



MERRIGUM AND SURROUNDS

Local Emergency Action Plan

Merrigum's local risks are:

With a population of 454 (2021 Aust. Census data), Merrigum is a rural township in Victoria's Goulburn Valley with a history of exposure to both flood and fire hazards. The town is particularly susceptible to localised flooding from the Mosquito Depression and surrounding southern catchments. Due to the flat topography, combined with the influence of irrigation channels and the railway embankment, floodwaters can be slow-moving and may take several days to recede.

Flood events can result in road closures, isolation of properties, and damage to buildings below flood level, impacting access, safety, and

the ability of emergency services to respond. These conditions can also prolong recovery for affected residents.

Merrigum is also exposed to seasonal grassfire risk, consistent with much of regional Victoria. This risk may be heightened by changing weather patterns, including hotter and drier conditions.

In addition to natural hazards, Merrigum faces several underlying vulnerabilities that may increase community risk. The local economy is heavily reliant on intensive agriculture and food processing, making it sensitive to climate variability, water availability, and land condition.

We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Peoples of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing Culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

Emergency Preparedness

Preparation is key

Share this LEAP with your local connections.

For more information scan the QR code below or visit shepp.city/emergency



In extreme weather and emergency events, essential services such as power, water, telecommunications and transport networks may be impacted, leaving households and communities isolated.

During emergency events, demand on CFA, VICSES, Police, and Ambulance may exceed capacity, meaning help may not be immediately available.



Stay informed during emergencies with the Greater Shepparton Emergency Dashboard, your one-stop source for warnings, road closures, weather alerts, local updates, community information and preparedness information.

First 72 Hours

Households should prepare an emergency plan and kit allowing for up to **72 hours of potential isolation and self-sufficiency.**



Emergency management is a shared responsibility between individuals, communities, Council and agencies. Preparation is key to reducing impacts and to supporting emergency services.

greater-shepparton.com.au/72-hours

Prepare your household emergency plan and kit

Your emergency kit should include: A battery-powered torch and AM/ FM radio. Key documents (passport/ birth certificate etc.) and important contact numbers.

***Download apps on Apple App Store or Google Play**

emergency.vic.gov.au/

All hazards:

RediPlan – redcross.org.au/prepare

Get Prepared app
redcross.org.au/emergencies/prepare/get-prepared-app/

Bushfire:

cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare

Flood & Storm:

ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe

*Vic Emergency app:

Set up a user profile and watch zones to ensure you receive official warnings alerts and emergency information.

Know your location

emergencyplus.com.au/



*Emergency+ app:

This app uses GPS in smart phones to help you provide critical location details required to mobilise emergency services.

Check your risk in your location

Closest CFA Brigades:

- Merrigum:
101-103 Waverley Ave,
- Cooma:
992 Kyabram-Cooma Rd
- NW Mooropna:
545 Hooper Rd

Closest VICSES Units:

- Tatura: 52 Martin St,
- Murchison: 10a Watson St

Shepparton Search and Rescue

- 15 Dudley St, Shepparton
sheppartonrescue.com.au



Fire:

CFA cfa.vic.gov.au

Select “Set your location” in the top left of the website to receive local information and warnings.



Flood & Storms:

VICSES ses.vic.gov.au

BOM Bureau Of Meteorology
bom.gov.au



Power Outages

powercor.com.au

In an Emergency

Life threatening emergency	Fire, Ambulance, Police	☎ 000
Non-life threatening emergency	Floods and Storms - VICSES	☎ 132 500
Non urgent Police assistance	Non-urgent Police Assistance Line & on-line reporting	☎ 131 44 onlinereporting.police.vic.gov.au Report non-urgent crimes or events, 24/7
Warnings and updates	Vic Emergency: Radio: ABC Local 97.7	1800 226 226 emergency.vic.gov.au
Bushfire Place of Last Resort	There is currently no BPLR located within the Greater Shepparton municipality	
Reporting urgent issues or hazards	Greater Shepparton City Council	☎ 03 5832 9700
<i>Council offers an emergency after hours ranger service to deal with Animal Management, Local Laws and other Council-related emergencies</i>	Snap Send Solve 	snapsendsolve.com/report/victoria *download the app on the Apple App Store or Google Play
Road Closures:	Vic Traffic	traffic.transport.vic.gov.au/
Medical Advice:	Nurse on Call:	☎ 1300 60 60 24 Connect with a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
	Victorian Virtual Emergency Department:	vved.org.au
	AED Locations	ambulance.vic.gov.au/find-aed see map on page 7 for locations
	Mental Health Support:	wellways.org/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing-local/ headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/shepparton/ primarycareconnect.com.au
Injured wildlife, wildlife rescue:	Bohollow Wildlife Shelter Inc.	☎ Deb Fowler 0418 328 671 ☎ Kirsty Ramadan 0447 636 953 ☎ 03 5826 9464 bohollowwildlife.com

LEAP Overview

This LEAP will be updated as required.

To ensure you have the latest version scan the QR Code or visit

greaterShepparton.com.au/emergencies



A LEAP is a community specific strategy that helps residents prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies such as bushfires and floods. By identifying local risks, resources, and roles, LEAPs take a grassroots approach that complements broader emergency plans, empowering communities to build resilience and reduce impacts.

This LEAP has been developed as part of the LEAPing into Safe Communities project, a joint initiative between the Strathbogie Shire Council and Greater Shepparton City Council. Safer Together is a Victorian Government approach to reducing the risk of bushfire and funds the Strengthening Local Government Partnerships Grants, which provides funding for the Local Government Authorities (LGA's) to design collaborative projects that adopt a community centred approach to reducing bushfire risk and building community resilience and partnerships with agencies.

In October 2025 the Merrigum Steering Group held its first meeting to guide the LEPA process. Following this, community members came together to explore ways to strengthen local emergency preparedness, with their ideas shaping the LEAP actions.

MERRIGUM LOCAL RISKS ARE:

FIRE: Merrigum is surrounded by flat agricultural pastures and open paddocks. During the summer and autumn months, dry or unmaintained grass over 10cm tall presents a significant risk, as grassfires spread much faster than bushfires. Potential risks due to the lack of irrigation and water availability.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE: priorities to protect within the community are:

- Communications: Telstra and Optus towers located within township - good coverage in the area
- CFA Brigade station
- Pub - Railway Hotel

COMMUNITY SAFETY / SECURITY: In the last 10 years, Merrigum's crime rate has seen an increase. Recent data indicates that the rate of assault and robbery is 1 offence per 21.2 people. Regarding property crime (burglary and theft, the rate is 1 offence per 23.4 people. In addition, the rate of total community safety (stalking and harassment) is 1 offence per 226.3 people. When considering these numbers, it is also important to consider the trends of these numbers compared to the greater Melbourne area.

Source: www.aucrimetracker.com/vic/merrigum/

STORMS/FLOODS: Fallen trees can block roadways and bring down powerlines. Flooding from the Mosquito Depression has improved via mitigation works completed in the 1990's. Infrastructure maintenance and ongoing regional oversight are continuously integrated into the Goulburn Broken Regional Floodplain Management Strategy which can be found at shepp.city/floodplain



MENTAL HEALTH: Mental health risks in Merrigum largely mirror the challenges faced in rural and regional Australian communities. Primary concerns include social isolation, limited local healthcare access, agricultural and economic stressors, and compounding impacts of climate events. Rural Australians are statistically more likely to experience psychological distress due to geographic barriers in accessing care.

LEAP Priority Actions

LEAP Priority Actions - The 3 phases of an emergency event: Prepare, Respond, Recover

PHASE 1: PREPAREDNESS - planning and preparation before the event – ensure preparedness covers all possible events , not just the ones identified at a local level.

Description	Lead	Timeframe
1.1 Skills Bank / Qualification Lists - keep list of community trades / skills and resources up to date, including local medically trained individuals.	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade / Residents & other/all community groups	Annually - ongoing
1.2 Welcome Packs for new residents	Merrigum Lions Club	Ongoing
1.3 Identify designated gathering point – establish community hub	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade	ASAP - ongoing
1.4 Household Emergency Plans – writing a plan and practicing your plan – First 72 Hours workshop - via council	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade / Households / residents	ASAP - ongoing
1.5 Buddy System – Get to know your neighbour – designated community members to follow up on vulnerable people in times of need	Community Action Group / Households / residents	
1.6 Language Barriers – multi-language info posters for seasonal workers at caravan park. Related brochures and information posters are available via the Emergency Management team at Greater Shepparton City Council	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade / Ethnic Council / CFA D22 /	ASAP - ongoing
1.7 Orientation of local risks by local CFA Brigade	Merrigum CFA Brigade	Annually - ongoing
1.8 Training: i. First Aid / CPR / De-fib – via council ii. Mental Health First Aid – via council iii. Chainsaw – via council iv. Technology – • setting up Vic EM app on devices – information available via EMV You Tube channel shepp.city/vic_em_app • digital and online safety – via Neighbourhood Houses shepp.city/comm-neighbourhood ; and free online learner resources at shepp.city/the_life_initiative	Council / Merrigum community /	Ongoing
1.9 Design and distribute fridge magnet outlining information relating to First 72 Hours and summary of main LEAP information	LEAP Steering Group / Council	ASAP

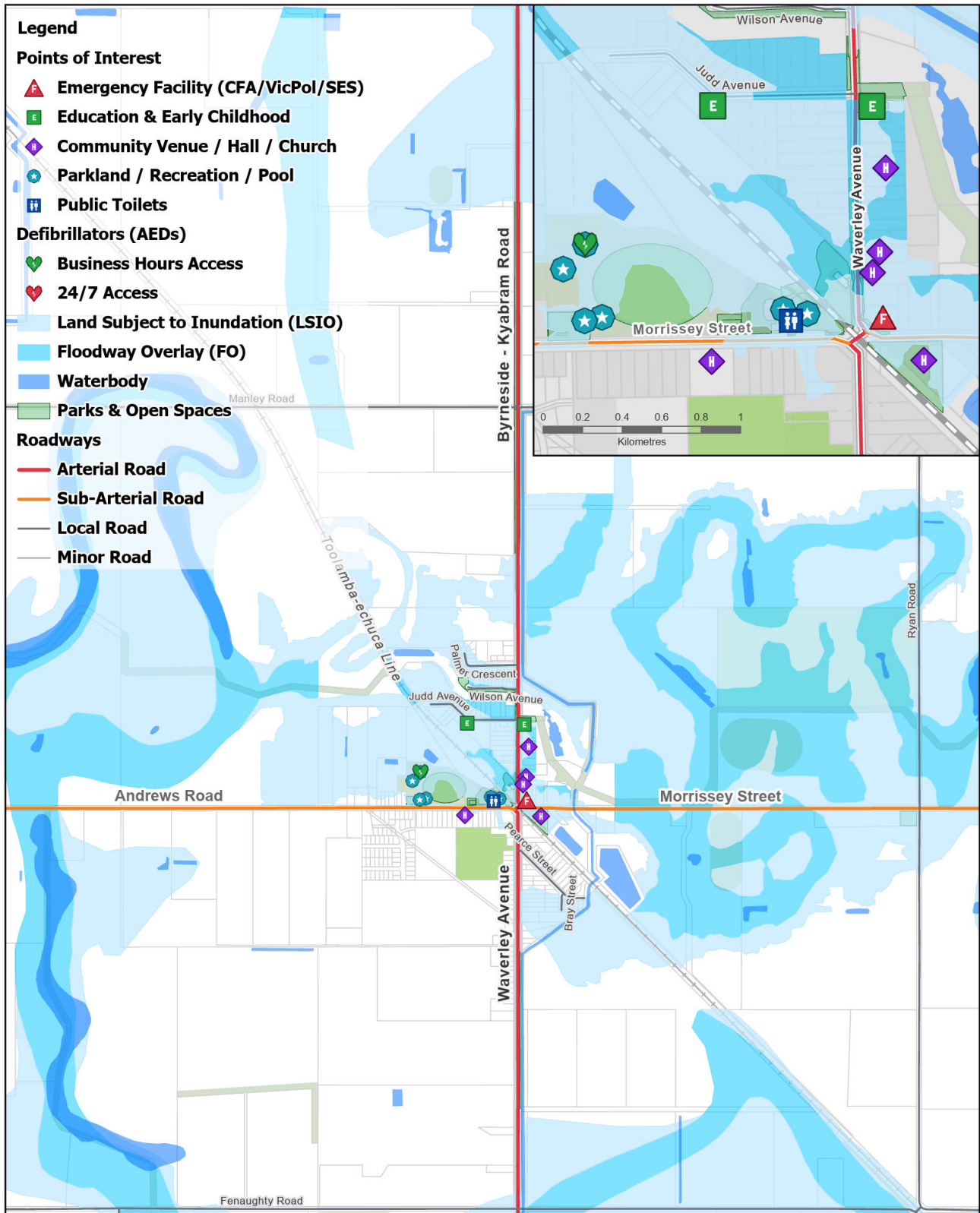
PHASE 2: RESPONSE - during the event, largely the responsibility of control agencies e.g. CFA, VICSES, VicPolice.

Description	Lead	Timeframe
2.1 Designated gathering point / community hub activated • Appoint main liaison from each community group to assist with gathering and disseminating information	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade / Residents & other/all community groups	As required
2.2 Use of CFA station LED signal and siren to warn citizens – identify when, what and how the siren would be utilised	Merrigum CFA Brigade / Community Action Group / Residents	As required
2.3 Door knocks, face to face catch ups/assemblies, and letterbox drops	Community Action Group / Residents	As required
2.4 Community notice board – central point for information; get quotes and apply for grant	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade /	12-18 months
2.5 Community Newsletter – quarterly – dissemination via letterbox drop, distributed by school kids	Community Action Group / Merrigum Primary School	Quarterly i.e. Dec, March, June, Sept

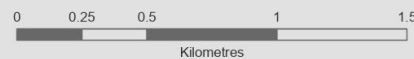
PHASE 3: RECOVERY - after the event, recovery is led by the local community, council and support agencies such as Australian Red Cross, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Department of Health (DoH), Department of Education (DoEd), Agriculture Victoria (AgVIC), Emergency Management Victoria (EMV). There are a number of additional agencies who may support when required.

Description	Lead	Timeframe
3.1 Community gatherings – pre and post season: • Community meetings / debriefs after events • Community days: o Make Merrigum Magnificent - 'meet & greet' o Regular (monthly/bi-monthly) town clean ups / working bee's o Community fundraising o Utilising community newsletter	Community Action Group / Merrigum CFA Brigade / Residents / ALL community groups	As required
3.2 Local buddy system – welfare checks for vulnerable community members i.e. elderly/living alone etc.	Merrigum CFA Brigade / Community Action Group / Residents	As required

MERRIGUM



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Connected Communities Are Resilient Communities

Identified strengths and values of the Merriquam community:

Merrigum's identity is deeply connected to its agricultural heritage, strong community spirit, and rural way of life. Located in the heart of the Goulburn Valley, the township has a long history of irrigation-based farming, with dairy production, cropping, and horticulture continuing to play an important role in the local economy and community character.

The township is known for its close-knit and welcoming community, where local organisations, volunteers, and community groups play a vital role in supporting residents and fostering social connections. Community events, recreation facilities, and local initiatives contribute to Merrigum’s family-friendly atmosphere and sense of belonging.

Merrigum also has important connections to the Traditional Owners of the land, whose enduring cultural heritage forms an integral part of the region's history and identity. Together, these agricultural, cultural, and community strengths shape Merrigum as a resilient and connected rural township.

Local Community Groups:

Preparation is about people – knowing your neighbours and being part of your community. Your involvement matters. Join a group, or start one, to help create a safer, more connected community.

- **Merrigum Lions Club:** lions201v5.org.au/merrigum/ or via Facebook
- **Merrigum CFA:** via Facebook
- **Merrigum Community Action Group:** via Facebook and 0400 177 758
- **Merrigum Football Netball Club:** merrigumfnc.com.au/home
- **Merrigum Bowls Club:** via Facebook and 0417 590 908
- **Merrigum Golf Club:** via Facebook or merrigumgolfclub@gmail.com and Ph. 5855 2713
- **Merrigum Community Plan Steering Committee:** via Russell Speed at rspeed3@bigpond.com or Ph. 5832 9805

Note your
important information HERE:

Translating and
Interpreting Service (TIS)
 131 450

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Australia (formally Vicdeaf)



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