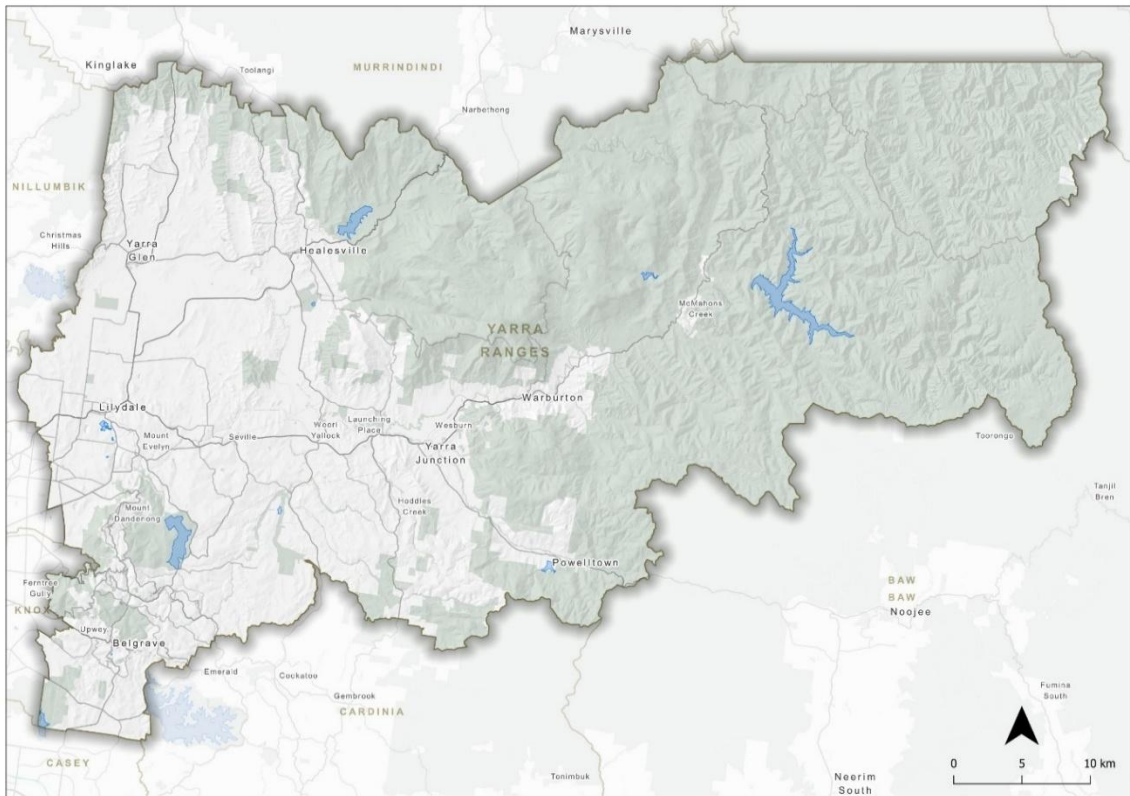




Yarra Ranges

Municipal Fire Management Plan 2026–2028



Developed by the Yarra Ranges Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee

Membership for 2026 – 2028 consists of:

- Country Fire Authority
- Fire Rescue Victoria
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Parks Victoria
- Melbourne Water
- Victoria Police
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Community

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Acknowledgement

For over 35,000 years, the Wurundjeri people have been the traditional custodians of the land within Yarra Ranges and beyond. Over that time, they have used fire as a tool for managing the land.

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (**MFMPC**) acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

About this plan

In 2018, the [Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018 \(Vic\)](#) amended the [Emergency Management Act 2013](#) to provide for new integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the State, regional and municipal levels and create an obligation for a MEMPC to be established in each of the municipal districts of Victoria, including the alpine resorts which, for the purposes of the [Emergency Management Act 2013 \(Vic\)](#), are taken to be a municipal district. Each MEMPC is a multi-agency collaboration group whose members bring organisation, industry or personal expertise to the task of emergency management planning for the municipal district.

The Yarra Ranges MEMPC considers that fire risk within the municipality requires a Municipal Fire Management Plan (this plan). The MEMPC has appointed a subcommittee, the MFMPC, to develop this plan. This Yarra Ranges Municipal Fire Management Plan is prepared and maintained as a sub-plan to the Yarra Ranges MEMPC to ensure the linkages across fire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery programs are consistent and holistic. This Plan has been developed in line with the:

- Emergency Management Act 2013, which provides the authority under which Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPC) operate.
- Ministerial Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.
- State Fire Management Planning Guidance to Regional and Municipal Fire Management Planning Committees.

Further information about Victoria's Emergency Management and Fire Management planning arrangements can be found at: emv.vic.gov.au.

Membership of the MFMPC consists of:

- The Country Fire Authority
- The Fire Rescue Victoria
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Parks Victoria

- Melbourne Water
- Victoria Police
- Department of Transport and Planning.
- Yarra Ranges Council.

The plan consists of two components:

- Operating Principles, which describe a strategic approach to managing fire risk
- The Action Plan, which details how the strategy will be implemented

Authorisation and Endorsement

This Municipal Fire Management Plan was approved as a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee on 18 February 2026.

Signed:



Nigel Brennan

Chair - Yarra Ranges Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee

Introduction

Planning Context

The objective of all fire management activities in Victoria is to reduce the impact and consequences of fire on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, the economy, and the environment. This MFMP, a sub-plan of the Yarra Ranges MEMP, reflects the shared responsibilities that government, fire agencies and communities have in achieving that objective. Development and implementation of this plan reflect a commitment by agencies that cover both private and public land tenures to work collaboratively towards a common vision for the municipality.

The focus of this document is strategic; it is intended to provide direction and link the long-term goals and priorities of the Committee with specific actions. The actions, documented in a separate Action Plan, are organised by priority and broken into short and intermediate-term actions.

Fire risk in the Yarra Ranges municipality

Yarra Ranges has a significant bushfire history that has led to significant loss of life and serious injury, loss of property, including homes, disruption to whole communities, devastation of the natural environment and long-term rehabilitation of affected communities. Increasing urbanisation and the influence of climate change are expected to result in future fire events that may have even greater impacts on social, economic, built and environment sectors of the municipality than in the past. The need for all agencies and the community, working as one on fire management, has never been greater.

Further discussion of the Yarra Ranges operating environment, including key challenges and opportunities for the municipality, can be found in Appendix C: Environmental Scan.

Operating Principles

The following operating principles underpin all MFMPC planning and operational activities.

Principle	Description
Ensure safety	Protection and preservation of life and relief of suffering is paramount. This includes: Safety of emergency response personnel, and Safety of community members, including those most at-risk in emergencies, residents, visitors or tourists
Protect the environment	We aim to strike a balance between reducing the risk of fire to people and the impact of fire reduction measures on our natural environment.
Community as an equal partner	Community ownership and leadership of fire management are critical to our long-term success. We adopt EMV's definition ¹ of community as "Groups of people in Victoria united by their geographical location, social networks, cultural heritage or common interests. People can belong to more than one community, and they can be virtual."
Working as one	Agencies working together to achieve common outcomes as one team with the community, founded on close collaboration, shared responsibility and acting with respect, integrity and trust developed through teamwork and strong relationships.
Risk based	Our decisions and actions are prioritised by risk. Sound and comprehensive risk identification, assessment and management underpin our decisions and activities.

¹ *Emergency Management Victoria Strategic Roadmap 2022–28, p. 7.*

Vision and Mission

Our Vision

Our **vision** is what we aspire to; it provides our overall goal for this strategy:

- A committee that works together with the government and the community to reduce the effects of unplanned² fire and supports recovery to a healthy, sustainable community and environment.

Our Mission

Our **mission** articulates how we will achieve our vision:

- To realise the benefits inherent in agencies and communities working together to reduce the likelihood, effect, and consequence of unplanned fire.

Long-term outcomes

If we are successful in progressing our vision and mission, we expect to see, in the longer term:

- The effects of unplanned fires on the community, infrastructure, economy, and environment will be minimised.
- The community to have greater ownership of fire management & work as an equal partner with fire management agencies.
- Fire management agencies to work “as one” to deliver sustainable, effective and efficient fire management services.

² In contrast, planned fire refers to burning for ecological, fuel reduction or cultural purposes.

Strategic priorities

To understand how the work of the MFMPC contributes to the vision and mission, a logic model was developed. Logic models link activities to outcomes; they provide “line-of-sight”. The logic model shown in [Appendix A: Logic Model](#) illustrates how the MFMPC developed long-term outcomes aligned with the Committee’s vision and mission.

Based on this logic model, four strategic priorities were identified:

1. Effective risk management
2. Evidence-based strategic direction
3. Capable and Engaged Community
4. Agencies and the community working as one

Short-term and intermediate outcomes that will deliver these priorities are presented alongside each priority in the table below. The actions that underpin each of the outcomes are contained in a separate Action Plan (see [Appendix D: 2026 Action Plan](#))

Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Priority 1	Effective risk management
Short-term outcomes	Aligned and integrated fire management planning and practices across all agencies. A community, in particular private landholders, engaged in fire risk reduction planning. Township communities have ownership of fuel treatment programs within their boundaries.
Intermediate outcome	Effective and consistent risk reduction planning involves all relevant agencies and the community and focuses on reducing risk across both public & private land use types.
Priority 2	Evidence-based strategic direction
Short-term outcomes	A comprehensive, strategic, evidence-based understanding of risk for the municipality. Effective systems are in place to monitor strategic risks and maintain an up-to-date risk profile, which informs our decision-making.
Intermediate outcome	Strategic direction and decision-making are informed by evidence and predictive modelling.

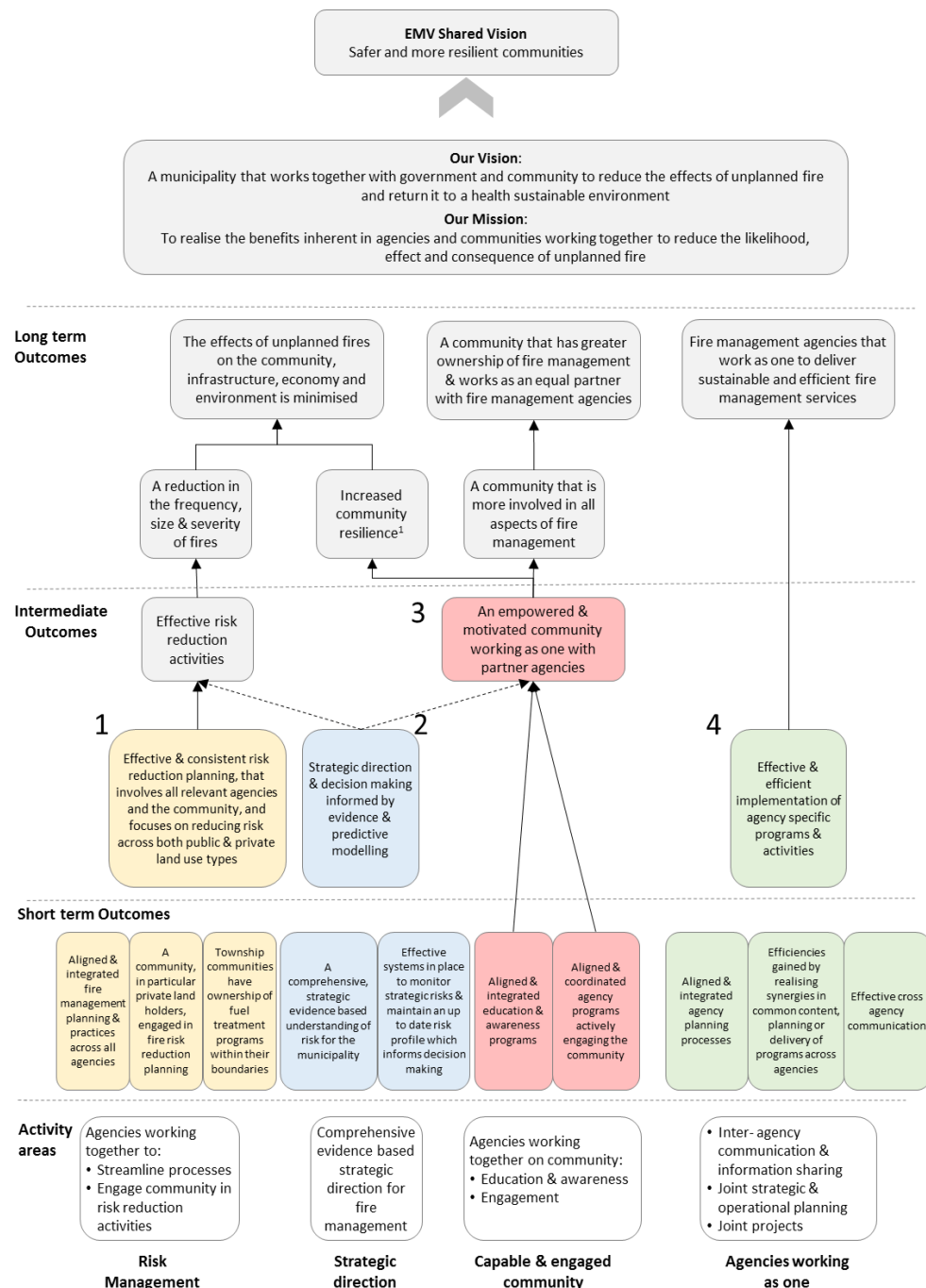
Priority 3	Capable and Engaged Community
Short-term outcomes	Aligned and integrated agency education and awareness programs. Aligned and coordinated agency programs actively engaging the community.
Intermediate outcome	An empowered, committed, and motivated community working as one with partner agencies as a result of increased community knowledge and awareness arising from consistent & coordinated engagement programs and communication.
Priority 4	Agencies and the community working as one
Short-term outcomes	Aligned and integrated agency planning processes. Efficiencies gained by realising synergies in common content, planning or delivery of programs across agencies. Effective cross-agency communication.
Intermediate outcome	Effective & efficient implementation of agency-specific programs & activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The MFMPC will use the evaluation questions in [Appendix B: Key Evaluation Questions](#) to monitor the implementation of this plan. A working group of the MFMPC will be convened at least annually to undertake this review. The working group will report to the MFMPC and include improvement opportunities.

Appendix A: Logic Model

A logic model describes the relationships between activities and outcomes at different time frames. The logic model below describes how the MFPC expects the long-term outcomes to be realised through the activities that agencies and the community, working as one, undertake.



1. Resilience is defined as "the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience". Adopted from Community Resilience Framework, Emergency Management Victoria, 2017

Appendix B: Key Evaluation Questions

The following are questions we will ask to better understand our progress towards realising our intermediate and longer-term outcomes. Key evaluation questions are high-level questions; they will be supported by more detailed work to develop measures, baselines, goals, and targets. We will use the key evaluation questions as the basis of annual evaluations to ensure our strategy remains on track.

Strategic priority	Outcomes we are working towards	Evaluation questions (How will we know?)
1. Risk Management	<i>In the medium term, we expect our work to result in the following:</i> Improved coordination of fuel and asset protection planning across the municipality; High-risk private land identified and mapped through inter-agency collaboration	- To what extent are fuel management and asset protection strategies aligned across agencies and landholders? - How effectively are private land parcels identified, mapped, and maintained? - Are data-sharing protocols established and functioning between key agencies?
2. Capable & Engaged Community	<i>In the medium term, we expect our work to result in the following:</i> More empowered communities through engagement and risk education; Improved coordination of public-facing messaging about fire risk reduction	- To what extent are Township Fuel Management Groups (TFMGs) active and supported? - How effective are communities contributing to municipal fire planning? - Are inter-agency campaigns delivered consistently and evaluated for reach and engagement?
3. Capability & Resilience	<i>In the medium term, we expect our work to result in the following:</i> A more comprehensive, strategic, evidence-based understanding of risk for the municipality	- Are SME presentations delivered as scheduled and informing planning? - How effectively are insights from presentations captured and translated into actionable outcomes? - Is the knowledge register maintained and used for continuous improvement?
4. Governance & Continuous Improvement	<i>In the medium term, we expect our work to result in the following:</i> Standing agenda includes emerging issues reporting and shared learning; Improved quarterly reporting between MFMPC and MEMPC	- Are emerging issues and AAR learnings consistently tabled and acted upon? - Is quarterly reporting timely, accurate, and constructive? - What proportion of agreed actions are completed within established timeframes?

Appendix C: Environmental Scan

Our operating environment is constantly changing and must be regularly assessed in terms of how it affects our operations. Key challenges and opportunities for the municipality include:

Challenge/ Opportunity	Potential implications for fire management
Demographic and Social	
Population expansion into the urban-forest & urban-grassland interface.	Increases in structural and vegetation fires. May require greater reach of education programs, communication, and greater community engagement in fire risk reduction activities.
Yarra Ranges as a tourism destination, particularly due to the impacts of the pandemic.	May have to target tourists or expand reach during holiday periods. The pandemic has resulted in an increase in local tourism and visitation to popular attractions.
Increases in the number of multicultural communities and visitors of varying diversity.	May present language barriers and cultural sensitivities when conducting community engagement programs and activities, as well as in responding to and recovering from emergencies.
Increase in ageing demographic – percentage of people over 55 is trending up for Yarra Ranges, compared to all other age categories.	May cope less well with fire planning and emergencies. Education and communication programs may also have to accommodate the learning and communication preferences of an older demographic.
Deliberately lit and suspicious fires are a factor in the Yarra Ranges.	Target areas for prevention strategies should be directed at these areas.
Increasing community expectation for immediacy and greater accountability.	Community engagement processes may have to be strengthened to ensure effective and representative community engagement.
Community understanding about preparedness for fire.	The effectiveness of education and awareness programs should be regularly evaluated and improved.

Challenge/ Opportunity	Potential implications for fire management
The nature of communities is changing. Traditionally place-based, varying types of community (faith, interest & digital).	Municipal fire management planning will have to accommodate a range of community types.
Consistency of messages across all agencies before, during and after fires.	Agencies will have to develop a common communication strategy/ protocol.
Environment	
Impacts of climate change are predicted to cause an increase in the frequency, intensity and size of fires, potentially prolonged fire danger periods and an increase in the number of total fire ban days.	The predicted changes will place an increased demand and pressure on fire management resources, and planning will need to consider the compounding impacts of extreme events. The intensity and increasing frequency emphasise the need to improve broad-scale community education and preparedness.
An area's environmental significance can create natural tension with fire management, particularly on fuel load matters.	Fire risk management needs to be integrated with planning activities, including catchment-wide biodiversity considerations.
Impacts on the already highly fragmented areas of high biodiversity values, especially on the fire-sensitive Ecological Vegetation Communities.	Biodiversity values will need to be considered on a site-by-site basis and will require follow-up to ensure biodiversity is protected, especially from weed invasion and loss of species.
The impact of fire may affect the yield and quality of water from fire-affected catchments.	Inter-agency cooperation will need to be strengthened to consider fire management across water catchments.
Economic and Infrastructure	
Fire planning has an impact on tourism and agricultural practices	Fire risk management planning should consider economic impacts to these industries.
Consequence management with early consideration for recovery is getting greater focus.	Develop greater strategic focus, e.g., including assets and infrastructure in risk assessment.
The municipality has several drinking water catchments.	Critical infrastructure must be a priority in fire risk planning

Challenge/ Opportunity	Potential implications for fire management
Businesses are more dependent on online services.	Communications infrastructure is located in extreme fire risk locations.
Technology	
Internet connectivity is seen as an essential service. Essential for business, education, and other platforms. Increasing expectations by the community that the information they need is readily accessible.	Shift from traditional mechanisms for education, information, awareness, and communication activities will change. Use of multiple platforms for communication dissemination. Understand and manage expectations.
The availability of powerful technologies for gathering large amounts of information into common databases for rapid dissemination to all agencies enhances the integration of planning.	Effective capture and usage of data – doing it better.
Political	
Changes to State Government policies.	Will require monitoring of changes and their potential impact on local planning.
Increasing expectations by the Government regarding community involvement.	Municipal plans will have to genuinely address community engagement and the desire for shared responsibility.
State Planning Legislation or Local Government Act.	Municipal Plan to adapt to any planning or legislative changes.

Appendix D: 2026 Action plan

Short-term and intermediate actions intended to achieve the strategic priorities of this plan are presented alongside each priority in the Action Plan. Progress toward achieving these outcomes is reviewed, along with the action plan itself, on an annual basis.