

Mildura Rural City Council

Community Relief and Recovery Plan COVID-19



Mildura Rural City Council

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Glossary of Acronyms

DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
CHO	Chief Health Officer
MRCC	Mildura Rural City Council
LGA	Local Government Area
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
CRREC	Community Relief and recovery Executive Committee
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
SCHS	Sunraysia Community Health Services
DET	Department of Education and Training
HUM	Hands Up Mallee
GEAS	Gender Equity Action Sunraysia
SMECC	Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council
MSAU-MDVS	Mallee Sexual Assault Service – Mallee Domestic Violence Service
DJR	Department of Justice and Community Safety
MASP	Mallee Accommodation and Support Service
MDAS	Mallee District Aboriginal Service
MBPH CYMHS	Mildura Base Public Hospital Child Youth Mental Health Service
MCH	Mildura City Heart
ERG	Economic Recovery Group
SunFRCS	Sunraysia Rural Financial Counselling Services
RDV	Regional Development Victoria

1.0 Municipal Relief and Recovery Overview

1.1 Introduction

The World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 (Novel Corona Virus 19) as a Global Pandemic on Thursday 12 March 2020. The Victorian State Government declared a State of Emergency on Monday 16 March 2020. A pandemic constitutes an emergency under the *Emergency Management Act 1986*. The Emergency Management Manual Victoria details the emergency roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to the prevention, mitigation, and risk reduction, response and recovery components of emergencies.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the control agency for human illness/epidemics. The *Victorian Health Management Plan for Pandemic October 2014* is a sub-plan of the DHHS public health emergency management arrangements, such as pandemic, lies with the Chief Health Officer (CHO) through the Communicable Disease Control Unit of DHHS. The CHO also has a range of powers under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

As highlighted in the Plan's introduction, further federal and state plans are currently being developed in light of the current Coronavirus pandemic. This document aligns to the relevant framework and plans listed, with flexibility to incorporate future plans as they become available.

1.2 Commonwealth Plans

- Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) February 2020
- National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic – Council of Australian Governments April 2011
- Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza – Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing August 2019

1.3 State Plans

- COVID-19 Pandemic plan for the Victorian Health Sector - Victorian Government March 2020
- Victorian Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic – Victorian Government 2015
- Community Support and Recovery Sub Plan – Victorian Department of Human Services March 2008
- Victorian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza – Victorian Department of Health & Human Services October 2014
- Emergency Management Manual Victoria – Victorian Government.

1.4 Purpose

The Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) Community Relief and Recovery Plan COVID-19 has been developed as a supporting document to the MRCC Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). It is designed to provide clarity on the responsibilities, expectations and arrangements to effectively coordinate relief and recovery services across the municipality.

The Community Relief and Recovery Plan COVID-19 is a high level document and is intended as an overarching guide to inform more detailed planning at individual practice and organisational level.

The aim of relief and recovery is to support community safety and resilience by successfully navigating the impacts of an emergency. MRCC has responsibility for the coordination and delivery of relief and recovery at a Municipal level. This plan will focus particularly on the social and economic environments which are most impacted in this pandemic.

1.5 Aim

The Community Relief and Recovery Plan COVID-19 will focus on providing deliverables at a Municipal level which includes:

- Alignment of arrangements with the State and Regional Relief and Recovery Plans.
- A localised relief and recovery framework that details the arrangements, expectations, roles and responsibilities of:
 - Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC)
 - Relief and recovery agencies
 - Community

1.6 Objectives

Preparedness	Have arrangements and actions been put in place to reduce the pandemic impact.
Containment	Prevent transmission, implement infection control measures, and provide support services to people within the municipality (as directed).
Maintain essential services	Provision for business continuity in the face of staff absenteeism and rising demands on local government services.
Mass vaccination	Assist in providing vaccination services to community and to our contracted councils/agencies (as directed) when a pandemic vaccine becomes available.
Communication	Develop media and communication messages, in line with whole of government messages. Inform the community and staff of any changes to normal municipal service delivery.
Community support and recovery	Ensure a comprehensive approach to emergency recovery planning in the municipal emergency management plan, with specific focus on a pandemic.

2.0 A Social Inclusion Approach to Recovery Planning

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the COVID-19 outbreak affects all segments of the population but will be particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations. This includes people living in poverty situations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, women, older persons, people with a disability, youth, children and other vulnerable communities. We must be mindful of intersectionality when planning, as we recognise that identity markers (e.g. “woman” and “black”) do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others.

Early evidence indicates that the health and economic impacts of the virus are being experienced disproportionately by people on lower incomes. People experiencing homelessness may be unable to safely shelter and are therefore highly exposed to the danger of the virus. Refugees, migrants, or people who are displaced also stand to suffer disproportionately both from the pandemic and its aftermath. Those who are impacted by domestic violence or child maltreatment will in many cases have their issues compounded by social isolation and other impacts of COVID-19.

Addressing the gendered impacts of the pandemic is critical to ensuring that the limited gains made in the past decades toward gender equality are not rolled back. Research about the impact of disaster across the globe and in Australia following the Black Saturday Bushfires, has highlighted how gender roles become more rigidly adhered to during disaster. Mental and physical health is impacted as well as safety consequences for both men and women, including higher incidents of conflict and violence.

If not properly addressed through policy, the social crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic may increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination and global unemployment in the medium and long term.

This plan aims to ensure that we take into account these factors and include them in the planning and delivery of the Relief and Recovery Plan.

Exerts from this section are taken from the following article and adapted for our community.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included-COVID-19.html>

3.0 A Community Engagement Focus to Planning

Mildura Rural City Council has a commitment to accountable, transparent and responsive decision making, which is informed by consistently well-planned communication, consultation and engagement between community and Council.

Council are legislated to conduct effective community engagement in accordance with the *Victorian Local Government Act 2020* and we have a commitment to community centered practice through systematic consultation and engagement processes.

Community engagement and consultation will be a focus of the Relief and Recovery Plan development and delivery and we make a commitment to engage with our community, particularly those most impacted by COVID-19, organisations, businesses, services and stakeholders to ensure all voices are heard.

4.0 Municipal Profile

Situated in Victoria's North West at the intersection of South Australia and New South Wales, Mildura Rural City Council covers around 10 per cent of the state's area or 22,000 square kilometers and incorporates the major regional centre of Mildura and a number of outlying communities

MRCC MUNICIPAL MAP



Mildura is the major service centre for towns and communities in our region including those across the border into New South Wales. The majority of the population resides in the Mildura City area (30,647) or one of the key satellite townships of Irymple (5,015), Red Cliffs (4,626), Merbein (2,671) or Nichols Point (1,463). Ouyen (1,083) is the largest rural town and the central business centre for residents living across the Mallee Track. The remaining population is dispersed across rural communities and on farming properties with populations less than 1,000. This includes the remaining townships of the Mallee Track (Murrayville, Underbool, and Walpeup etc.), the Millewa (Cullulleraine, Meringur and Werrimull) and other small towns such as Merbein South, Cabarita, Cardross, Koorlong, Nangiloc, Colignan, and Yelta.

Mildura Rural City Council has a diverse and aging population of 53,878 (2016 census data). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Census shows 3.8 per cent of our Municipality's local population are Aboriginal or Torres Straits Islander, compared to 2.8 per cent of the Australian and 0.2 per cent of the Victorian population.

Of those residing in the LGA, 10.8 per cent (5,813) of the population were born overseas, representing 74 different countries. In comparing our Local Government Area's (LGA's) level of overall social advantage and disadvantage compared to all 79 LGAs in 2015, Mildura is ranked fifth highest in regards to disadvantage.

For many years, certain cohorts within the Mildura Local Government Area (LGA) have been experiencing significant levels of entrenched socio-economic disadvantage in terms of income, education, occupation, wealth, and living conditions. Based on the 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing the Mildura LGA was allocated an Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage score of 935 compared to the Victorian average of 1,000 (where a lower score represents greater levels of disadvantage). This 'score' sees the Mildura LGA ranked as the 5th most disadvantaged LGA of the 79 LGAs in Victoria. These figures have remained constant between the 2011 and 2016 Census periods. The high level of disadvantage essentially means there will be a higher proportion of the population who are

more vulnerable to both the health and economic impact of a pandemic resulting in poor health and wellbeing outcomes in both the emergency and recovery phase.

Additionally, the Mildura LGA is not reaching the Victorian standards in preventing chronic disease, has low measures of self-reported good health and are below comparable measures in over 100 indicators in the Victorian Health Domain measures, aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

Industries identified as key drivers of the local economy include the primary production of wool, cereal crops, viticulture and horticulture and associated production industries such as wineries and fruit and vegetable processing. Many of the local townships and communities are dependent on these primary industries for their sustainability and growth.

The tourism industry is emerging as a major generator of income particularly in the regional centre of Mildura and adjoining areas. More recently the region is experiencing growing investment in renewable energy production.

Preliminary Emerging Impacts of COVID-19 on the Municipality

Social Indicators (already entrenched disadvantage)

Poor Social indicator levels significantly limits a communities capacity to pay for services, infrastructure and to engage effectively with one another. Through preliminary conversations and data obtained since the beginning of the pandemic, our community are already seeing impacts in areas of homelessness, family violence, impacts in our Aboriginal communities and the disability community. These are not new issues for our community, but the pandemic in compounding and increasing the numbers and intensity of issues.

Tourism

Visitor tourism is very significant to the Mildura LGA economy and accounts for over 229,000 visits per year, with an annual spend around \$320M. With an expected estimated 80 per cent plus reduction in visitation numbers this number could be as low as 46,000 for the next 12 months, with a corresponding impact of over \$255M from the region's economy.

Sports Tourism

The Mildura region stages over 100 events and festivals ranging from civic, community, arts and culture, leisure and sporting events.

Approximately 22 per cent of events in Mildura Rural City Council are sporting events In March-May 2020 alone, twelve annual sport tourism events were cancelled due to COVID-19. Tourism Research Australia calculates the overnight regional Victoria nightly spend rate of \$172 p/p p/n to measure the economic impact of an event. Based on previous year's attendance figures, these four sporting tourism events alone, had a negative impact of over \$2.5M on the Mildura economy.

- Mildura Ski Club – Mildura 100 Ski Race – approx. \$2M per year
- Mildura Rowing Club – Mildura Easter Rowing Regatta – approx. \$165K per year
- Mildura Lawn Tennis Club – Mildura Easter Tennis Tournament – approx. \$206K per year.
- Sunraysia Drag Racing Club – Easter event. Approx. \$165,000 per year.

Poverty

Mildura's median weekly household income (above) is just over \$150/week above this poverty line, with over a quarter (27 per cent) of our households significantly below this figure at \$650/week.

More than 30 per cent of persons living in the Mildura LGA are in rental accommodation, compared to 28.7 per cent for the Victorian average.

Unemployment

Mildura almost exclusively over the previous 10 year period, has displayed a higher than average unemployment rate, relative to Australia. As a result of the Covid restrictions, unemployment soared between March-May. The region had an additional 1,500+ people claiming Jobseeker payments, with over 4,500 now on this benefit, which doesn't include those on Youth Allowance (almost 700 young people), which grew by 65 per cent. Over 2,500 jobs have been lost to date. As at the end of June, an article produced by Mildura Regional Development indicates an UE rate of 7.1 per cent. These figures do not highlight chronic underemployment, where the region relies on a casual, part time and weekend workforce, now severely affected as a cross border community, in terms of agricultural laboring positions, which are still not exempted under recent specialist exemptions from NSW.

5.0 Relief and Recovery Plan Preparation

5.1 Principles of Emergency Relief

This plan reflects the municipality's commitment to implementing relief services in alignment with the Victorian principles for the coordination and delivery of relief services. The principles provide context for relief preparations, clarity of the expectations surrounding relief during an event and a benchmark for the evaluation of relief following an emergency/pandemic.

The principles for the coordination and delivery of relief are:

- Emergency/pandemic affected communities receive essential support to meet their basic and immediate needs
- Relief assistance is delivered in a timely manner
- Relief promotes community safety and minimises further physical and psychological harm
- Relief and response agencies communicate clear, relevant, timely and tailored information and advice to communities about relief services, through multiple appropriate channels.
- Relief services recognise community diversity
- Relief is adaptive, based on continuing assessment of needs
- Relief supports community responsibility and resilience
- Relief is coordinated, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Relief services are integrated into emergency management arrangements

*Reference-MRCC Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

5.2 Relief and Recovery Planning

The response phase of an emergency can be a whole of government, integrated tiered approach that requires transparency, cooperation and collaboration across the major stakeholders. This includes those agencies identified with responsibilities under the Act, as well as those who provide essential support and services.

To activate and deliver services in a coordinated manner that has the most value to each unique emergency situation, it is essential that an agreed understanding and a strong commitment to the stages of preparedness, response and relief/recovery is clearly articulated and demonstrated between the key response, relief/recovery agencies and support services.

At a Municipal level this includes developing and maintaining relationships, processes and protocols that cover the phases and scale of possible events and identifies the probable impacts on local relief and recovery.

When transitioning from relief to recovery, planning will focus on an assessment of the incident impacts to determine the influences on the recovery environment and functions.

6.0 Response, Relief and Recovery Interface - A Community-Focused Relief Model

The image below models the overlapping phases of an emergency event and can be used as a guide in preparedness, response and relief/recovery emergency management planning. It is utilised at a state and regional emergency management planning level and therefore provides consistency across all tiers in managing the emergency.

This plan acknowledges that relief is a shared responsibility that requires a community centered approach. It recognises all communities have valuable insight into their levels of resilience in preparing for, experiencing and moving on from an emergency.

6.1 MRCC Local Relief Framework

<p style="text-align: center;">Individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop personal resilience Have 'Readiness' plans and prepare Communicate with at risk and vulnerable neighbours Seek information Connect with family and friends Stay in touch Activate community networks 	<p style="text-align: center;">Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop community based resilience Activate community networks Engage community leaders Harness local knowledge and skills Active involvement in and ownership of relief actions and communications Plan for transition to recovery
<p style="text-align: center;">Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have business continuity plans in place Provide access to essential services, goods and resources Provide technical skills and knowledge Support community and consider affected peoples situations Activate industry networks Plan for transition to recovery Collaborate with emergency services and community 	<p style="text-align: center;">Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and coordinate response to emergencies (Control Agency) Provide specialist skills, supports and services Sharing valuable information and data Activate networks and community connections Communicate key messages Share information and knowledge Fulfil emergency relief responsibilities and/or commitments Participate in preparation and mitigation Have appropriate policies, process and procedures in place Support community-led activities Plan for transition to recovery.
<p style="text-align: center;">Non - Government Organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage volunteers Provide specialist skills, supports and services Utilise networks and community connections Communicate key messages Share information and knowledge Fulfil emergency relief responsibilities and/or commitments Participate in preparation and mitigation Have appropriate policies, processes and procedures in place Support community-led relief activities Plan for transition to recovery 	<p style="text-align: center;">Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead local preparation, mitigation and coordination of relief services Activate and monitor relief services and needs Communicate with, connect and listen to individuals, families, community, businesses, agencies and organisations Have appropriate arrangements, policies, processes and procedures in place Fulfilling emergency relief responsibilities and/or commitments Implement legislative requirements Support community-led activities Plan for transition to recovery

6.2 Environments for Recovery

The Emergency Management Victoria Environments Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Local Government recommends the following environments to assist to provide the scope of recovery planning and coordination at a functional level in the following:

- Social Environment
- Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Economic Environment
- Agricultural Environment.

The LGA's recovery actions and activities as described in this document align with two areas of recovery - Economic and Social. These Environments have been heavily impacted in the pandemic and have been chosen as the priority areas of focus. The Environments will be detailed later in this plan but below is an overview of each.

6.3 Social Environment

The people, social, health and community environment refers to the impact that an emergency may have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, neighbourhoods and the community fabric. This includes the main elements of safety and wellbeing, health and medical, psychosocial support, targeted programs for specific groups including children, youth, men and women, individualised support programs and community support programs.

6.4 Economic Environment

The Economic Environment considers the direct and indirect impacts that the event may have on business, production and the broader regional economy. Economic recovery can operate at a number of levels, ranging from; Microeconomic that addresses the needs of individuals and households, Enterprise-level activities which assist business and industry and macroeconomic where consequences of the economic impact of the emergency on the broader economy are monitored and addressed by both government and the private sector.

7.0 Council's Roles and Responsibilities in Recovery Planning

7.1 Community Support and Recovery

The key recovery activities to be carried out in the event of a human pandemic by Council are:

- Keeping the community informed e.g. information lines, newsletters, websites and other means, as appropriate
- Establishing and staffing recovery/information centre(s)
- Forming and leading Municipal/Community Recovery Committee(s)
- Providing and managing community development services
- Providing and/or co-ordinating volunteer helpers
- Providing personal support services, such as counselling and advocacy
- Providing material aid and a range of in-home assistance
- Assisting with public appeals
- Post-impact assessment – evaluate progress to improve effectiveness.

DHHS has developed a *Victorian Action Plan for Human Pandemic: Community Support and Recovery Plan*, which places emphasis on the vital role that municipalities will play in supporting communities during a human influenza pandemic.

8.0 Public Health

Local government performs important public health roles during normal day-to-day business.

During a human pandemic this role may be escalated to include:

- Conducting extraordinary vaccination sessions
- Distributing public information and advice
- Assessing the impact of the pandemic in the municipality and assisting the State Government to develop and implement strategies to maintain public health

9.0 Business Continuity

Municipalities need to ensure they are able to continue to deliver essential local services subsequently impacting on our communities.

During a pandemic, Council will need to ensure important community support services are maintained, such as home and community care programs, maternal and child health services, waste management and other regulatory services

Council acknowledges that emergency recovery can continue long after the event and that emergencies/pandemics impact and disrupt the normal relationships between communities and service providers, this includes Council's relationship with residents.

10.0 Recovery Structure

10.1 Governance

Under the Emergency Management Manual Victoria Part 7, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the nominated control agency for public health emergencies in Victoria and has appointed a State Controller – Health.

Under the Emergency Management Manual Victoria, Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and DHHS have responsibility for coordination of emergency relief at state and regional levels respectively; and local governments have responsibility at the local level. Support agencies including Australian Red Cross, The Salvation Army, Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry and Foodbank Victoria play a critical role in supporting provision of emergency relief to Victorian people with needs due to COVID-19.

10.2 Approach to Recovery

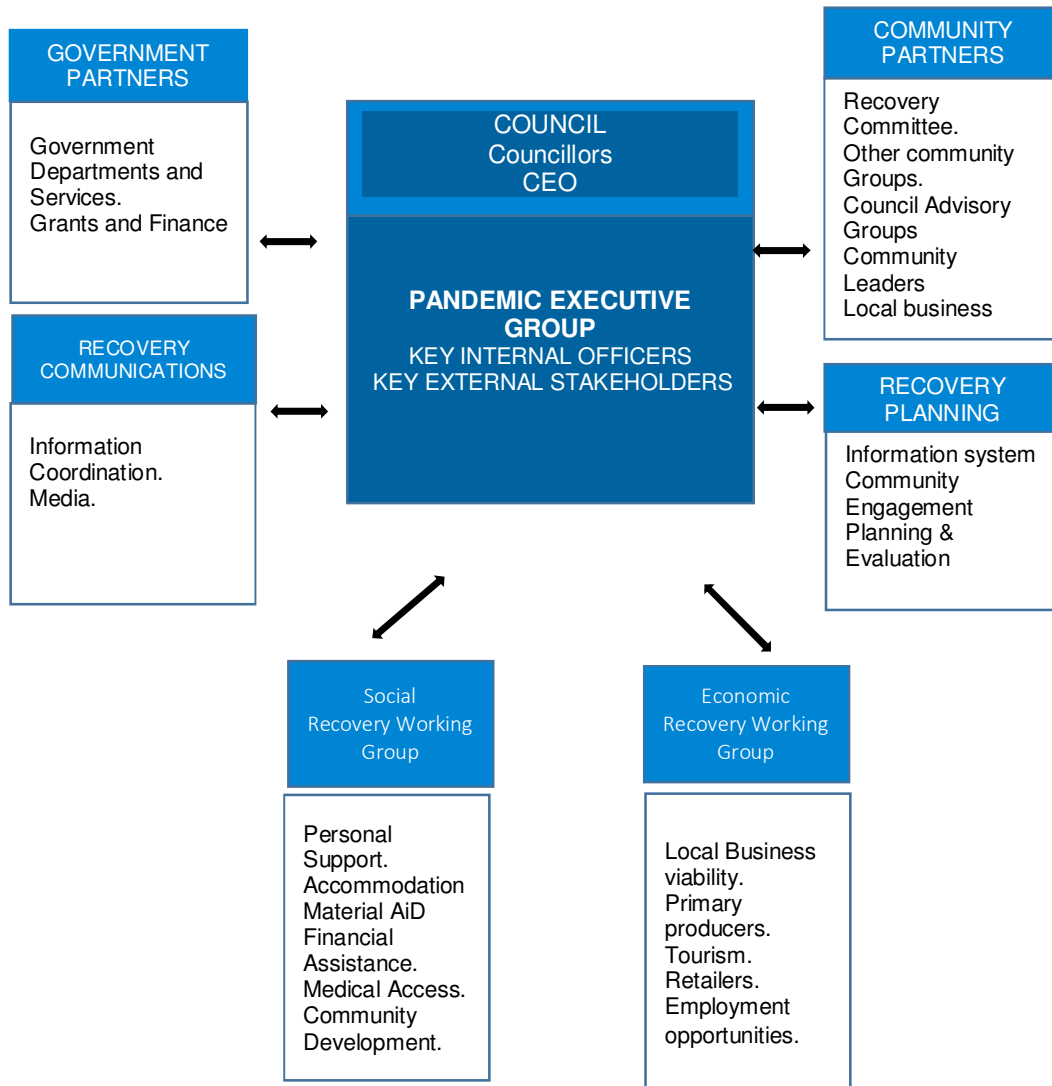
The recovery structure is implemented and led by Council who will facilitate the Municipal coordination of recovery by activating a multi-agency and integrated approach. This approach will:

- Ensure agencies and organisations involved in the management, coordination and service delivery undertake recovery operations in a planned, coordinated and adaptive framework.
- Recognise the complex and dynamic nature of the incident in conjunction with other recent incidents and the impacts on affected individuals, families and communities.
- Support and build on community, individual and organisational capacity.
- Be community focused and consequence driven across the five environments as outlined above.

10.3 Local, Regional and State Roles and Responsibilities

Tier	Key Agencies	Roles and Responsibilities
Local	Councils and Agency relief partners	Provision and/or coordination of relief services at the local level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community engagement activities ▪ Coordination of local groups and volunteers ▪ Provision of local advice, direction, information and ▪ Services through local communication channels as a primary source of information. ▪ Provide regular information and report identified ▪ issues to region ▪ Provision of animal welfare services
Regional	As per the State Operational Arrangements – COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional coordination ▪ Issues discussion/resolution and escalation ▪ Information and communications flow relating to relief and recovery ▪ Reporting of identified issues and analysis to state ▪ Assurance ▪ Capacity monitoring
State	State Control Centre As per the State Operational Arrangements – COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic emergency operation coordination ▪ Coordination of state-based emergency activity (i.e., food packages, PFA and accommodation) ▪ Liaison with Regional Recovery Coordinators ▪ Coordination of State Relief and Recovery Team meetings ▪ Monitoring Emergency Relief plan actions ▪ SCT strategic discussion (information flow) and management of residual risks for resolution ▪ Collation and dissemination of reporting ▪ Ensuring the stability of supply chains ▪ Coordination of animal welfare partners

10.4 Municipal Management Recovery Framework



*Reference- Disaster Recovery Toolkit For Local Government 02 Recovery: Readiness: preparation for recovery before a disaster

10.5 Local Recovery Networks

Council is dependent on robust and resilient local services, community and business networks that can be activated and engaged in the recovery process.

The Community Relief and Recovery Executive Committee and the Social and Economic Recovery Working Groups include an identified group of agencies, organisations, businesses and community groups that are invited to support recovery planning, coordination and service delivery. Some or all, may be engaged to provide expertise, resources or services as required. Some do have statutory roles and responsibilities, however all are valuable potential partners.

Attention will deliberately be drawn to gender equity when establishing the membership of the action teams to ensure women are represented and a gendered lens is applied when developing the actions and implementing the work. Emerging information is revealing that women are over-represented regarding the impact of the pandemic and underrepresented in Federal and State Response and Recovery Planning.

10.6 Community Relief and Recovery Executive Committee (CRREC)

The CRREC will provide a strategic leadership platform that adopts a collaborative multi agency approach to address the current and accumulative impacts within each community and interest group. The committee will also address the recovery support and assistance needs of those impacted by the event.

A Terms of Reference for the CRREC would include, but are not limited to:

- Support the transition from response/relief to recovery ensuring agencies and organisations involved in the management, coordination and service delivery undertake recovery operations in a planned, coordinated and adaptive framework
- Ensure linkages between stakeholders for effective information sharing and relationships (Municipal and Community)
- Ensure that priority issues are escalated to the most appropriate body or authority and their responses are communicated to relevant stakeholders. The MRM will be responsible for providing regular feedback and situational updates on recovery to the delegated team
- Ensure stakeholders implement the adopted communication and engagement strategies. Develop a resourcing plan for the recovery process
- Act on items and actions in the Relief and Recovery Plan
- Monitor recovery progress in the affected communities, gather information and provide feedback
- Liaise, consult, negotiate and lobby the various levels of government on behalf of the community in relation to items and actions in the Plan
- Undertake specific recovery activities as determined by the circumstances
- Provide reports to the MRCC and other nominated representatives as required

Representation on the Community Relief and Recovery Executive Committee (originally the Pandemic Co-ordination Executive Group) will initially be made up of CEO/Managers from the following organisations;

- Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC)
- Department Health Human Services (DHHS)

- Victoria Police (VicPol)
- Northern Mallee Primary Health Network (PHN)
- Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS)
- Mildura Base Hospital (MBH)
- Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS)

10.7 Social and Economic Recovery Working Groups

The Social and Economic Recovery Working Groups will report directly to the CRREC. Membership will be determined by the CRREC and will include representatives of organisations likely to be involved in the recovery process, including government agencies, industry groups, small business and non-government agencies.

Terms of Reference for the Social and Economic Recovery Working Groups may include, but is not limited to:

- Act on items and actions in the Relief and Recovery Plan.
- Monitor recovery progress in the affected communities, gather information and provide feedback.
- Identify community needs and resource requirements and make recommendations to the Community Relief and Recovery Executive Committee (CRREC), recovery agencies and service providers on short and longer term actions, activities and plans with reference to community preparedness, recovery and resilience.
- Liaise, consult, co-ordinate and negotiate where appropriate, on behalf of the community with recovery agencies, government departments, recovery service providers and MRCC in order to implement recovery programs and initiatives.
- Undertake specific recovery activities as determined by the circumstances.
- Identify community and service needs and resource requirements and make recommendations to include in the plan for the short and longer term actions, activities and plans with reference to community preparedness, recovery and resilience.
- Liaise, consult, co-ordinate and negotiate where appropriate, on behalf of the community with recovery agencies, government departments, recovery service providers and MRCC in order to implement recovery programs and initiatives.
- Advocate/lobby where appropriate with recovery agencies, government departments and MRCC in order to implement recovery programs and initiatives and make recommendations.
- Provide reports to the CRREC and other nominated representatives as required.
- Particular attention will be drawn to gender equity, to ensure women are represented on all groups to ensure a gender lens is applied to relief and recovery.

Specific Goals of the **Social Recovery Working Group** in recovering from a pandemic are;

- To activate and implement strategic recovery planning and monitor medium to long term recovery
- To identify emergency social issues for incorporation into medium and long term recovery plan.
- To assist those affected with access and referral to personal support and counselling.
- To support communities define and prioritise recovery needs and activities that will further support resilience building

- To assist those affected with access to safe accommodation, suitable to their needs
- To provide access to timely information about post disaster circumstances and recovery activities.
- To assist with the coordination and distribution of material relief to those affected.
- To reduce risk to public health following the disaster
- To build trust between Council, agencies and communities

Specific goals for the **Economic Recovery Working Group** in recovering from a pandemic are:

- To identify emergency economic issues for incorporation into medium and long term recovery plan.
- To assist those affected by economic issues with access and referral to personal support and counselling.
- To support the business community define and prioritise recovery needs and activities that will further support resilience in the local economy.
- To provide access to timely information about pandemic circumstances and recovery activities.
- To assist with the coordination of distribution of material relief to those affected.
- To reduce risk to public health during and post pandemic economic recovery.
- To build trust between Council, agencies and the business community.

Agencies and organisations will be invited to attend the Social and Economic Recovery Working Groups as their expertise and local knowledge is required. These organisations/services include but are not limited to:

Social

- Northern Mallee Community Care Partnership / Hands Up Mallee (NMCP)
- Salvation Army
- St Vincent DePaul
- Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council
- Centrelink
- Mallee Accommodation and Support Services (MASP)
- Haven Home Safe
- MDAS
- MFC
- Christie Centre
- Sun Assist
- Orange Door
- MSAU-MDVS
- Mallee Track Health and Community Services
- Department of Justice and Regulation
- Department of Education and Training
- Centacare
- Department of Health and Human Services

- Australian Red Cross (ARC)
- Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC)
- Aboriginal Covid-19 Response Network
- Centrelink
- Gender Equity Action Sunraysia (GEAS)
- Victoria Police
- Mildura Regional Development (MRD)
- Victorian Legal Aid
- Mildura Base Public Hospital

Economic

- Mildura City Heart
- Regional Development Victoria
- Agriculture Victoria
- Sunraysia Rural Counselling Service
- Mildura Airport Board
- Local employment and Training Organisations
 - SuniTAFE
 - MADEC
 - Northern Mallee Leaders
- Tourism Sector
- Hospitality Sector
- Local members of Parliament
 - Ali Cupper
 - Anne Webster

Other key stakeholders as appropriate.

10.8 Principles for Recovery Success

As the immediate emergency ends the Principles of Relief transition to Contributors to Recovery Success. Apart from the focus on the two environments, Council acknowledges the importance of a localised recovery framework that is based on the following contributors are essential for success. These provide the foundations for a coordinated approach to recovery aimed at bringing back order and reasserting normal community aspirations.

10.9 The Contributors to Recovery Success

Community focus:

Recovery is driven by community needs and led by the community members, engaging local people and business affected by events.

Leadership and coordination:

Recovery is supported by effective management structures and processes to enable the coordination of recovery efforts by all Council departments, the community and other stakeholders.

Informed decision making:

Decisions about recovery actions are clearly stated and based on the best available information, data and identified community needs.

Communication:

Recovery is supported by clear, timely and reliable two-way communication with the community and stakeholders.

Capacity building:

Adequate resources are directed to recovery and personnel within Council, communities and other stakeholders are supported to increase their skills and experience to contribute to effective recovery outcomes.

- *Reference- Disaster Recovery Toolkit For Local Government 02 Recovery: Readiness: preparation for recovery before a disaster

11.0 MRCC Recovery Staff

When the transition document is signed for ongoing recovery management, MRCC may appoint dedicated recovery staff to lead and manage the implementation of the recovery component of this plan with a focus on municipal community recovery.

Responsibilities of the recovery staff will include (but are not limited to):

- Working with available resources to deliver the outcomes identified in the Community Recovery Plan.
- Development of further sub-plans that may be required to support the overarching Community Recovery Plan.
- Identifying and addressing relevant issues that may not have been captured in the Community Recovery Plan.
- Provision of regular progress/milestone reports to General Manager Community, the MRCC CRREC and other entities as required.
- Gaining the support and cooperation of key agencies and service providers to achieve the objectives of the Community Recovery Plan.
- Manage budgets, people and other resources to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved in line with the Community Recovery Plan.
- Conduct an evaluation of municipal recovery activities following any activation of the arrangements of the plan and communicate those outcomes to the Regional Recovery Coordinator.

12.0 Recovery Information, Communication and Community Liaison

Information is recognised as one of the most important requirements and services to assist recovery. Communication is the way that the information can be delivered and coordinated. Through information and communication strategies the MRRP seeks to:

- Help people manage their expectations and assumptions about recovery – including how long things take and how complex recovery is.
- Address issues of complexity, duplication and overload that are affecting the communication of information.
- Provide information in a variety of ways to suit the different needs of how people relate to, access, and receive information and knowledge.
- Address the many challenges to people accessing and making meaning of the information that will help their recovery (e.g. language, disability, isolation, dislocation, resources, and stress factors).
- Target particularly vulnerable groups in the community including low socioeconomic groups, elderly, disabled, unemployed, families, people who are socially isolated and/or displaced from their community, people with poor English speaking abilities, people with mental health challenges and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (including those living in caravan parks).

- The strengths to draw on in relation to these Information and Communication strategies include the good intention of services to work together and an abundance of information. There are particular opportunities to:
 - Share information and resources.
 - Identify services and gaps to prevent duplication or overflow of information.
 - Use information to build resilience and community connections.
 - Strengthen capacity of networks.
 - Create a structure to continue and expand existing networks.

13.0 The Municipal Relief and Recovery Action Plan – A Working Document

Council has begun to formulate a recovery plan with actions based on the listed recovery goals for each of the recovery environments. Individual actions can be added to, deleted or modified over time to reflect the nature and consequences of the pandemic, ensuring the recovery plan meets community needs and expectations wherever possible.

Please read these actions with the mindset that this is the beginning of a pandemic plan and guide only. Actions will be added to and refined when consultation has taken place with services and community.

Where the plan is unable to achieve the identified goals the CRREC and/or MRM may escalate issues to other levels of government for assistance or support. The CRREC will review the plans as required.

14.0 Foundations for Recovery

THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	<i>What projects and initiatives will achieve goals?</i>	<i>Who is the potential lead for the action?</i>	<i>Would your organisation be a partner in this action?</i>	<i>What are the timeframes?</i>
Governance	Activate Municipal Recovery Management governance structure and support arrangements including: Sub-committees and Working Groups to address specific recovery needs and; Recovery Action Plans.	MRCC MRD	Haven DHHS SCHS	June 2020 (economic and social recovery workgroup meetings commence)
	Activate the local recovery networks, services and agencies.	MRCC MRD	DET DHHS	Jul-20
	Undertake initial impact assessment with response agencies to help inform relief activities.	MRCC MRD	Haven DHHS	Jul-20
	Maintain essential services to the community through Council's Business Continuity Plan.	MRCC	Haven DET DHHS	March 2020 - ongoing
	Support businesses, organisations and groups with advice specifically related to COVID-19 Restrictions including OH&S planning.	MRCC MRD	DHHS MCH	March 2020 - ongoing

14.0 Foundations for Recovery

THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	Prepare necessary reports associated with the Covid 19 response and track the progress, success and performance of initiatives undertaken.	MRCC MRD	DHHS	Ongoing
Engagement	Undertake detailed impact assessment and engagement with identified organisations, services, industries and business to determine emerging needs at various times throughout the recovery period.	MRCC MRD	HUM Haven DET DHHS GEAS All Partners	TBC
	Undertake detailed engagement with business and community (universal and targeted) particularly with our most vulnerable in this pandemic, to ensure their voice is heard in developing actions at various times throughout the recovery period.	MRCC MRD	HUM All Partners	TBC
	Undertake mapping to identify what organisations, services, industries and business are currently delivering to highlight gaps, duplications and emerging needs.	MRCC MRD	HUM	As required and ongoing

14.0 Foundations for Recovery

THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	Use information from the impact assessment, engagement and data to develop recovery activities relating to economic and social wellbeing of the community *Establish priorities *Identify partners *Determine timelines *Develop operational plan	MRCC MRD	DHHS	TBC
	Build relationships and provide support to community groups, business community and organisations delivering services to the community during COVID-19.	All Partners	Haven DHHS	Immediate and ongoing
	Sustain and develop collaborative relationships with local, state and federal government organisations to ensure appropriate services are delivered in response to COVID-19.	All Partners	Haven DHHS GEAS	Ongoing
Data	Develop a coordinated approach to identifying and accessing local real time data from businesses, services and government bodies to inform decision making around social priorities.	MRCC MRD	HUM	TBC
	Apply a gendered lens when analysing local data to identify gendered impacts.	MRCC GEAS MRD		Immediate and ongoing

14.0 Foundations for Recovery

THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Communication	Develop and implement a Communications Plan. – Be Kind Approach	MRCC MRD	Red Cross DET DHHS SCHS	Aug-20
	Disseminate public health information to support community safety and reduce contagion.	MRCC DHHS	Red Cross DHHS MASP	Ongoing
	Ensure all communications are accessible for all community to access with particular focus on our most vulnerable - Easy English (e.g. multicultural groups, CALD, Indigenous, people with a disability, LGBTIQ+).	MRCC MRD	Haven	Ongoing
	Align communication campaigns as community and business specific needs arise eg Family Violence, Safe to leave home messaging, masks, shopping and eating out.	MRCC MRD	DET Orange Door DHHS GEAS	Ongoing
	Implement supports for those requiring assistance with digital connectivity and literacy including identified vulnerable groups.	MRCC	DET SunAssist DHHS	Immediate and ongoing

14.0 Foundations for Recovery

THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	Ensure communication is delivered in appropriate languages and that the information is understood and being acted on by our CALD communities.	SMECC		Ongoing
Funding	Develop a Council grant funding program to support community recovery activities.	MRCC		TBC
	Be prepared to support, advocate and apply for funding opportunities when they become available for community projects that support recovery and the needs of individuals, families, communities, industries and business.	MRCC MRD	DHHS GEAS All Partners	Ongoing
Evaluation	Develop an evaluation framework to capture the process of the Relief and Recovery Planning process.	MRCC MRD	DHHS	TBC
	Learn from the experiences of the pandemic and share with each other.	MRCC MRD	DHHS All Partners	Ongoing
	Take measures to mitigate the impacts of future emergencies on individuals, families and business.	MRCC MRD	DHHS	Long term

15.0 Social Relief and Recovery Plan

Goals of the Plan	To activate and implement strategic recovery planning and monitor medium to long term recovery
	To identify emergency social issues for incorporation into medium and long term recovery plan.
	To assist those affected with access and referral to personal support and counselling.
	To support communities define and prioritise recovery needs and activities that will further support resilience building
	To assist those affected with access to safe accommodation, suitable to their needs
	To provide access to timely information about pandemic circumstances and recovery activities.
	To assist with the coordination of distribution of material relief to those affected
	To reduce risk to public health during and post pandemic
	To build trust between Council, agencies and communities

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	<i>What projects and initiatives will achieve goals?</i>	<i>Who is the potential lead for the action?</i>	<i>Would your organisation be a partner in this action?</i>	<i>What are the timeframes?</i>
Mental Health	Provide immediate counselling and personal support services to community.	MRCC/SCHS	Red Cross Haven DET DHHS SCHS Orange Door	Immediate and ongoing
	Undertake post pandemic needs assessment to estimate the longer term psychosocial impacts on community, displacement of people, the impact of business disruption and on how members of community live and connect with one another.	MRCC/SCHS	DHHS GEAS	12 - 24 months
	Provide appropriate response and support to community members affected by family violence and family members using violence.	MSAU-MDVS Orange Door SCHS	DET DHSS	Immediate and ongoing

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Family Violence and Community Safety	Focus on the messaging to community about how to access family violence services - look for innovative entry points.	MSAU-MDVS		Immediate and ongoing
	Address the perception of community safety - focus on people feeling safe, secure and connected to their communities in ways that are appropriate.	MRCC	DJCS Vic Pol	Immediate and ongoing
	Undertake assessment of current crime trends and their impacts on community.	Vic Pol	MRCC	Ongoing
Rural Communities	Consult with rural communities to work in partnership to deliver targeted and area specific programs focusing on enabling them to take the lead in finding creative approaches to meet the current challenges (Regenerative Communities Program).	MRCC	Haven DHHS	Medium to long term
Employment	Through Council's Jobs Victorian Employment Program, support and create pathways to sustainable employment - focusing on the social aspects of unemployment as a priority.	MRCC and partners	Haven	Immediate and ongoing

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Equity - Vulnerable Community Focus	Place specific emphasis on recovery activities that are informed through engagement and designed by our most vulnerable community members impacted by the pandemic.	MRCC and partners	Haven DET DHHS	Immediate and ongoing
Gender Equity	Maintain a focus on Gender equity throughout all stages of relief and recovery.	MRCC - GEAS		Ongoing
Youth	Develop a Youth Action Plan with key actions specifically focusing on what and how services and supports can be provided to youth during and following COVID-19.	MRCC and partners	DET DHHS	Medium to long term
Volunteering	Identify opportunities to support volunteering locally through services and community groups (Be Collective Model).	MRCC	Haven HUM SunAssist DHHS Salvation Army	Medium to long term

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Community Connection	Identify opportunities to rebuild and support community social infrastructure, enabling community to re-engage following isolation.	MRCC	HUM DHHS	Immediate and ongoing
Housing and Accommodation	Council's Community Relief Service to provide housing service navigation assistance including referral and follow up as required.	MRCC	Haven DHHS	Immediate and ongoing
	Provide emergency accommodation services based on community needs.	Haven DHHS MASP MSAU-MDVS MDAS		Immediate and ongoing
	Investigate and support service delivery models of social housing that meet the community needs for emergency and longer term accommodation as per Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021.	Northern Mallee Homelessness Network	Haven DHHS MASP MSAU-MDVS MRCC	Medium to long term
	Continue to deliver Council's Community Relief Service to provide community with local navigation and connections to existing social, health, financial and wellbeing support services including food relief.	MRCC	Haven DET SMECC	Immediate - short to medium term

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Access to Food and Other Essential Supplies	Support community access to seasonally appropriate clothes and blankets.	Red Cross Salvation Army St Vincent de Paul MASP	Haven	Immediate
	Provide immediate food relief services throughout the community.	Red Cross Salvation Army St Vincent de Paul	Haven DET MASP SMECC MRCC	Immediate - short to medium term
	Support the transition of Food relief to Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council.	MRCC SMECC	Haven DHHS Christie Centre Salvation Army	Medium to long term
	Research partnership models for long term food security systems to distribute food relief and strengthen food security options for vulnerable community members.	MRCC SMECC	Haven DHHS Christie Centre Salvation Army	12 - 24 months
Public Health	Assist with providing vaccination services to the local community as appropriate.	MRCC		Ongoing

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	Continue to promote Council's role to maintain social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, stay home when sick and download COVIDSafe App; and develop signage and tools to ensure consistent messaging across Council facilities and parks.	MRCC	Red Cross Haven DHHS	Ongoing
	Ensure our community has access to appropriate stocks of PPE including masks, gloves etc.	DHHS		Ongoing
First Nations People	Identify opportunities to build relationships, connect with and support Aboriginal community groups and community and provide support and assistance where appropriate.	MRCC MDAS	DET DHHS MDAS All Partners	Immediate and ongoing
	Identify opportunities to work with our First Nations People to include in the design of actions and through community engagement.	MRCC	All Partners	Immediate and ongoing
	Identify opportunities to build relationships, connect with and support multicultural community groups and provide support and assistance where appropriate.	MRCC SMECC	Haven DHHS All Partners	Immediate and ongoing

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD)	Work with SMECC's newly funded 8 outreach worker positions to ensure that work in the recovery space is aligned.	SMECC		Medium to long term
	Monitor impact of COVID-19 within the CALD community in regards to social impact on cultural practices and ensure the messages from Government are being adhered to using trusted community members to deliver messages respectfully.	SMECC		Immediate and ongoing
Child Wellbeing	Focus on the health and wellbeing needs of all children in our Municipality, including our most vulnerable children.	MRCC	MASP Orange Door MDAS SCHS MDVS-MDVS	Immediate and ongoing
	Focus on the mental health of children in our communities.	MBPH CYMHS	SCHS	Immediate and ongoing
People with a Disability	Ensure people with a disability are included in community engagement and have an opportunity to shape recovery actions.	MRCC	Christie Centre	Ongoing

SOCIAL HEALTH THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Aged Community	Ensure the aged community are included in community engagement and have an opportunity to shape recovery actions.	MRCC	SCHS	Ongoing
Sport and Recreation	Maintain contact with clubs, community groups and stakeholders who use community facilities and sportsgrounds to assist in reviewing the financial and social impact of closures, cancellations, reduced membership and new regulations.	MRCC		Ongoing
Education	Local state, Catholic and private schools to monitor the social impacts of COVID-19 in the education space and respond as required.	DET Catholic/Private Schools		Ongoing

18.0 Economic Relief and Recovery Plan

Goals of the Plan	To activate and implement strategic recovery planning and monitor medium to long term recovery.
	To identify emergency economic issues for incorporation into medium and long term recovery plan.
	To assist those affected by economic issues with access and referral to personal support and counselling.
	To support the business community define and prioritise recovery needs and activities that will further support resilience in the local economy.
	To provide access to timely information about pandemic circumstances and recovery activities.
	To assist with the coordination of distribution of material relief to those affected.
	To reduce risk to public health during and post pandemic economic recovery.
	To build trust between Council, agencies and the business community.

ECONOMIC THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	<i>What projects and initiatives will achieve goals?</i>	<i>Who is the potential lead for the action?</i>	<i>Would your organisation be a partner in this action?</i>	<i>What are the timeframes?</i>
Hardship	Provide appropriate response and support to business/industry owners forced to close or severely impacted through relief mechanisms such as fee and rate deferment.	MRD	MRCC MCH	0-2 Months
	Establish a registration process for businesses experiencing hardship to seek extensions/waivers for fee and rates.	MRCC MRD		2-4 Months
	Focus on the messaging to the business community & industry about how to access assistance, financial support, services and grants.	MRD	ERG	0-4 Months
	Engage with business community leaders and industry advisory groups and activate and co-ordinate appropriate local services, agencies and memberships.	MRD	ERG	0-4 Months

ECONOMIC THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
Employment & Skills	Work with local employment and training organisations to assist affected business and industry owners and employees.	MRD	ERG Appropriate Government bodies Employment agencies	2-6 Months
	Encourage and support employment and re-training opportunities for affected businesses and industry employees.	MRD	MRCC SuniTAFE Employment agencies Industry bodies	2-12 Months
	Seek government support for employment initiatives.	MRD	MRCC	0-6 Months
Small Business	Work with local businesses, business groups and community progress associations to address barriers to customers returning to businesses in local communities.	MRD	ERG and others yet to be identified Support Community Recovery Committee.	0-4 Months

ECONOMIC THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	Support communities to develop and activate marketing strategies to encourage customers to return.	MRD		2-12 Months
Tourism Promotion	To attract customers back to local communities and take advantage of emerging domestic tourism initiatives to visit Regional Victoria.	MRD	ERG and others yet to be identified Support Community Recovery Committee. Mildura Airport	6 months - 2 years
	Work with local businesses, business groups and community progress associations to address barriers to customers returning to businesses in local communities e.g. tourism.	MRD		2-6 Months
	Support communities to develop and activate marketing strategies to encourage customers to return.	MRD		0-4 Months
Financial Advice/Support	Provide immediate financial counselling and support services to business.	MRD	SunFRCS MRCC MCH	0-6 Months
Mental Health	Provide immediate access to counselling and support services to the community.	MRCC / SCHS	MRCC Government agencies	0-4 Months

ECONOMIC THEMES	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER	TIMELINE
	Undertake post pandemic needs assessment to estimate the longer term psychosocial impacts on community, displacement of people, the impact of business disruption and on how members of community live and connect with one another.	MRCC / SCHS	SunRFCS Other agencies to be identified	2-12 Months
Working for Victoria	Provide links to opportunities through side kicker provided under the working for Victoria scheme.	MRD	MRCC RDV	0-4 Months

19.0 Recovery Evaluation

MRCC Recovery staff will conduct an evaluation of municipal and community recovery activities following any activation of the arrangements in the plan.

The evaluation process should analyse the roles and measure the outcomes of the MRCC CRREC and Recovery Environments Working Groups. Each event is a key factor in learning from and improving the Municipalities' capacity to respond to and recover from emergency events.

The National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework provides MRCC with a strategic tool to review and assess its performance in planning, responding to and recovering from these incidents and is a critical resource bank of information such as key learnings and challenges.

Recommendations detailed in this analysis will also assist in planning and preparedness arrangements for future emergencies to ensure MRCC fosters continuous improvement through lived experience and lessons learnt, and in our roles as pivotal advocates for the communities and industry groups in the MRCC LGA.