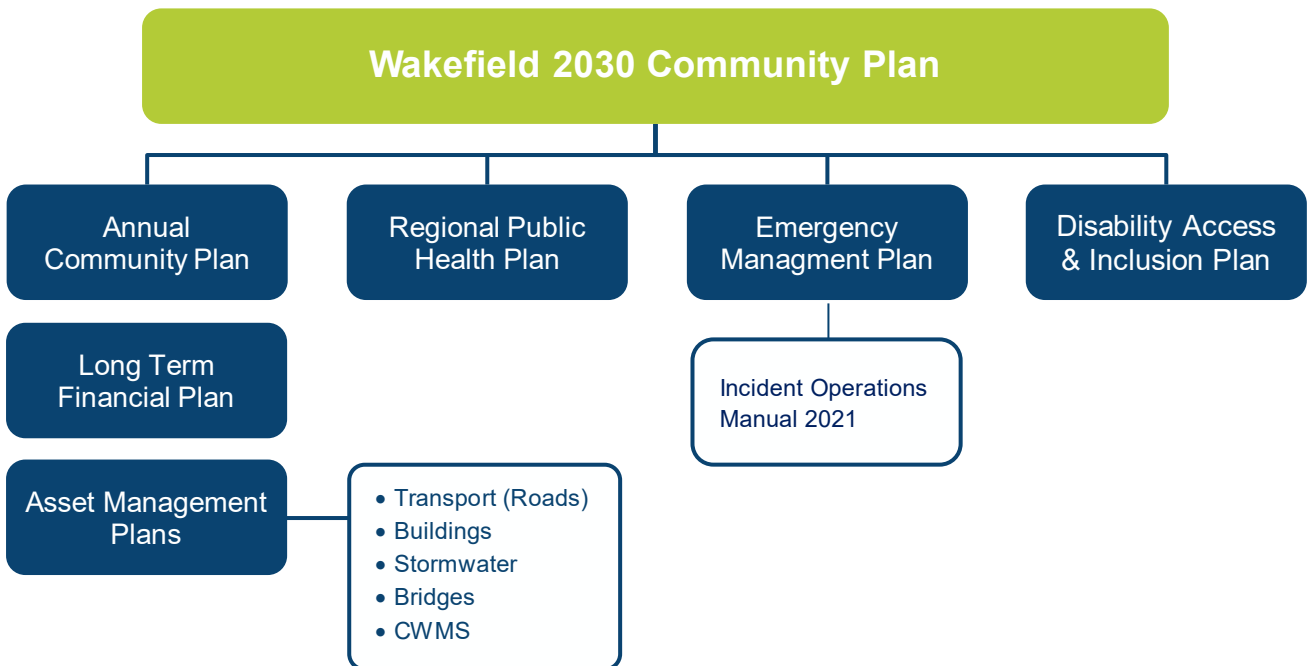
Purpose

This Emergency Management Plan establishes priorities for disaster risk reduction, maintaining incident operational capability and preparing for recovery. In accordance with the State Emergency Management Plan, Local Government Emergency Management Framework and the Emergency Management Planning Guide for SA Councils, the plan:

- Describes the context for the plan in terms of Council and community values, state emergency management arrangements and Council's partners in emergency management.
- Establishes links between the plan and other relevant Council or regional strategies.
- Identifies emergency risks in the region and possible impacts on Council and community values.

Link to related Council plans

The plan is linked to, and underpinned by, other Council plans and strategies.



Several key actions within the Wakefield 2030 Community Plan relate specifically to emergency management including:

- Infrastructure renewal actions for roads, community wastewater, bridges and stormwater which will, ultimately, reduce disaster risk.
- To work with external agencies to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the region.
- To develop, with the community, a region-wide emergency risk management plan that emphasises the role of individuals, Council and other agencies before, during and after an emergency.

However, through its broader liveability, economic and environmental strategies, the plan will also assist in building community connections and resilience in the longer term.

Scope and exclusions

The Council's Emergency Management Plan is limited to community emergency risks that are within its sphere of influence and responsibility. The plan does not address the management of internal emergency risk to operations or services as these are addressed in Council's Business Continuity Plan and other internal procedures.

CONTEXT

Community profile

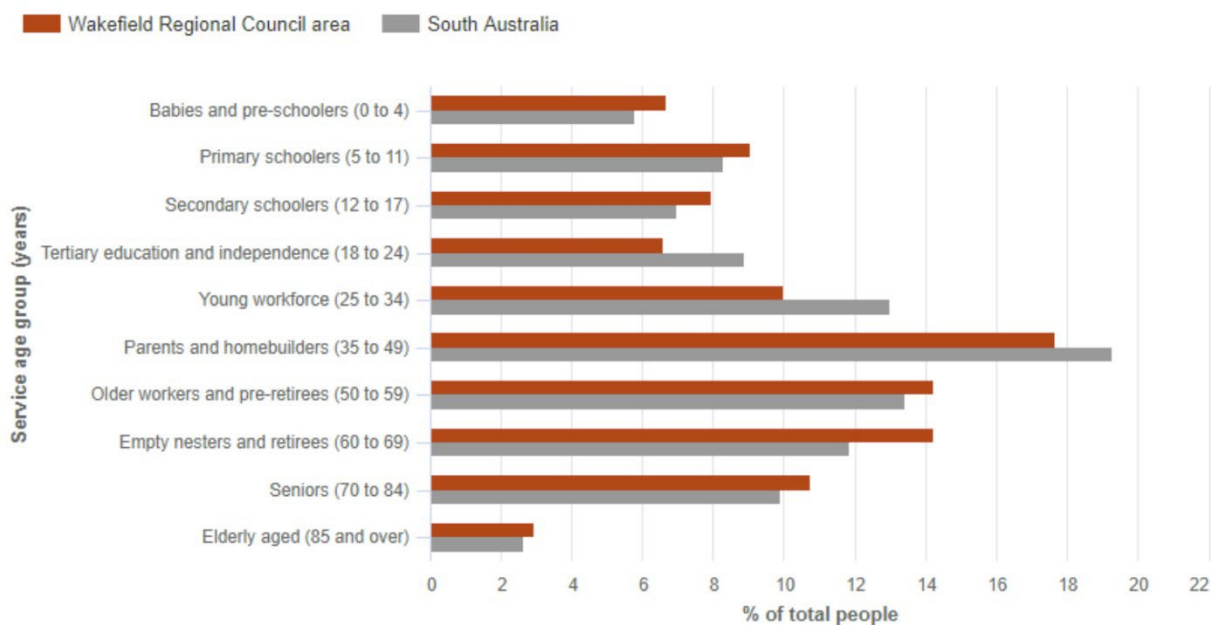
The Wakefield Regional Council area is predominantly rural, with townships at Balaklava, Blyth, Brinkworth, Hamley Bridge, Lochiel, Owen, Port Wakefield and Snowtown, and a number of smaller settlements. Rural land is used largely for farming and agriculture. The Council area encompasses a total land area of over 3,460 square kilometres.¹

Our People

The estimated population is 6,773 (2020).² The figure below shows that a slightly higher percentage of children and adolescents (0–17 years) and a lower percentage of 18–34 year old people live in the area compared to all of South Australia. Wakefield is also home to a higher percentage of older people (50–85+ years).

Age structure - service age groups, 2016

Total persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).

¹ Wakefield Regional Council. community profile, <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-yorke-mid-north/about?WebID=190>

² Wakefield Regional Council. community profile, <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-yorke-mid-north/about?WebID=190>

Our Economy

Agricultural production output in the region is valued at \$288,304,871. The largest commodity produced is livestock, which accounts for 42.0% of the area's total agricultural output in value terms.³

Disaster Resilience

The Australian Disaster Resilience Index rates disaster resilience in the region⁴ as low which indicates communities “*may be limited in their capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events, and are limited in their capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation.*”⁵

The Index uses eight disaster resilience factors:

 Social character	 Economic capital
 Planning and the built environment	 Emergency services
 Community capital	 Information access
 Governance and leadership	 Social and community engagement

The Index identifies disaster resilience strengths for the area are:

- Social character
- Community capital
- Social and community engagement

Barriers to disaster resilience are identified as:

- Planning and the built environment
- Economic capital
- Emergency services
- Information access
- Governance and leadership

³Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 2015-16. Cat. No. 7503.0

⁴ An SA2 is an ABS statistical collection area and does not align with local government boundaries,

⁵ Data Resilience Data Report Wakefield – Barunga West SA2

COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Council and community values are drivers for why Council is involved in emergency management, as the consequences of an emergency can undermine what is most important to the community.

A major community survey undertaken in early 2019 and significant engagement during development of the Wakefield 2030 Community Plan paint a clear picture of what the community values.

Council identified, with its community, a vision for the region:

Wakefield is a thriving and connected regional community known for its lifestyle, vibrant towns and economic prosperity. The region is growing, supported by quality assets and driven by a strong sense of pride and confidence. Wakefield is a great place to do business and a great place to belong.

Specific assets, services, places, spaces and attributes valued by the community include:

- Country lifestyle but close to the city
- Quality of life
- Friendly, caring community
- Agriculture
- Open space
- Sport and recreation
- Swimming pools
- Arts and culture
- Specific community art – e.g., Owen silo, Snowtown water tower
- Health services – e.g., Balaklava and Snowtown hospitals
- Aged care services
- Schools
- History and historic towns
- Family and friends
- Affordable housing
- Environment – including Halbury Parklands, Port Wakefield tidal lagoon, Rocks Reserve, Lake Bumbunga
- Safety and security
- Services that support the community
- Assets that support the community – including public halls
- Economic growth
- Wind farms
- Bowmans intermodal
- Tourism
- Volunteers

Wakefield 2030 includes strategies to encourage population growth and shows that Council is the custodian of significant assets – such as roads and footpaths, bridges, Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS), stormwater infrastructure and buildings that require significant expenditure.⁶

⁶ Wakefield 2030 Our Community Plan p.10

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The roles of local government in emergency management are informed by the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and the Local Government Emergency Management Framework (LGEMF). They are enabled by the Local Government Act 1999, which outlines the requirement for councils to consider risks (including emergency risks) as follows:

- Make informed decisions (section 6)
- Take measures to protect their area from natural hazards (section 7)
- Provide infrastructure for community and for development (section 7)
- Ensure the sustainability of the council's long-term financial performance (section 8)
- Assess the maintenance, replacement or development needs for infrastructure (section 122)
- Identify anticipated or predicted changes in any factors that make a significant contribution to the costs of the council's activities or operations (section 122)

The SEMF – which this plan supports – sets out the role of local government in emergency management as follows:

Local government has a fundamental enabling role in emergency management because of their strong relationships with local community networks and knowledge of locally available resources. Local governments have responsibilities, in partnership with state government, to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of their communities by participating in local emergency management response and recovery.

Emergency management – a shared responsibility

Emergency management is a shared responsibility, between a range of government and non-government agencies, Council, and the community.

South Australia's Disaster Resilience Strategy (2019-2024) identified the current highest priority as building the resilience of people and communities, defining resilience as the “*ability to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what happens*”⁷

Key partners of the Wakefield Regional Council are:

- Emergency services
- Local businesses and industries
- Local residents
- Regional groups (e.g., Regional Development Australia, Legatus Group of Councils etc)
- Community groups, such as town committees
- Aid agencies such as Red Cross

Council participates in regional emergency management planning through:

- Yorke and Mid North Zone Emergency Management Committee
- Flinders Mid- North Yorke Bushfire Management Area Committee

Council is also a participating organisation within the Local Government Functional Support Group which manages a coordinated local government response during emergencies, in line with the SEMF.

⁷ South Australia's Disaster Resilience Strategy 2019-2024 p.13

Emergency risk assessment

Council takes a risk-based approach to emergency management within the region. This considers the likelihood and consequence of an emergency and allows Council to prioritise and plan appropriately.

Council has undertaken an assessment to identify the most relevant risks to the Wakefield region.

This work builds upon the Zone Emergency Management Plan risk register for the Yorke and Mid North Emergency Management Zone that was developed using the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG).⁸ Council through the Zone Emergency Management Committee was a contributor to this work.

To better understand the Council area's emergency risk profile a workshop of Council employees was held, and participants ranked the identified hazards – along with drought – based on the likelihood and consequence of these events occurring.

This showed the following were **priority** emergency risks for Council:

- Bushfire
- Drought
- Extreme weather – storm

Other emergency risks were:

- Extreme weather – heat
- Pandemic
- Flood
- Animal and plant disease
- Earthquake
- Coastal erosion

The workshop mapped these emergency risks against the Council and community values, as described above, and also identified a range of vulnerabilities:

- Ageing population
- Export trade
- Poor public transport
- Lack of volunteers
- Ageing assets
- Poor phone coverage in some areas

The group discussed a range of activities that could be undertaken – or changes made – to reduce risks and address vulnerabilities, including advocacy for mobile phone coverage through the Federal Black Sport Program, Climate Change Adaptation Planning, roadside vegetation management, infrastructure investment, volunteer programs and stormwater planning. All of these initiatives are captured within Council's Wakefield 2030 plan.

⁸ NERAG provides a contextualised emergency risk assessment methodology consistent with the AS/NZS 13000:2009.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Disaster risk reduction

Definition

Strengthening community resilience and reducing disaster risks are the key priorities for council before an emergency. This involves taking action to avoid the creation of new disaster risks, reducing existing disaster risks, and managing any residual risk by being prepared. Proactive management of disaster risks reduces the need to respond to and recover from emergencies.

Disaster risk reduction includes both eliminating and reducing exposure to hazards (prevention), and accepting that some emergencies will happen (mitigation). Accepting that emergencies will happen means that we need to reduce their impact, or increasing the resilience of the community exposed to the impact.

While councils undertake specific actions to build community resilience for emergencies and reduce disaster risks, most of the activity happens through everyday business activities.

Council activities that contribute to disaster risk reduction

Wakefield 2030 outlines a number of priority projects that will build community resilience and support disaster risk reduction. Council currently undertakes the following activities to reduce the disaster risk to its communities.

- Land-use planning
- Public health measures (e.g. immunisation food safety, wastewater management, hygiene and sanitation)
- Bushfire Management Planning
- Land management
- Road maintenance, renewal and upgrade
- Traffic management
- Stormwater infrastructure maintenance, renewal and upgrade
- Tree / vegetation management (roadside, parks and reserves)
- Building safety
- Fire prevention
- Participation in Bushfire Management Committees
- Maintain asset, liability and WHS insurance
- Community development
- Community centres
- Libraries
- Provision of public information
- Flood barriers / mitigation works

Council's priorities

Council's priorities for disaster risk reduction are:

1. Understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks.
2. Integrate disaster risk into existing plans and decision-making.
3. Partner with local stakeholders in addressing priority emergency risks.
4. Strengthen disaster resilience in communities through community development.

Incident operations

Definition

Council will support its community, other councils and the South Australian emergency management arrangements immediately before, during and immediately after an incident.

When participating in incident operations, Council will do so within the scope of its emergency management policy, the i-Responda operating platform, the Local Government Incident Operations Protection Guide and, when appropriate, as a member of the Local Government Functional Support Group.

The specific procedures which outline how Council coordinates its emergency operational activity are detailed in Council's Incident Operations Arrangements document, which sits alongside council's Business Continuity Plan.

Council activities that contribute to incident operations

Council currently undertakes the following activities to contribute to incident operations that support the emergency services and their communities.

- Environmental health services
- Waste management
- Traffic management
- Flood mitigation
- Community facilities
- Plant and equipment
- Community networks
- Coastal management
- Vegetation management
- Plant or equipment to support emergency services
- Specialised and skilled staff
- Communication

Council's priorities

Council's priorities for incident operations are:

1. Maintain a locally relevant risk-based suite of Incident Operational Arrangements.
2. Build capability to participate in the Local Government Functional Support Group.
3. Participate in incident operations in accordance with the i-Responda operating platform.

Recovery

Definition

Recovery is the process of restoring emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, reconstructing physical infrastructure, and restoring the environment following an emergency. It can take weeks, months, or even years depending on the scale of the emergency.

After a major emergency, recovery becomes a 'whole of Council' concern that impacts upon all aspects of the organisation and requires a level of responsiveness to changing community needs that may go beyond 'business as usual'.

Council does not undertake recovery alone. It is a shared effort between the affected communities, all levels of government and the not-for-profit and private sectors.

Council activities that contribute to recovery

Council will provide leadership and support to the community in recovery. Council will undertake the following activities to contribute to recovery.

- Environmental health services
- Animal management
- Waste management
- Road maintenance, renewal and upgrade
- Traffic management
- Stormwater infrastructure maintenance, renewal and upgrade
- Vegetation management (roadside, parks and reserves)
- Community development
- Events
- Community grant programs
- Building maintenance, renewal and upgrade
- Advocacy
- Communication

Council's priorities

Council's priorities for recovery are:

1. Provide leadership, co-ordination and advocacy when the community is impacted by disasters.
2. Support the identification and assessment of community impacts.
3. Secure grants and other funding assistance to support disaster recovery.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Council's Senior Leadership Group will ensure this plan is resourced by:

- Presenting specific emergency risk management actions to Council for budget, as required
- Ensuring staff resources are available and appropriately trained to manage emergency risks
- Maintaining the services required for reducing disaster risk, managing incidents and recovery

Once adopted by Council, the plan will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Group.