Local Government Victoria  
Department of Environment, Land,  
Water and Planning  
PO Box 500  
Melbourne VIC 8002  

LGV.emergencies@delwp.vic.gov.au  

Dear Sir/Madam  

Re: Gannawarra Shire Council submission on Councils and Emergencies Directions paper  

On behalf of Gannawarra Shire Council, I thank Local Government Victoria for the opportunity to respond to the Councils and Emergencies Directions Paper.  

The following comments align to each relevant blue text description:  

1. **Lead an all-agencies approach to community-based risk assessment and planning including compliance with relevant legislation and policy at the municipal level;**  

2. **Prepare and maintain municipal emergency management plans and subplans and**  

3. **Appoint a municipal emergency management planning committee.**  

The Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) process is not a Council led process. VICSES currently **leads** the Gannawarra CERA process, Council **supports** the process by facilitating workshops etc.  

Facilitating planning at a local level (including appointment of MEMPCs) is an appropriate role for councils. In relation to the MEMPC, this is a multi-agency plan prepared by the MEMPC, not a Council Plan. Without support (such as the current MERP funds), Planning Committees, Plans and VICSES Audit administration tasks will be a challenge to resource for this Council.  

4. **Support hazard-specific risk assessment to inform plans and community resilience-building strategies, using local knowledge and information based on community needs.**  

Gannawarra Shire Council routinely supports control agencies with hazard-specific risk assessment and planning but is not aware of a requirement to implement resilience-building strategies. Council currently communicates emergency management related information through existing community engagement process, eg community planning groups, progress associations and the Gannawarra Resilience Network.
5. **Lead** implementation and coordination of specific risk treatments on private and council land in partnership with emergency management agencies, including flood/fire management, maintaining a register of at-risk groups.

Gannawarra Shire Council is not/cannot **lead** implementation and coordination of specific risk treatments on private land.

27. **Provide and staff a recovery centre.**

Staffing a recovery centre, particularly relating to protracted events can be extremely challenging for small councils such as Gannawarra.

41. **Support response agencies to effectively deliver emergency response services locally.**

The nature and extent of work undertaken by Gannawarra Shire Council to provide this type of support is dependent on its capability and capacity at the time and particular circumstances of the event.

44. **Conduct local recovery activities**

Whilst councils are the most appropriate agency to coordinate recovery, appropriate capability and capacity of this Council cannot be guaranteed.

59. **Clear blocked drains and local roads including by removing trees on council land and on roads.**

Gannawarra Shire Council does not currently clear blocked drains belonging to private landowners or another authority and resourcing this work into the future could not be guaranteed.

61. **Support agencies to coordinate volunteer efforts after emergencies.**

Council’s capacity to coordinate local volunteer efforts after emergencies, for private fencing damage cannot be guaranteed and will largely depend on the scale of the emergency and resources available at the time.

63. **Support agencies to coordinate and manage services to meet the immediate needs of affected livestock locally.**

Gannawarra Shire Council has limited capacity to support and manage disposal of dead livestock in an emergency event.

85. **Engage the community in developing and delivering recovery activities including by appointing community development and/or community recovery officers.**

Gannawarra Shire Council would require external funding to appoint a community development and/or community recovery officer where the scale of the emergency is too great for the function to be undertaken by staff in existing related roles.

86. **Support agencies in line with relevant fire legislation and regulations by:**

- Issuing permits to burn
- Meeting the costs of providing, installing, marking and maintaining all fire plugs in the municipality.

Gannawarra Shire Council supports a review of the Schedule 13 ‘permit to burn’ arrangements.

Gannawarra Shire Council currently meets the costs of providing, installing, marking and maintaining only fire plugs that it requires to be installed in the Gannawarra Shire, not all fire plugs in the Shire.
94. Initially assess impacts on essential infrastructure and services. Councils are not responsible for initial impact assessments.

104. Coordinate relief agencies and the community to develop local relief plans. Gannawarra Shire Council is not aware of any current requirement to develop a local relief plan and is currently not resourced to develop local relief plans throughout the municipality.

140. Coordinate the rebuilding and redevelopment of council and private assets. Gannawarra Shire Council’s involvement in the rebuilding and redevelopment of private assets is limited to the building and planning permit process.

141. Restore Council-owned assets, prioritising business operations and commercial or community facilities essential for community wellbeing or recovery activities. Gannawarra Shire Council is not aware of any current requirement for restoration works to be prioritised in this manner. Council’s capacity to restore assets cannot be guaranteed and will be dependent on available funds and funding.

142. Coordinate clean-up activities including the disposal of dead animals. Gannawarra Shire Council accepts responsibility for cleaning up Council owned or managed land but is not aware of any current requirement for it to clean up private property, nor can it guarantee capacity to coordinate disposal of dead animals.

In relation to black text descriptions, Council wishes to make the following general comments:

- Gannawarra Shire Council would welcome a review of arrangements for vulnerable people in emergencies as it believes these fit more appropriately with another agency, eg State (DHHS) or Federal Government. With the transition of aged care and disability to the Federal Government and the implementation of portals such as My Aged Care, Council will not be as aware of those most vulnerable into the future.

- Gannawarra Shire Council supports emergency management related roles and functions that align to core Council business. Council’s emergency management risk profile does not warrant, nor is Council in a position to appoint and train emergency management specific personnel.

- Council’s capacity to undertake roles not required under legislation, policy and planning obligations cannot be guaranteed, particularly during large scale or protracted events.

- Council is well placed to support lead agencies with provision of local intelligence, access to community facilities and available Council resources, but is most often not in a position to lead or coordinate activities outside the realm of usual Council functions and the knowledge, expertise and experience of its staff.

If you require further information in relation to this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on [redacted].