

Disaster Resilience Plan for the communities of the Lakes Entrance District



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This plan acknowledges the Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and pays deep respect to all First Nations peoples and communities with enduring cultural connections to Lakes Entrance District, who have cared for and nurtured Country for tens of thousands of years.

We honour and celebrate the rich diversity, living cultures, and ongoing contributions of all First Nations peoples who live, work, visit, and play across the Lakes Entrance District.

We also acknowledge the many First Nations communities who, together, continue to shape and contribute to the region we know as East Gippsland.

Disaster Resilience Plan for the Lakes Entrance District communities

This **Disaster Resilience Plan for the communities of the Lakes Entrance District** outlines our approaches to mitigating the impact of disasters, based on our local strengths, our community capability, local networks and available assets and infrastructure.

This Plan describes our disaster risks given the local vulnerabilities, hazards and community and agency capacity. It also outlines our community priorities to build our disaster resilience.

This Plan was developed in consultation with local communities across the Lakes Entrance District. It reflects the diverse voices of people available during the consultation process and brings together many key communities:

Place-based communities – Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Beach (including Toorloo Arm), and Nowa Nowa (including Tostaree and Wombat Creek)

Aboriginal communities – Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust (LTAT) and Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service (LTHCS), Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA), Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service (YWAHS) and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC).

This Plan will evolve as our communities change and grow.

This Plan sits within a framework of other agency and state government plans including emergency, health and wellbeing, and community plans, and should be read in conjunction with those plans.

Contents

Document Purpose	3
Plan on a page	4
District Overview	5
Community Capacity	11
Regional Vulnerabilities	14
Our Communities' Hazards	16
Community Priorities	17
Community Emergency Plans	18
Appendix 1. Definitions	19

Our Community Disaster Resilience Plan on a Page



Our capacity

Our capacity refers to the strengths, skills, experience, education and networks of our communities.

We are made up of small and larger townships, ranging from Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Beach and Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust (LTAT) on the coast and Nowa Nowa and Wairewa to the North.

Our residents are diverse in vocation, background and experiences, and include tradespeople, business owners, farmers, healthcare and emergency workers (volunteer and paid), people who value living amongst nature, new residents looking for a tree change and less permanent holiday-makers.

Some have strong local knowledge of the region, and we understand our capabilities, our vulnerabilities and there is varying knowledge of our disaster risks. Our people, networks and infrastructure are our strengths which include:

1. **People and relationships.** We are well-connected and have strong formal and informal networks. However, this is reduced with the seasonal population. **First Nations organisations** provide culturally safe health, healing and outreach services
2. **Deep local knowledge.** Many of us understand the local area including those with traditional knowledge of the land and caring for Country.
3. **Practical and professional skills.** Many of us, including local traders, have the skills and know-how to look after ourselves with support.
4. **Local infrastructure.** Our towns have assembly areas with generator and STAND facilities we may rely on before, during and after emergencies, including LTAT with an on-site Relief Centre.
5. **Self reliance.** Many in the community are used to managing isolation during power outages, road closure or peak-season congestion. There is a willingness to plan and/or evacuate, and take responsibility for self-care within the first 72 hours of an event.



Our vulnerabilities

Our vulnerabilities refers to the gap between what we can do for ourselves and where we need agency support. Some of our key vulnerabilities are:

1. **Health and wellbeing.** We are an ageing population and many people live alone. There is limited local medical and pharmacy capacity under surge conditions. Smoke, heat and isolation can impact on more vulnerable residents.
2. **Culturally safe.** Vulnerability increases during an emergency due to geographic isolation, limited access to services, and the need for culturally safe engagement. Communication and support for Aboriginal community members is preferred through trusted Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.
3. **Geographic isolation and access.** Single-road access points, road closures and limited alternate routes mean that we are at risk of isolation from our properties, communities or accessing support due to flooding, fire or fallen trees. Holiday-period congestion along the Princes Highway and local coastal roads can also affect emergency access.
4. **Power.** Businesses and households have a high reliance on power for essential services and there are limited refuelling options during prolonged outages.
5. **Communications.** Without communications we are isolated, especially during an emergency. There is variable mobile coverage and known black spots. This creates a high dependency on STAND and UHF as fallback measures.
6. **Landscape.** Our environment is beautiful, but fuel management on neighbouring public land requires greater focus and adjustment so that we are safer together.
7. **Seasonal visitors.** A significant population surge occurs during summer holidays with many who are unfamiliar with local hazards and evacuation routes. There is a high concentration of holiday accommodation, caravan parks and short-stay properties.
8. **Resource support.** Due to the isolated nature of the area, timely access to services can be challenging. This is exacerbated during an emergency event.



Our hazards

Hazards refer to events in our environment with the potential for disasters. These events are occurring more frequently, often consecutively and sometimes concurrently and their impact is cumulative.

We have identified the **following hazards** that impact us.

1. **Bushfire and smoke.** Fire at the forest edges and risk of ember attack on townships. Dense smoke from regional fires can cause health impacts and disrupt tourism.
2. **Drought.** Significant drought periods heighten bushfire risk and affects agriculture.
3. **Flooding and storm surge.** Strong risk of flash flooding from heavy rain and coastal inundation risks from easterly systems combining with king tides.
4. **Severe storm and wind.** There is a strong risk of tree fall on roads and powerlines, including damage to roofs and boats.
5. **Heat.** Extended heatwaves can cause health challenges for young and elderly people.

Community priorities

Our community priorities are the residual risks that are left after assessing our capacity, our vulnerabilities and hazards. They include:

1. **Accurate and reliable communications.** We are connected and can access up to date information about local risks to our community.
2. **Consistent road access** to support our community, our jobs and the economy.
3. **Reliable power supply** that enable us to stay connected to essential services that are critical to our lives and livelihoods.
4. **Social connection and support that is culturally safe** is crucial to our mental health, wellbeing and resilience.
5. Collaborative approach to **fuel management to reduce bushfire risk.**

District Overview

The Lakes Entrance District sits at the heart of the Gippsland Lakes system – a meeting place of ocean, estuary, forest and community.

We are a district defined by contrasts:

- permanent residents and season visitors,
- coastal lowlands and forested areas,
- self-reliant communities and critical service hubs,
- rich Aboriginal culture and strong contemporary local networks.

Lakes Entrance township functions as the regional hub – a service and supply centre for surrounding towns with more dispersed communities. The communities of Lake Tyers Beach and Toorloo Arm are framed by water and forest, while Nowa Nowa, Tostaree and Wombat Creek sit inland, surrounded by dense forest.

Across the district, the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (**GLaWAC**), the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust (**LTAT**) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations – Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (**LEAHA**), Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service (**YWAHS**) and Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service (**LTH&CS**) – are central in supporting community wellbeing and cultural safety before, during and after disasters. Their leadership and On-Country knowledge strengthens the resilience of the district.

As communities of the Lakes Entrance District, we have varied experience with disasters, where the memory of the 2019-20 fires is front of mind in the forested areas, severe and damaging storm cells have affected power and road access and, more recently, threats of coastal storm surge with strong winds and abnormally high tides created flash flooding risks. However, the varied landscape and isolated impact for some of these events means there is a diverse experience of disaster impact.

Disaster risks for each township differs depending on the unique geographic location and local vulnerabilities. These disaster risks will likely increase and occur more frequently and concurrently due to the impacts of climate change.

Connecting the differences across our townships are common experiences and requirements across the whole region, which are reflected in this single Disaster Resilience Plan for the communities of the Lakes Entrance District.

Map of Lakes Entrance District



Lakes Entrance township

Community Profile

Lakes Entrance is a vibrant coastal hub known for its scenic waterways and strong boating, fishing and visitor communities. It serves as a service and employment centre for surrounding townships, supplying goods, services and hospitality that supports both residents and the visitor economy. The Lakes Entrance Plan covers the communities of Lakes Entrance, Bullock Island, Kalimna, Kalimna West, The Barrier and Lake Bunga.

Many residents live here permanently and rely on local businesses for their livelihoods. However, a high proportion of dwellings are owned by holiday-makers and may be vacant for long periods, which can limit day-to-day neighbour connections.

Population surges are significant. While the permanent population is approximately 7,000 people (2021 Census), numbers can swell to seven or eight times that during peak holiday periods. This seasonal influx places added demand on local infrastructure, emergency services and essential supplies. However, this seasonal influx is important for local traders who rely on the visitor population during holiday periods.

Things to know about Lakes Entrance

- Local traders are available to provide support to emergency services, many with own generators.
- Mechanics Hall is the major destination for support during an emergency fire event and has been updated with STAND equipment. The Lakes Life Church may be activated as the relief centre following a flood. .
- Run by volunteers, Neighbourhood House provides an essential and anonymous food service to areas for those more vulnerable. However, during an emergency food supplies have seen less fresh food available and stores depleted.
- The Coast Guard is run by 15-20 active volunteers and have updated facilities with solar and battery capacity. The Coast Guard is adjacent to the population centre and has a marine radio service that can cover blackouts when the statewide system is down and has meeting facilities.

Key community strengths

- Strong networks among local businesses and service providers
- Experienced volunteers and local emergency service partners
- A culture of self-reliance supported by local knowledge and preparedness. Lived experience of challenges during an emergency has focused some on planning for their own circumstances. See: [Person centred community preparedness](#)
- Strong First Nations linkages and services. See overviews of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOS): [LEAHA](#), [LTAT & LTHCS](#) and [YWAHS](#).

Challenges

Due to its low-lying coastal location, Lakes Entrance is exposed to:

- Coastal storm surge and flooding from heavy rainfall and high tides;
- Flash flooding in urban and surrounding areas; and
- Bushfire risk from the adjoining Colquhoun State Forest.

These hazards can isolate parts of the community, impact access routes, and affect the tourism and service industries that underpin the local economy.

Lake Tyers Beach

Community Profile

Lake Tyers Beach sits east of Lakes Entrance on the East Gippsland coast. The community is surrounded by scenic waterways and natural bushland — bordered by Lake Tyers to the east, Lake Bunga to the west, coastal waters to the south, and forested areas to the north. The Plan incorporates Toorloo Arm.

While there are no retail outlets or postal services, the township is well connected through its **community meeting places** — including the Hall, Recreation Reserve, Oneonta Community Gardens, The General, and the Tavern. At the 2021 Census, the local population was around **1,300 people**.

Things to know about Lake Tyers Beach

Lake Tyers Beach has a strong sense of place and connectedness built around its natural environment and active community life.

Key strengths include:

- Community hubs that foster connection and information-sharing (school, gardens, Hall and Tavern). The local Hall has been updated with STAND equipment.
- Local knowledge, self-reliance and an understanding of capacity limitations. Some plan to leave early, while others have knowledge and skills for managing seasonal conditions.
- Strong volunteer spirit, with community members active in local groups, emergency services and land-care initiatives.

These strengths help the community mobilise quickly and support one another in the early stages of an emergency.

Key risks

The community's geography brings both beauty and vulnerability.

- **Bushfire** - surrounding bushland and forested areas to the north present a significant fire risk, particularly during hot, dry conditions.
- **Flooding and storm surge** - low-lying areas near Lake Tyers and Lake Bunga are susceptible to inundation and access disruption during heavy rain or coastal storms.
- **Isolation** - limited road access and distance from major services can lead to temporary isolation during emergencies.



Assembly point: Lake Tyers Beach Hall

Nowa Nowa

Community Profile

Nowa Nowa is a **vibrant and creative community** nestled in the forested landscapes of Lake Tyers State Park and Boggy Creek Gorge, inland of Lake Tyers. Known for its natural beauty, Nowa Nowa attracts artists, nature-lovers and those seeking a rural lifestyle close to Gippsland Lakes. The Nowa Nowa Plan covers the communities of **Nowa Nowa, Tostaree and Wombat Creek**.

The township has a small but diverse population with a broad mix of skills and experience. Residents value the area's remoteness and understand that living in an isolated setting brings additional challenges during emergencies.

The **General Store** is the heart of the community, providing a vital hub for information, supplies and connection — particularly during difficult times. At the **2021 Census**, the population was just over **200 people**.

Things to know about Nowa Nowa

Nowa Nowa's greatest strength lies in its **close-knit, self-reliant and caring community**. People look out for one another and are quick to lend a hand when needed.

Other key strengths include:

- A **strong local identity** supported by artistic, environmental and volunteer networks.
- **Trusted local meeting places**, such as the General Store and community events, that help share information and support. The Community Room has been updated with STAND equipment.
- **Diverse skills and practical knowledge** with residents experienced in managing isolation and resourcefulness.
- **Positive relationships with emergency service agencies**, ensuring good coordination during incidents.

These connections and local capacities underpin the community's resilience and preparedness.

Key Risks

Nowa Nowa's forested environment and location present several emergency risks:

- **Bushfire** – the surrounding state forest and dense vegetation create a high fire risk, particularly in summer.
- **Storm and wind damage** – tree falls and blocked access routes can isolate the community during severe weather.
- **Isolation** – more remote living means extended response times and reliance on local initiative in the first 72 hours of an emergency.



Local supplies: Nowa Nowa General Store

Gunaikurnai people and local Aboriginal community organisations

Community Profile

Across the Lakes Entrance District, Aboriginal community organisations play a central role in supporting the safety, wellbeing, and cultural continuity of Aboriginal peoples. These organisations include the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), self-governing Aboriginal communities, healing and wellbeing services, and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), the Registered Aboriginal Party. Each are trusted, community-embedded and have deep local knowledge.

They operate as **critical enablers of preparedness, response, and recovery**, ensuring Aboriginal community members receive culturally safe information, support, and advocacy during emergencies. Their leadership, networks, and cultural authority mean they must be considered **primary partners** in district-level emergency management arrangements.

Aboriginal community organisations' **Community Emergency Management Plans** that encompass the Lakes Entrance District:

- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA)
- Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust (LTAT) & Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service (LTHCS)
- Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service (YWAHS)

Things to know about Aboriginal communities

The following strengths create a culturally grounded, highly connected capability that is essential to district-wide emergency management:

Strong cultural authority and trusted relationships. Each organisation is built on long-standing community trust, cultural leadership, and local governance structures that support informed decision-making grounded in culture and community needs.

Holistic, culturally safe services. ACCHOs and healing services offer wraparound support that integrates health, wellbeing, family support, outreach, and cultural connection, ensuring continuity of care during emergencies.

Local capability and self-determination. Aboriginal communities maintain local decision-making, community governance, and, in some cases, On-Country infrastructure and emergency protocols that support timely, culturally appropriate action.

Deep regional networks. These organisations partner closely with emergency services, councils, health services, and other agencies, enabling coordinated communication, outreach, and support for vulnerable community members.

Cultural heritage protection. As the Registered Aboriginal Party, GLaWAC is the primary source of knowledge and statutory advice relating to cultural heritage management during emergencies. Early engagement supports the protection of Country and heritage places.

Gunaikurnai people and local Aboriginal community organisations

Key Risks

Aboriginal communities across the district face several shared risks:

- **Geographic spread and isolation** – Communities, services, and outreach teams operate across large distances, with some sites highly exposed to road closures, power outages and telecommunications failure.
- **Service continuity challenges** – Emergencies can disrupt access to health, wellbeing, and outreach services that community members rely on, especially during peak periods of stress or displacement.
- **Health and wellbeing impacts** – Existing trauma, underlying health conditions or family-violence dynamics can be exacerbated during crisis events, increasing the need for culturally informed support.
- **Limited resources in remote areas** – Some communities and service hubs have constrained personnel, infrastructure or transport capacity during prolonged events.
- **Cultural heritage risks** – Emergencies (particularly fire, flood and land-disturbing operations) can pose risks to cultural sites and Country, requiring early and ongoing engagement with GLaWAC.

Community Expectations of Emergency Management agencies

Agencies can strengthen outcomes for Aboriginal communities by:

Engaging early and consistently – Notify relevant Aboriginal organisations at first indication of a potential emergency to allow proactive communication with community and activation of internal plans.

Working through trusted organisations – Engage with communities through their established Aboriginal organisations to maintain cultural safety and respect local decision-making.

Including Aboriginal organisations in IMT processes – Ensure participation in planning, operational briefings, situation updates, and communications forums.

Respecting statutory roles – Work collaboratively with GLaWAC on matters of cultural heritage, including input into preparedness activities, fuel management planning, and response operations.

Supporting continuity of care – Enable health, wellbeing, outreach, and family-support services to continue operating where possible, including during prolonged emergencies.

Ensuring information is culturally appropriate – Provide clear, timely, and accessible information that organisations can relay through trusted channels to their communities.

Building sustained relationships – Maintain year-round engagement, not only during emergencies, to strengthen planning, readiness and mutual understanding of roles.

Community Capacity

Community capacity refers to the high-level skills and experience, networks and infrastructure that we have in the community that can help us be prepared for emergencies, as well as before, during and after an emergency. Our people and their networks, and our community infrastructure are our biggest strengths.

Community skills and strengths

The skills, experience and expertise of our residents are key strengths of our community. We are proud to have a community with such diverse skills and experiences.



Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and fully incorporated, not for profit Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations work closely with and will facilitate communications and support with First Nations people during an emergency event. *(Indigenous icon credit: Eucalypt)*



Qualified tradespeople, such as mechanics, engineers and other certified skills, including operating heavy machinery and compatible supplies for emergency services in times of need.



Some local traders maintain ability to operate (with own power source) when power is in limited supply: <https://www.leada.com.au/emergency-resources/>.



While many residents are new to the area, many residents have local knowledge and experience of past disasters.



Many residents volunteer throughout the community, as well as for the emergency services, and we have a strong volunteer culture.

Community Capacity

Community infrastructure

Most townships have a [Local Incident Management Plan \(LIMP\)](#) which provides information about our community assembly areas and key contact information.



Community Assembly Areas may have access to satellite communications, wi-fi and a TV that can be hooked up to do video calls with the Incident Control Centre through the **Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND)** initiative.



Four **CFA Stations and Coast Guard**: Kalimna West, Lakes Entrance, Bunjil in Toorloo Arm, Toorloo in Lake Tyers Beach, Waiwera and Lakes Entrance Coast Guard.



Bruthen SES Unit provides support into the Lakes Entrance District.
Lakes Entrance community has an **ambulance service**.

In addition to the community infrastructure above, we also have the following:



Generators at many places in the region, including, e.g., community hall in Wairewa and the Community Room in Nowa Nowa.

Lake Tyers Beach Hall has **solar panels and battery** set-up.



Seven static water tanks are located around the Lakes Entrance district, holding 46,000 litres each for fire fighting purposes.



There are aboriginal **cultural heritage sites** and places of **historical significance** around the Lake Tyers State Park that need to be protected, the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai people.

Regional Vulnerabilities

In this Community Disaster Resilience Plan, regional vulnerabilities **represent the gap between community capability and agency expectations**. In other words, it's the gap between what our towns or localities can do for ourselves and what we need agencies, such as, CFA, DEECA and the Council, to do.

Our local communities know the region best and we understand the unique vulnerabilities and hazards of the region. We have identified the following key vulnerabilities in our region. These vulnerabilities are outlined in more detail on the following pages.



Indigenous icon credit: Eucalyp

Regional Vulnerabilities



1. Health and wellbeing

Our communities have an ageing population. A greater ageing population potentially requires greater care, more in-home care, and support to access internet and technology.

Many people also live on their own and many amidst houses owned by holiday-makers. The proportion of one-person households in our region is higher than the Victorian (and Shire) average.

Many community members have not directly experienced previous natural disasters, however many have experienced the disruption that disasters cause. The mental health impact continues where we can see solvable problems that remain unsolved.

Our economy relies on seasonal visitors and when natural disasters are forecast, visitor numbers drop. This creates anxiety for local traders, particularly when our towns aren't directly impacted by a forecasted event.



2. Culturally safe

Emergency events can amplify challenges for Aboriginal people such as disrupted access to culturally appropriate services, creating isolation and health impacts.

However, when agencies collaborate closely with Aboriginal-controlled organisations, they help ensure responses are inclusive, coordinated and culturally secure. Strengthening these partnerships before, during and after emergencies is key to safeguarding wellbeing, sustaining community confidence, and maintaining connection to Country and culture.

Aboriginal organisations are best placed to lead communication during response, preparedness and recovery efforts within their communities because they provide services that are culturally grounded and trauma-informed. Working through these established networks ensures information is shared appropriately, decisions are community-led, and assistance is delivered in a way that supports dignity, trust and self-determination.



3. Communications

Communications includes both communicating with each other and agencies as well as telecommunications infrastructure.

Communicating with each other and agencies

Reliable information makes you feel safe. It stops you from catastrophising.

Not having up to date and location-specific information is a key vulnerability. We rely on communications from the authorities about the weather conditions and their likely impact. Without communications we are isolated, especially during an emergency.

Telecommunications infrastructure

Telecommunications infrastructure is critical because it is how people communicate with each other and dial 000 for help. Severe weather can impact the critical infrastructure that powers telecommunications.

Telecommunications towers usually go down within a few hours depending on when the backup generator was last refuelled.



4. Seasonal visitors

A significant population surge occurs during the summer holiday period, with visitors often unfamiliar with local hazards, warning systems and evacuation routes. The district has a high concentration of holiday accommodation, caravan parks and short-stay properties, many located close to the coast or waterways.

This influx places additional demand on roads, essential services and emergency response capacity, and increases the need for clear, accessible public information and coordination between tourism operators, accommodation providers, agencies and local communities.

Regional Vulnerabilities



5. Geographic isolation

We recognise that we live in an isolated part of Victoria. Many communities are connected by limited road networks that can be cut by fire, flood or storm damage, restricting access for emergency services and limiting self-reliance on reaching supplies.

Isolation can delay assistance, disrupt communication, and heighten reliance on local capability and neighbour support. For smaller or more remote communities such as Nowa Nowa, Toorloo Arm, Wairewa and the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust, maintaining self-sufficiency and strong local coordination is essential during these periods.



6. Road access

Road closures due to incident control protocols may prevent locals from accessing their properties. When there is not an imminent threat on the road, and telecommunications and power is down, road access to talk to your neighbours is critical for ensuring people are safe and for getting supplies or medical assistance.

Enforcing a road closure when there is no imminent threat creates anxiety for locals leaving home for essential reasons. Sometimes it may require those locals to take a longer route using roads that have not been closed. Non-local police need to be briefed as to the local conditions where they are attending.

Road access

High priority access roads, such as the Princes Hwy and the Bruthen-Nowa Nowa Rd are essential for locals to function and sustain our own resilience. However, heavy rainfall can cause landslips, fallen trees or water inundation in low-lying areas.

Bairnsdale is our key evacuation destination for essential services, however, locals are unlikely to carry chainsaws and alternatives are required when the Mitchell River Bridge is impassable or fire threatens the Colquhoun forest.



7. Landscape

Known for its natural beauty and ecological diversity — wetlands, estuaries and marine environments provide critical habitat for wildlife and support tourism, fishing and recreation.

However, this proximity of coast, lake and forest also brings exposure to multiple natural hazards, including bushfire, coastal storm surge, flash flooding and erosion. The district's geography creates both opportunity and challenge: it sustains a strong visitor economy and close community ties, yet its dispersed settlements, seasonal population changes and limited access routes mean that resilience relies on local preparedness, strong coordination and place-based knowledge.



8. Power

Lack of power is another key vulnerability for our region. We are affected by power outages to our immediate district, and a power outage, especially during an emergency, can cause significant disruption and can impact other essential services such as telecommunications and pumps for water supply, fuel access and refrigeration.

Businesses, health services, community assembly areas and relief centres rely on generators and alternative energy sources to maintain essential functions, but capacity varies across locations.

Prolonged outages highlight the importance of local backup power, satellite communications and community coordination to support safety and wellbeing during emergencies.



9. Resource support

As regional and reasonably dispersed communities, we rely on support during disasters.

We have health workers, community workers and volunteers.

During an emergency event, health workers working in Bairnsdale may be stranded away from their community, neighbours and their own families.

Due to the isolated nature of the area, access to health services can be difficult. During an emergency event, timely access to health services is even more challenging.

Our Communities' Hazards

The following hazards have been identified by the residents and communities in our region which considers the history of emergency events in the Lakes Entrance District:

Disaster risk	Description and context
Bushfire and smoke	The threat of major bushfires on an annual basis throughout the Lakes Entrance district is significant and real. The surrounding Colquhoun State Forest, Lake Tyers State Park and adjoining bushland create conditions where fire can spread quickly under hot, dry and windy weather. Dense smoke from extended campaigns of regional fires create a health hazard.
Drought	We have experienced significant drought periods, which heighten bushfire risk in our region and adversely impact the agricultural sector in terms of feed and livestock conditions. Preceding the 2019-20 Black Summer fires, East Gippsland experienced five to six years of exceptional dryness.
Floods	Floods continue to be a major disaster risk in the low lying areas of Lakes Entrance District. Severe weather coupled with heavy rainfall causes landslips and in floods low-lying areas, not only in the Lakes Entrance township but in culverts on the roads to the north.
Severe storm and wind	There is potential for storms to cause significant damage and lead to road closures from flash floods and trees falling across the road. The townships of the Lakes Entrance District are subject to weather patterns from the Southern Ocean as well as from the high country.
Storm surge	Severe weather and high tides can cause seawater to inundate roads, properties and infrastructure, leading to flooding, erosion and isolation. Storm surges often coincide with heavy rainfall and strong winds, compounding impacts on drainage and access.
Heat	Prolonged high temperatures increase the risk of heat-related illness, particularly for older people, young children and those with existing health conditions. Heat can also stress power supply, reduce water quality and heighten bushfire risk.

Community Priorities

Residual risks are what's left after assessing our vulnerabilities in light of the hazards and our capacity to prepare and manage in times of disaster. We have identified the following residual risks for the communities of the Lakes Entrance District and identified priority actions — our Community Priorities — to mitigate against these risks. Priorities specific to each township are outlined in further detailed in each township community emergency plan.

Residual risk		Our Community Priorities
1	Without communications we are isolated and lack reliable information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure community members know where to access internet and satellite capability. • Look out for neighbours and locals, establish methods to check on everyone. • Support Council's work that has improved telecommunications resilience in our region (establishing the STAND framework – Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters). • Familiarise ourselves with our Community Assembly Areas, which are our connection points for community and communication points for agency and community to provide emergency information. • Ensure the Incident Control Centre can communicate with the Community Assembly Areas and are in contact with official local contacts • Strengthen how we receive reliable, accurate and regular communications during an emergency.
2	Lack of road access cripples our community, our jobs and the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure those tasked with enforcing road incident control protocols are supported by local knowledge, to minimise disruption to local residents in the event of a road closure. • Improve timely and accurate information about access routes and clear signage. • Ensure multiple channels of communications before, during and after a disaster. • Enable the major roads to stay open for locals to function, check on neighbours and get essential goods.
3	Power outages impair essential services that are critical to our lives and livelihoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure communications towers are able to re-fuelled regularly. • Plan and implement emergency backup battery capacity for communications towers and exchanges.
4	Social support that is culturally safe is crucial to our health, wellbeing and resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local service providers and council, ensure better access to health, mental health and social support services, with a focus on community and individual resilience. • Develop an integrated approach to working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOS) during an emergency event.
5	Bushfire risks increase where high fuel loads exist on neighbouring public land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with land and fire management agencies on an approach to understanding and reducing bushfire risk, and for community input to be reflected in the Joint Fuel Management Plan. • Undertake joint fuel management initiatives between community and agencies for more effective fuel reduction on public land and improved property preparation on private land.

Community Emergency Management Plans

Community Emergency Management Plans are available for:

- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- Lakes Entrance
- Lake Tyers Beach
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA)
- Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust (LTAT) & Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service (LTHCS)
- Nowa Nowa
- Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service (YWAHS)



Photo courtesy of Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust Community Emergency Management Plan

Appendix 1. Definitions

Term	Description
Capacity	<p>In this Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community capacity refers to the high-level skills and experience, education and networks in the community. Agency capacity, as it relates to the hazard and vulnerabilities, is the ability of the agency to support community and reduce the impact of a disaster.
Disaster risk	<p>The Disaster Risks for the Lakes Entrance District communities are the residual impact of a disaster given the hazards, as identified by local agencies, in combination with vulnerabilities, as identified by the Lakes Entrance District communities, after community and agency capacities to respond have been considered. Local community capacities and agency capacities work together to reduce the impact of a disaster on community.</p> <p>These disaster risks have been identified following extensive community consultation, and using the following Disaster Risk Equation:</p> $\frac{\text{Hazards (H) x Vulnerability (V)}}{\text{Capacity (C)}}$
Hazard	In Emergency Management, a hazard is referred to as the potential for disaster to occur.
Impacts	The impact of an event depends on the elements at risk, such as people, economy, environment, agriculture or infrastructure and their associated vulnerability to damage or change because of the event.
Resilience	Resilience is the ability of an individual, system, community or society exposed to an event to resist, absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of an event in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservations and restoration of its essential basic services, structures and functions.
Vulnerability	<p>Vulnerability is a community's susceptibility to injury or damage from hazards. Vulnerability is a reflection of the community's coping resources and may vary within the smaller social and economic groups which form a large community.</p> <p>It is important to note that exposure and vulnerability change over time. It is therefore critical to periodically revisit vulnerabilities in any emergency risk management review.</p>