

City of Rockingham
Heat Management Plan


LIFEGUARD

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Amendment Record

No.	Date	Details
1	April - July 2026	Stakeholder Engagement
2	October 2026	Draft Plan Finalised
3	November 2026	Public consultation and Plan endorsed by LEMC

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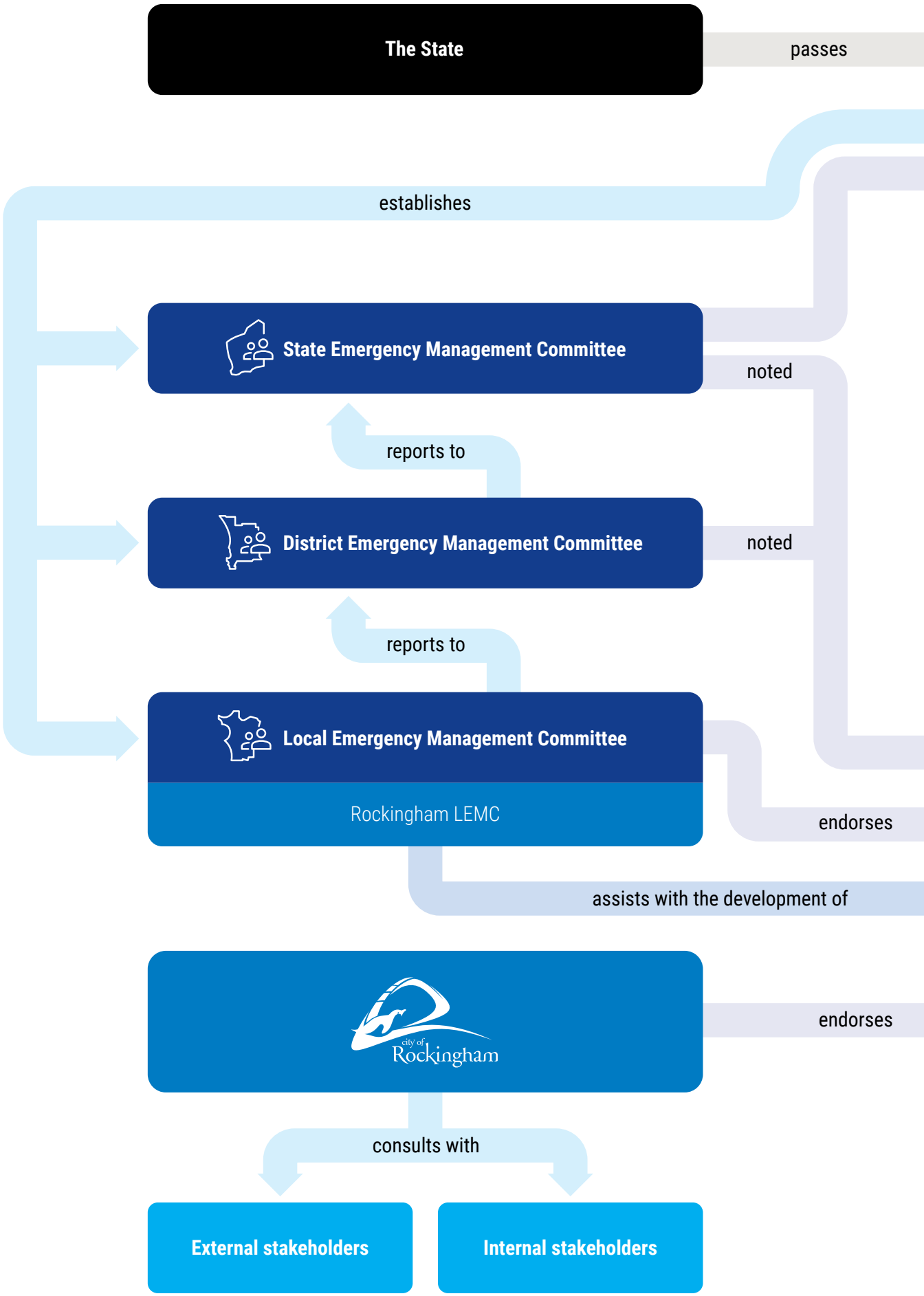
The Heat Management Plan – Ownership

The City of Rockingham Heat Management Plan (HMP) was made possible through funding provided under the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) AWARE Grant Program. The Plan was developed in collaboration with Executive Risk Solutions, combining specialist emergency management expertise with the City's local knowledge, strategic priorities and operational experience.

While various City business units incorporate heat-related actions and considerations within their respective strategies, the Compliance and Emergency Liaison (CEL) Team retains ownership of the Heat Management Plan (HMP), including responsibility for its ongoing review, coordination and updating to ensure it remains current and aligned with the City's priorities and heat resilience objectives.

Local Emergency Management Arrangements

The HMP is a component of the City's Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) and should be considered in conjunction with the other elements of the LEMA, particularly the Local Recovery Plan.


The State
passes
establishes
State Emergency Management Committee
noted
reports to
District Emergency Management Committee
noted
reports to
Local Emergency Management Committee
Rockingham LEMC
endorses
assists with the development of
endorses
consults with
External stakeholders
Internal stakeholders

State Emergency Management Legislation

writes

requires Local Governments to have

Local Emergency Management Arrangements

State policy, plans, procedures and guidelines

forms the framework

to which LEMAs must align



Local Emergency Management Arrangements

City of Rockingham LEMA

- Emergency Management Plan
- Recovery Plan
- Emergency Risk Management Plan
- Communications Plan – Emergency Events and Disaster Recovery
- Emergency Animal Welfare Plan
- **Heat Management Plan**
- Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding
- Department of Communities Local Emergency Relief and Support Plan
- Other emergency management documentation (registers, plans, procedures, guidelines etc)

About This Plan

This plan provides an overview of the City's current actions and proposed future initiatives to reduce the impacts of extreme heat across **people, places and the environment**. It outlines how the City will support community preparedness and wellbeing, create cooler and more heat-resilient urban spaces, protect the natural environment, and work collaboratively with partners to strengthen local resilience.



Authority

This plan forms part of the City's Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) and has been endorsed by the City's Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC). The LEMA have been approved by the City's Council in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 2005*.

Aim

To reduce the health, social, environmental and operational impacts of extreme heat across the City.

Purpose

To outline the City's approach to building community resilience to extreme heat through preparedness, risk reduction, coordinated support and ongoing adaptation to changing climate conditions.

Objectives

The City's approach to heat resilience is guided by four interconnected focus areas that recognise the impacts of extreme heat on people, places and the natural environment. Together, these focus areas provide a framework for strengthening community preparedness, integrating heat resilience into the planning and management of urban spaces, protecting environmental assets, and building partnerships to support continuous improvement.

These focus areas guide the City's existing activities and future initiatives to reduce the impacts of extreme heat across the City of Rockingham.

1	Community Centred Action	→	**People:** Awareness, Preparedness, Vulnerability and Community Resilience
2	Cool Urban Spaces	→	**Places:** Planning, Urban design, Infrastructure and Heat Mitigation
3	Care for Environment	→	**Environment:** Natural areas, Ecosystems, Vegetation and Environmental Resilience
4	Targeted Collaboration	→	**Partnerships:** Coordination, Shared Capability, Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Context

Under Western Australia's heatwave arrangements, the Department of Health has overall responsibility for emergency management of heatwaves. Prevention, preparedness and recovery responsibilities are shared across agencies and the community. The City's role is to support local preparedness, maintain City services, share public information, support community connection and create partnerships to enhance emergency management arrangements. Other arrangements relevant to this plan include:

- *WA Emergency Management Act 2005*
- *Emergency Management Regulations 2006*
- City of Rockingham Strategic Community Plan 2023–2033
- City of Rockingham Local Emergency Management Arrangements
- City of Rockingham Urban Forest Strategy 2025–2030 and Street Tree Planting Plan 2025–2030
- City of Rockingham Sustainability Strategy, Environmental Protection Strategy, Public Open Space Strategy and Local Planning Strategy
- City of Rockingham Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Seniors Strategy and Community Safety and Support Services Strategy
- State Emergency Management Plan and State Hazard Plan – Heatwave
- Bureau of Meteorology National Heatwave Warning Framework and heatwave service
- Western Australian Department of Health extreme heat and heatwave guidance

Scope

The scope of the HMP is limited to the City's local government area. The plan focuses on actions before, during and after extreme heat events. It doesn't replace official health advice, State hazard management arrangements, or the responsibilities of service providers and residents.



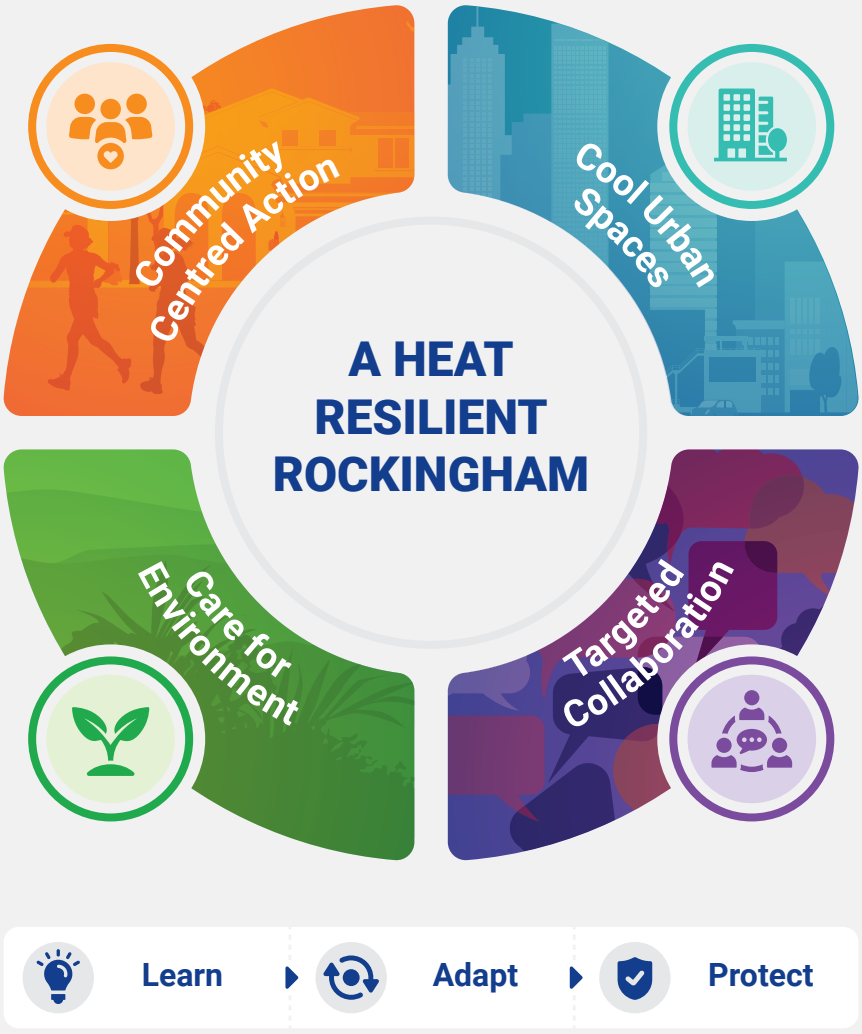
Section 1

Heat Management Framework

Heat Management Framework

This Plan is structured around four interrelated focus areas: **Community-Centred Action, Cool Urban Spaces, Care for Environment, and Targeted Collaboration**. Together, these focus areas provide an integrated framework for strengthening the City of Rockingham's resilience to extreme heat by addressing the needs of people, the design and management of urban spaces, the protection of natural environments, and the partnerships required to achieve lasting outcomes.

Each focus area contributes to reducing heat-related risks and impacts, while recognising that effective heat management requires coordinated action across the City. Collectively, they guide the City's existing activities and future initiatives to improve preparedness, support those most at risk, enhance the liveability of public spaces and promote a more heat-resilient community.



Building our Heat Resilience



Community Centred Action = People + Preparedness

- **Build community awareness and preparedness** by improving understanding of extreme heat, heatwave warnings, associated risks and practical actions to stay safe.
- Identify and **support people most at risk** to extreme heat by understanding local heat vulnerability and addressing barriers that may limit people's ability to prepare for and respond to extreme heat.
- **Strengthen community resilience** and support networks by working with community organisations, local networks and existing City services to support people before, during and after extreme heat events.
- **Provide timely, trusted and accessible heat information** through clear, consistent and inclusive communication that enables the community to make informed decisions and take protective action.
- **Support individual and household preparedness** by promoting practical measures that help residents, businesses and community organisations prepare for and manage periods of extreme heat.



Cool Urban Spaces = Planning, Design + Infrastructure

- Integrate urban heat considerations into land-use planning and development.
- Embed **heat-resilient design principles** into streets, public spaces, buildings and infrastructure.
- **Reduce urban heat island impacts** through appropriate urban form, materials, shading and surface treatments.
- **Improve thermal comfort** and access to shade across streets, activity centres and other high-use urban spaces.
- Use heat and spatial data to **identify priority areas** and guide urban heat mitigation investment.
- **Embed urban heat resilience** into relevant City strategies, policies, standards and capital works programs.



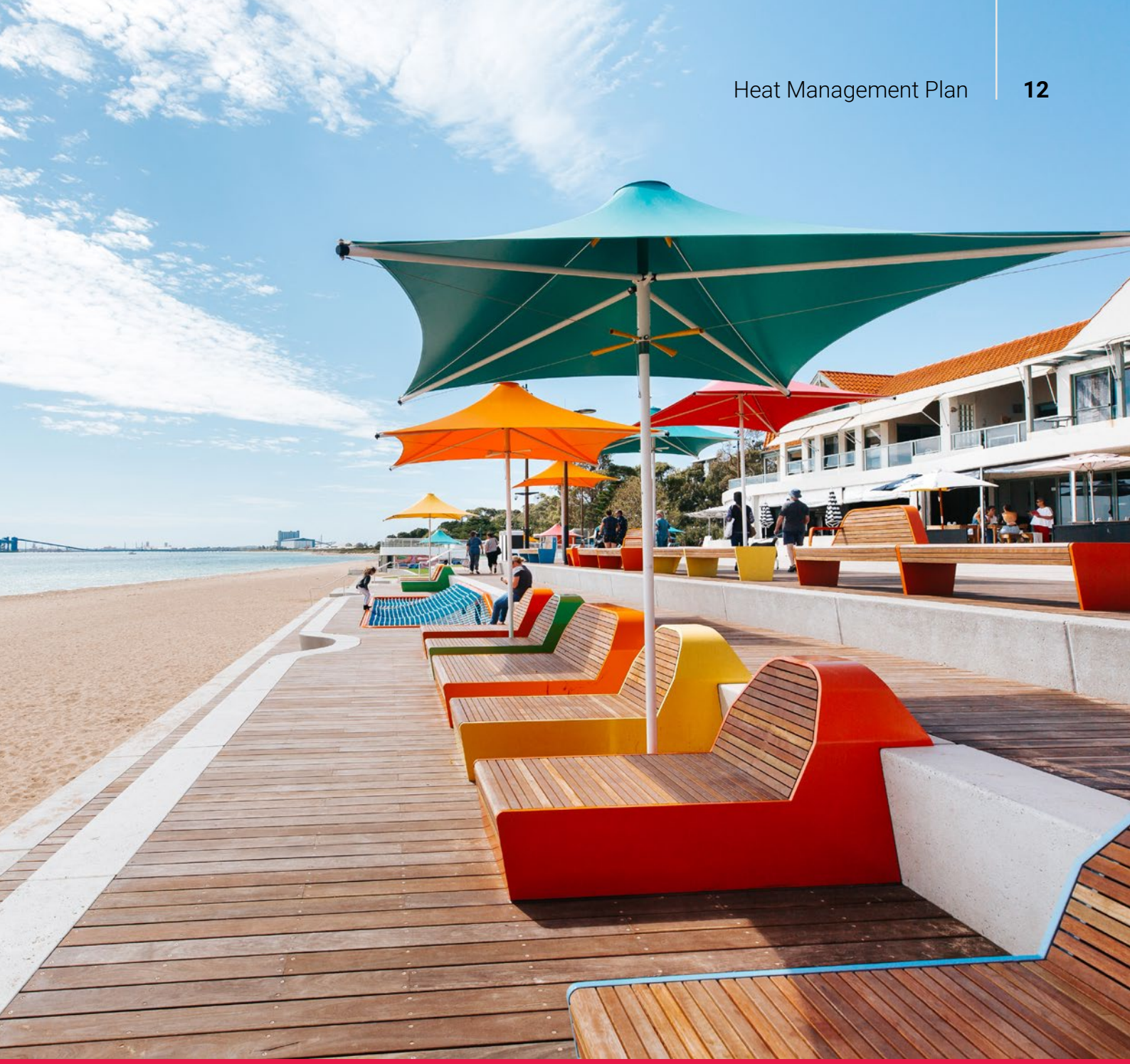
Care for Environment= Natural Environment + Ecosystems

- **Strengthen the resilience of natural areas and ecosystems** by considering the impacts of extreme heat on vegetation, biodiversity, waterways and other natural assets.
- **Protect and enhance urban vegetation and tree canopy** to support ecosystem health, habitat and the capacity of the natural environment to withstand periods of extreme heat.
- **Support water-efficient and climate-resilient environmental** management by incorporating appropriate water use, vegetation selection and maintenance practices into the management of natural areas and landscapes.
- **Incorporate climate and heat resilience into environmental planning** and management to ensure the potential impacts of increasing temperatures are considered in the protection, restoration and ongoing management of the City's natural assets.
- **Monitor heat-related impacts on the natural environment** to improve understanding of local environmental vulnerabilities and inform future management, adaptation and investment decisions.



Targeted Collaboration = Partnerships + Coordinated Action

- **Strengthen local partnerships and coordination** by working with health, emergency management, welfare, community, aged care, disability, utility, education and other relevant organisations to support coordinated action before, during and after extreme heat events.
- **Clarify roles and responsibilities** across partner organisations to support timely decision-making, information sharing, escalation and coordinated delivery of heat-related actions.
- **Strengthen shared capability and preparedness** by supporting collaboration, knowledge sharing, training and joint initiatives that improve the community's capacity to prepare for and respond to extreme heat.
- **Coordinate the delivery of priority heat actions** by working with partners to identify responsibilities, timeframes and resources required to implement the Plan.
- **Monitor, evaluate and share lessons** by assessing heat-related impacts, reviewing the effectiveness of actions and using lessons identified to strengthen future planning and collaboration.
- **Maintain effective implementation and review arrangements** that track progress against priority actions, measure outcomes and ensure the Plan remains responsive to changing climate and community needs.



Section 2

Extreme Heat in WA

Extreme Heat - A Local Hazard

Heatwaves are a significant natural hazard in Western Australia and are increasingly recognised as a whole of community resilience issue. Extreme heat can affect people, essential services, infrastructure, transport, the built and natural environment, and the local economy.

What is extreme heat?

Extreme heat occurs when high temperatures and other environmental conditions create elevated risks for human health, natural enthronement, infrastructure and livelihoods. It is one of the deadliest weather and climate hazards worldwide[1].

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) assesses heatwaves using forecast and observed maximum and minimum temperatures over three days, taking into account what is unusually hot for the location and recent conditions. Heatwave risk is therefore relative to local climate and recent conditions rather than being defined by a single temperature threshold.

The City faces heat-related risks arising from a combination of a warming climate, urban development and infrastructure pressures.

These risks are compounded by reliance on essential services, including electricity, transport and cooling systems, which may be disrupted during extreme heat events.

Heatwave severity

Classification	Bureau of Meteorology Definition
Low intensity heatwave	Conditions that may be uncomfortable and can still affect people who are particularly vulnerable.
Severe heatwave	Conditions that present a greater risk to vulnerable people and may place pressure on services and infrastructure.
Extreme heatwave	Rare and very intense conditions that can affect normally reliable infrastructure, services and healthy people as well as those already vulnerable.

1. World Meteorological Organization. 2026. https://wmo.int/themes/extreme-heat

Heatwave warnings

The Bureau of Meteorology provides seven-day heatwave forecasts and issues warnings when a heatwave is expected within the next four days. In Western Australia, heatwave warnings are generally issued at 2pm local time.

Emergency WA provides updated advice and heatwave warnings, using the Australian Warning System's three levels of escalation:

Warning Level	Community Action	City Action
 **Advice**	Stay informed and prepare.	Share heat preparedness information and direct the community to official channels for weather forecasts, warnings and health advice.
 **Watch and Act**	Conditions are changing and protective action should begin.	Share relevant heat-related information, consider potential impacts on City services, and liaise with relevant local partners as needed.
 **Emergency Warning**	Highest level of warning. Immediate protective action is required.	Reinforce official heat-health advice and maintain essential City services where practicable.

During heatwaves, the City will share relevant public information and communicate changes to City services resulting from cascading heat impacts, such as power outages. This may include information about available support services and resources, changes to the operation of City facilities and public spaces, and advice on where community members can access heat-related assistance.

Hazard Management Agency (HMA)

The State Hazard Plan – Heatwave outlines the arrangements for managing heatwave emergencies in Western Australia, including the key roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies. The Department of Health, as the Hazard Management Agency (HMA), has primary responsibility for coordinating the management of this hazard. This includes coordinating the management of heat-related health risks, providing public health advice, and supporting a coordinated response to protect the community from the health impacts of extreme heat.

The City of Rockingham supports this work through its local preparedness, sharing of public information and management of City services, in accordance with its responsibilities and operational capacity.



Section 3

Understanding Heat Risk in the City

Local Heat Risk

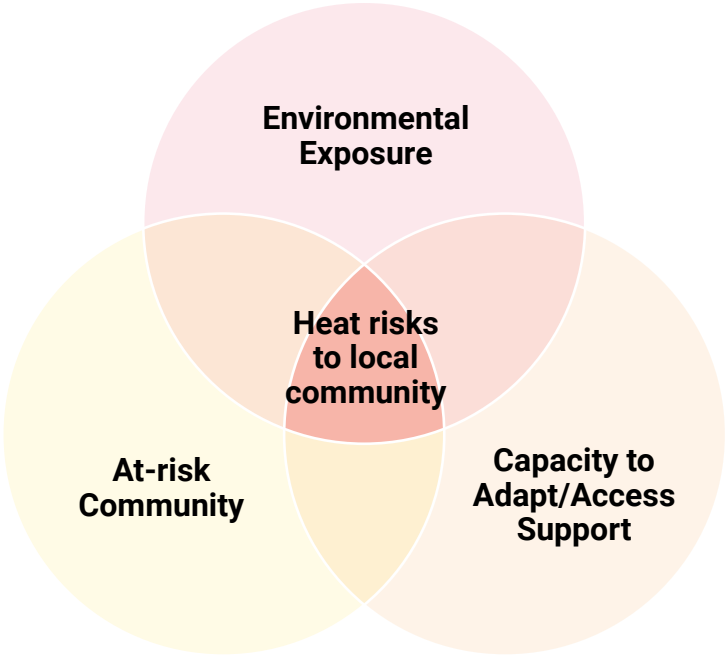
Across the City of Rockingham, heat exposure varies with land cover, vegetation, tree canopy, building materials and urban development.

Landgate's Urban Heat Map[2] identifies localised areas of elevated land surface temperatures, including areas of cleared land in parts of Baldivis. These patterns highlight the importance of considering heat at a neighbourhood and street level, rather than assuming all areas within a suburb experience the same conditions. Coastal influences and established vegetation can provide local cooling benefits, although conditions vary by location and time of day.

Heat risk is influenced by more than the **severity and duration of heat events alone**. It reflects the interaction between **heat exposure, at-risk community and the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt or access support**.

These factors interact to influence the likelihood and severity of heat-related consequences across the City.

The figure below illustrates the interconnected relationship between environmental exposure, at-risk community, and adaptive capacity/access to support.



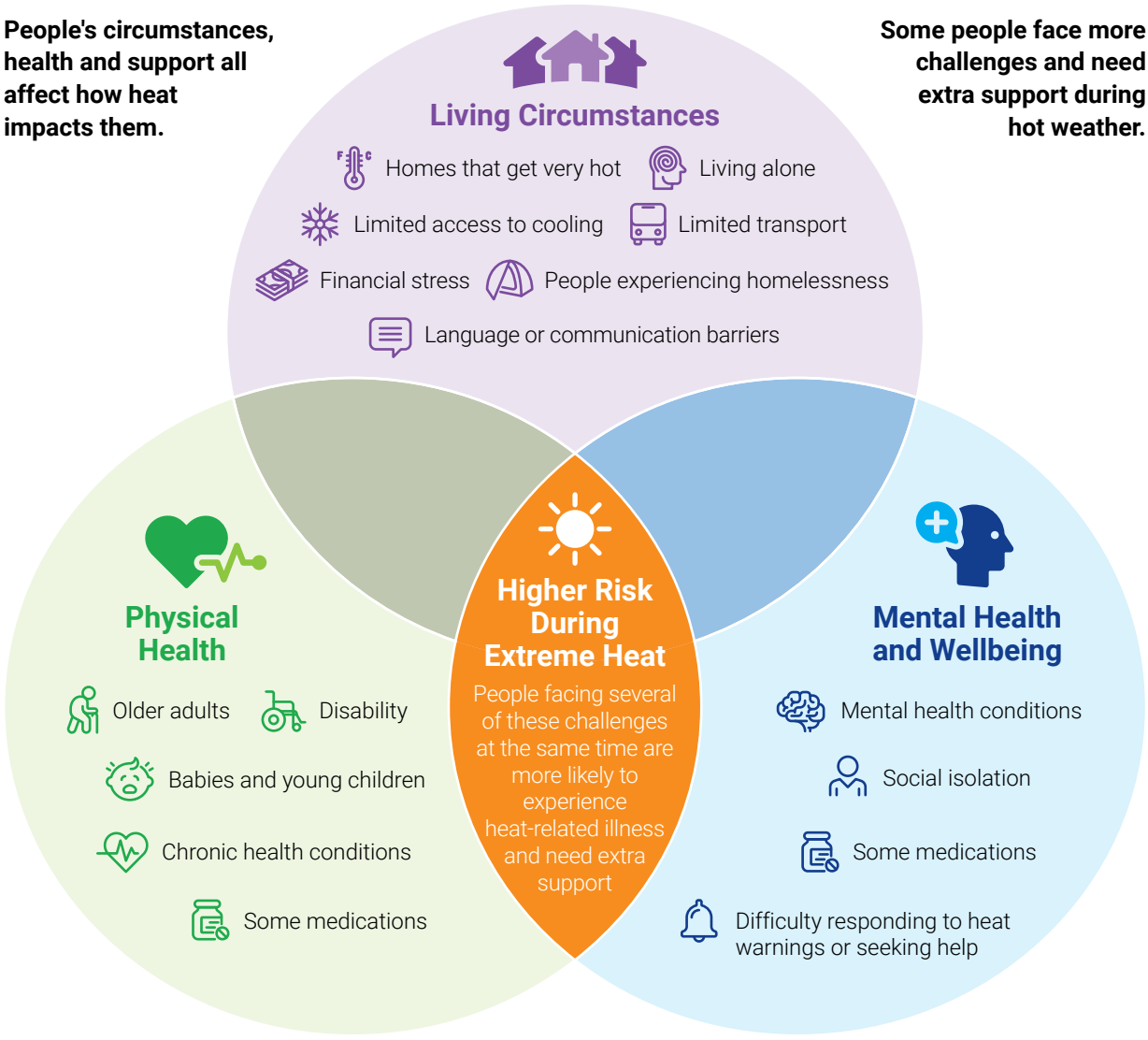
2. Landgate. Urban Heat Mapping. https://urbanheat.landgate.wa.gov.au/

Heat Equity Principle

Extreme heat does not affect everyone equally.

The heat equity principle recognises that extreme heat does not affect everyone equally. A person's ability to prepare for, cope with and recover from extreme heat can be influenced by their health, age, income, housing quality, access to cooling, social connections and the characteristics of the places where they live, work and spend time.

Applying a heat equity approach means identifying communities and locations experiencing greater heat exposure or vulnerability, and prioritising support, resources and interventions according to need.



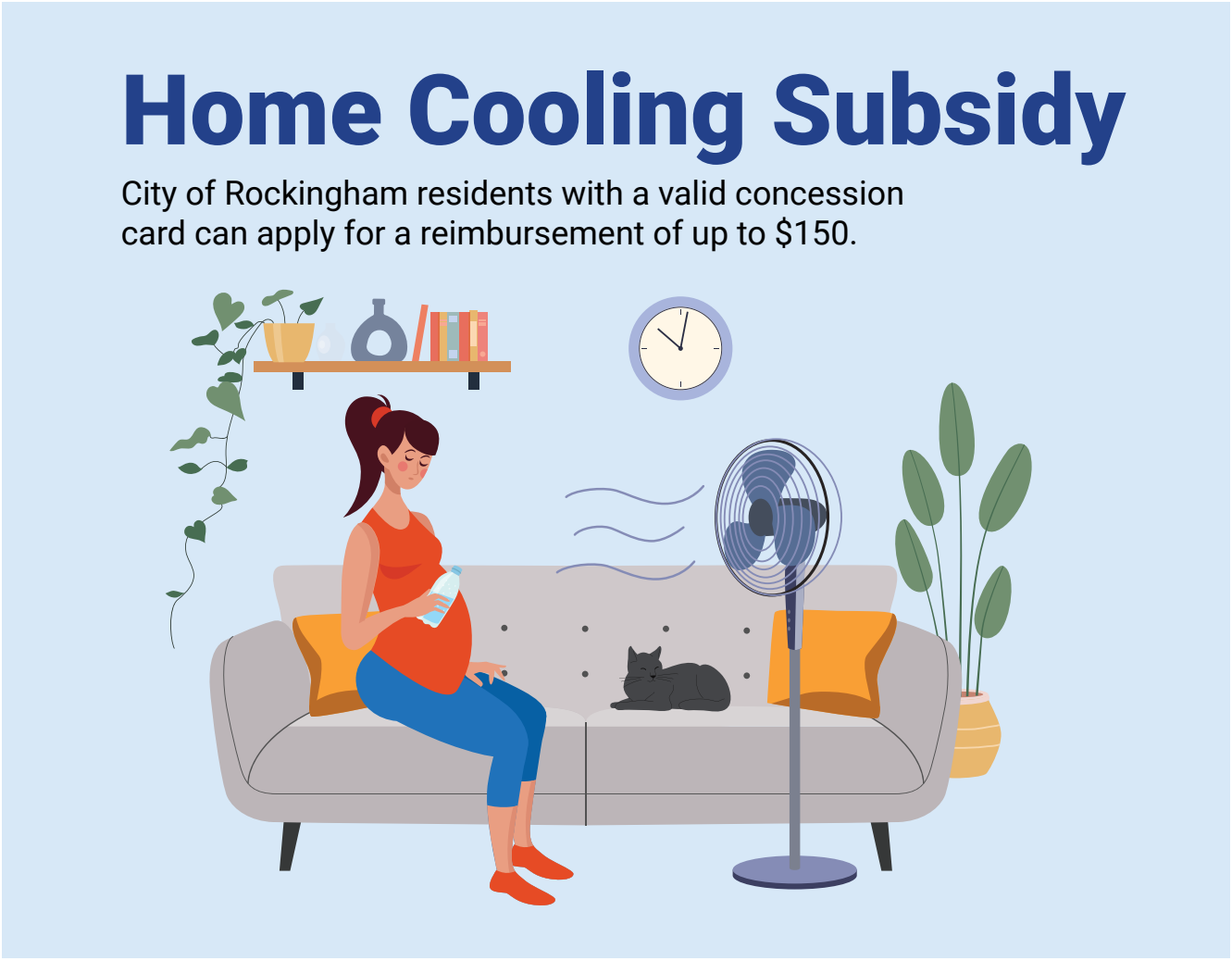
Moses A, Guo S, Wood L et al. Heat-health interventions for people experiencing homelessness The Lancet Public Health, 2026; 11, e819-e830

Supporting at-risk Individuals

Everyone can be affected by extreme heat, but risk increases where exposure is high and a person's ability to keep cool, recognise danger or access support is limited. The City uses a people and places approach as levels of risk can change with circumstances.

For the City of Rockingham, this includes:

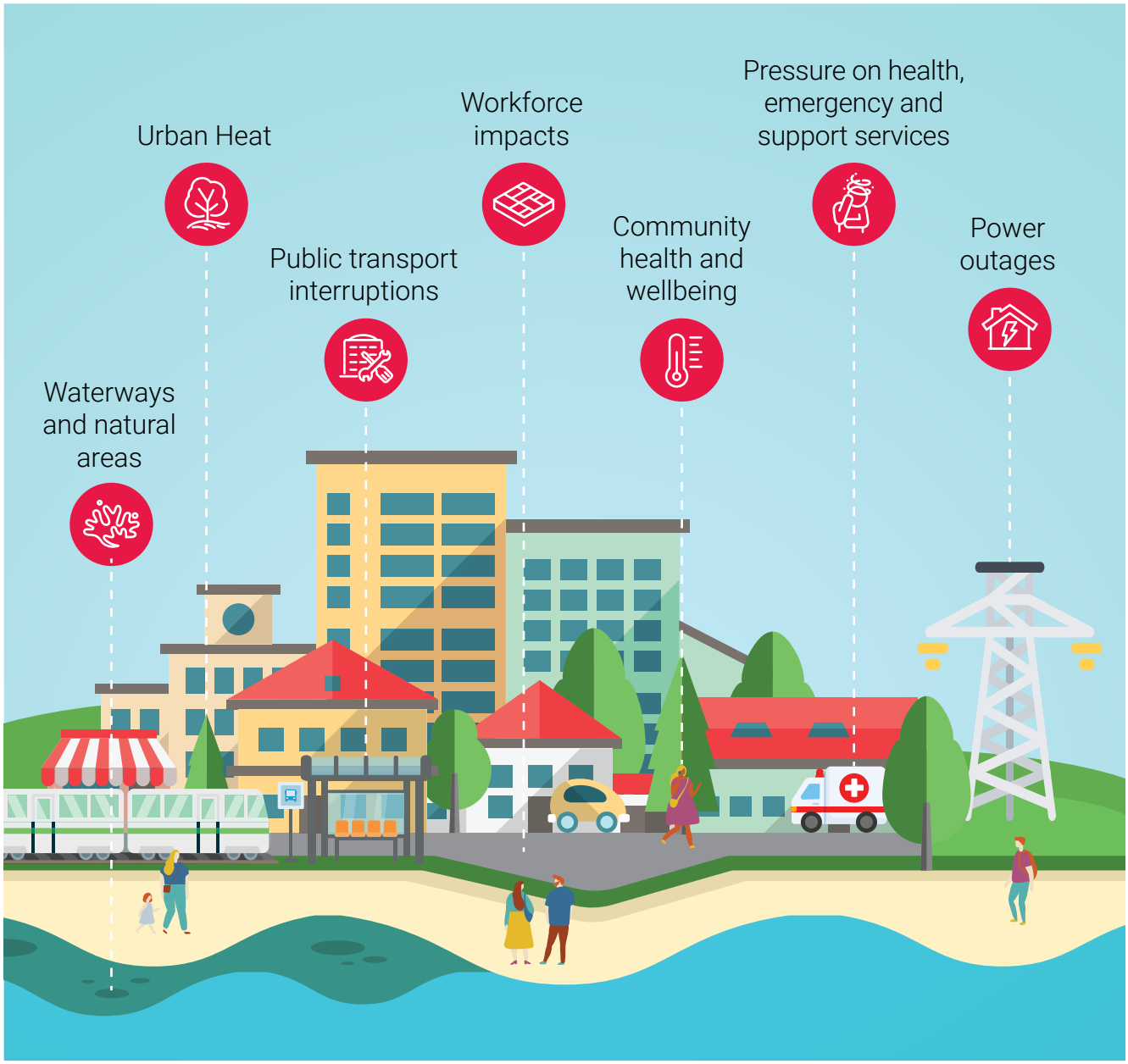
- Supporting people who may have limited capacity to keep cool by providing initiatives such as transport to cool spaces and the Home Cooling Subsidy
- Considering the equitable distribution of shade, tree canopy, cool public spaces and community facilities
- Promoting accessible heat-health information
- Creating meaningful partnerships with key community touchpoints such as local Pharmacies
- Engaging with affected communities and support agencies to understand their experiences and ensure that heat management initiatives are inclusive, practical and responsive to local needs



Compounding Heat Events

The consequences of extreme heat can increase significantly when it occurs at the same time as another hazard or emergency.

The City's heat preparedness will consider not only heatwave conditions, but the potential for heat to coincide with:



During a heatwave, these events may change community needs, reduce the availability of normal support options and require greater coordination through the City's established emergency management and business continuity arrangements.



Section 4

Community Centred Action

Managing Heat Across the City

The City's approach to extreme heat is informed by its existing public health, emergency arrangements, environmental management, and community planning frameworks. It also complements relevant City plans, strategies and initiatives that contribute to community health and wellbeing, urban greening, accessible public spaces, and environmental resilience. The City's 'Community-Centred Action' focuses on building awareness, strengthening preparedness and encouraging action to reduce the impacts of extreme heat, with a particular focus on individuals at greater risk.



Build Awareness

Provide clear and accessible information about heat-related risks, how to stay informed and where to find official advice about staying safe.



Strengthen Preparedness

Support individuals and families to be heat ready by providing practical guidance on how to prepare to keep themselves, their household, and pets safe.



Encourage Action

Engage with residents and community networks to encourage proactive behaviour and support the development of heat preparedness plans tailored to individual and household needs.



Support those at Greater Risk

Work with local support agencies and community partners to provide assistance to people at greater risk to the impacts of high heat (such as those experiencing homelessness and financial hardship).

Residents are responsible for their own safety and are encouraged to make appropriate arrangements to prepare for extreme heat, protect their health and wellbeing, and ensure the needs of their family and pets are considered.

The City's activities will depend on the severity and duration of the heat event; the impacts experienced and the information available at the time. These actions will not replace the role of the Department of Health, Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the Bureau of Meteorology in providing official heat-health advice, forecasts, and warnings.

Supporting the Community

Extreme heat can have significant impacts on the health, safety, and wellbeing of the Rockingham community. Prolonged periods of high temperatures can increase the risk of heat-related illness, intensify existing health conditions and place additional pressure on health, emergency, and community support services. **These impacts are not experienced equally**.

The City supports the community to manage the impacts of extreme heat through a range of preparedness initiatives, the design and provision of cool public places and spaces, maintaining essential services and working in partnership with key agencies and local organisations.

Build Awareness and Encourage Preparedness

Provide accessible information and encourage action.

Promote through City communication channels, community networks, and facilities.

Encourage community to prepare for periods of high heat and check on people who may need additional assistance.

Provide cool, accessible spaces

Promote suitable public facilities and spaces that may provide respite from the heat.

Consider shade, drinking water and heat exposure when planning community activities, events, and services.

Consider heat-related risks in the planning and design of City facilities, public amenities and spaces, as well as the delivery of outdoor events and activities.

Support people most at risk

Work with local support services and agencies to understand the needs of people at risk.

Engage with community groups and service providers to support preparedness.

Identify opportunities to strengthen connections with at-risk community members.

Maintain essential community services

Prepare City facilities, services, and outdoor operations for periods of extreme heat.

Consider the safety of staff, contractors, volunteers, and community members undertaking activities in hot conditions.

Coordinate with relevant agencies when heat impacts community needs, service delivery, or business continuity.



Section 5

Cool Urban Spaces

Cool Urban Interface

The City will progressively integrate heat resilience into planning, infrastructure, public open space and asset renewal. This includes increasing shade and thermal comfort, considering access to drinking water where appropriate, using heat and canopy information to guide investment, and considering future heat conditions when planning long life infrastructure.

Not all residents have access to effective cooling at home. During periods of extreme heat, access to a suitable cooler environment can provide important temporary relief and reduce heat exposure.

Depending on individual circumstances, a cooler place may include the home of family or friends, a City library or community facility, shopping centre, community organisation or another publicly accessible air-conditioned location.

Local Cool Spaces

Cool spaces are places where people can seek relief from high temperatures and reduce their exposure to extreme heat. These may include the homes of family or friends, air-conditioned public facilities, such as libraries and community centres, as well as shaded parks and other outdoor areas that offer respite from the sun. Access to cool spaces is particularly important for people experiencing homelessness, those without reliable cooling at home, and households experiencing financial hardship that may limit their ability to afford cooling.

The City will continue to work with community groups, service providers, and facility operators to improve community awareness of places where temporary relief from extreme heat may be available.

Identifying accessible cool spaces close to home, and planning how to get there when needed, can help residents stay safe and comfortable during periods of extreme heat.



Cool City Facilities

City libraries are used informally by residents seeking respite during hot weather. These venues provide welcoming community spaces where residents can seek respite from the heat while enjoying a range of facilities, programs, and activities. Beyond borrowing books, libraries offer programs and experiences catering to a broad range of ages, interests, and abilities, providing opportunities to learn, connect with others and participate in community life. During periods of extreme heat, residents are encouraged to visit their local library to spend time in a cooler indoor environment while taking advantage of the activities and resources available.

City libraries are all accessible via public transport, providing a convenient option for residents to reach these cooler spaces. Explore what's happening at the City libraries during periods of extreme heat by visiting the What's On Calendar.

Access to Cool Spaces

The City recognises that access to transport can prevent some residents from reaching cooler spaces during periods of extreme heat. The City's Community Transport Service may assist eligible residents to reach cooler spaces within the City during periods of extreme heat. This service can help reduce barriers to accessing cooler environments, particularly for people who may be at greater risk or have limited transport options.

Residents are encouraged to contact the City to discuss service eligibility, availability, and transport arrangements ahead of forecast heatwaves.

Dedicated Cooling Centres

City facilities that provide access to air-conditioned spaces where people can seek relief from extreme heat, are distinct from formally activated emergency cooling centres or relief facilities established at the direction of the Hazard Management Agency (HMA) as part of an emergency response. The availability and purpose of City facilities should not be confused with the activation of dedicated emergency facilities, which operate under specific arrangements and direction.

Building Heat Resilience

Managing extreme heat requires more than responding to heatwave events. Decisions about the design and management of neighbourhoods, buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces can influence the community's exposure to heat for decades. The City will use and build on established strategies, policies, and planning processes to integrate heat resilience into its long-term planning and decision-making.

Designing Heat Resilience

The City will integrate heat resilience into the planning, design and renewal of public spaces and infrastructure. This includes considering shade, vegetation, surface materials, access to drinking water, accessibility, passive cooling, and future climate conditions.

Strategic Planning and Urban Design

The City's Strategic Centre Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) incorporates urban greening and aligns with broader State planning frameworks that establish minimum requirements for greening and tree canopy. It also supports Western Australia's State Planning Policy 7.2 – Precinct Design, which aims to create greener, more walkable, and climate-resilient city centres.

The City's Playground Safety Management Plan includes a playground design and assessment framework that strengthens safety considerations across all development sites, with a particular focus on reducing heat-related risks.

These types of innovative approaches enhance the heat resilience of public spaces for the community.

Development and Open Space Requirements

The City's planning requirements help retain green space and reduce the extent of heat-absorbing surfaces in residential areas. For example:

Residential Design Code (R-Codes) Requirements

R-Codes establish requirements for open space and, depending on the applicable provisions, limit the proportion of site area that can be covered by hard surfaces.

Public Open Space

Most local governments require a minimum of 10% of the total subdivisible area of residential subdivisions to be provided as public open space. In rural areas, different zoning requirements apply, and land clearing may be limited to 30% of the total land area in some circumstances.

Street Trees and Landscaping

The City has a dedicated Landscape Architect who supports future residential development and opportunities to increase tree canopy through street tree planting and landscape design.

Building Heat Resilience into Neighbourhoods

The way neighbourhoods and homes are planned and designed can influence how well communities cope with rising temperatures. Good neighbourhood design can make it easier for people to walk, access local services and travel between homes and town centres. The Western Australian Planning Commission's Liveable Neighbourhoods policy supports compact, walkable and mixed-use neighbourhoods.

New homes in Western Australia must meet the energy-efficiency requirements of the National Construction Code (NCC). The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) provides an assessment of a home's thermal performance and energy efficiency.

Together, these planning and building approaches can help create more liveable neighbourhoods, improve comfort within homes and support the community to better manage the impacts of increasing temperatures.



Section 6

Care for Environment

Green Spaces

Rockingham's natural environment and urban forest are central to long-term heat resilience. Trees and vegetation provide shade, reduce surface and ambient temperatures, support biodiversity and improve neighbourhood amenity and wellbeing.

As at January 2024, canopy covered 13.7% of the City. The Urban Forest Strategy identifies a City wide aspirational target of 16.5% over the next 20 years and an aim to increase combined canopy across streets and public open space from 17.9% to 24.5%.



Support delivery of the Urban Forest Strategy and Street Tree Planting Plan as key heat mitigation measures.



Protect existing mature canopy where practicable because established trees provide immediate cooling benefits.



Prioritise urban greening in areas with low canopy and high heat exposure where feasible.



Integrate urban greening into road upgrades, streetscape works, public open space planning and major projects.



Balance greening objectives with bushfire risk, water availability, infrastructure constraints, sightlines and appropriate species selection.



The City will use canopy and land surface temperature information, where available, to understand long-term changes in heat resilience.

The importance of urban forrest

The City recognises the importance of urban forest as part of the City's resilience infrastructure. Unlike mechanical cooling, tree canopy can provide neighbourhood scale benefits including shade, reduced surface temperature, lower energy requirements, habitat, improved amenity and health and wellbeing benefits.



Credit: WALGA EM Forum

Section 7

Targeted Collaboration

Shared Responsibility

Extreme heat affects more than individual health. It can place pressure on community support services, public spaces, essential infrastructure, and the organisations that help residents stay safe. **The City cannot address these impacts alone.**

Through targeted collaboration, the City works with government agencies, community organisations, service providers and local networks to strengthen preparedness, coordinate support for people at greater risk and improve the community's ability to manage extreme heat.

Working Together to Build Heat Resilience

Coordinate Preparedness

Use existing partnerships and networks to coordinate heat preparedness

Identify partner roles, available resources, service limitations, and opportunities to work together before summer

Include heat-related risks in relevant meetings, workshops, exercises, and seasonal preparedness activities.

Coordinate Support for People at Greater Risk

Work with local support agencies to understand community needs, identify gaps in assistance, and strengthen referral pathways

Share relevant heat safety information through community organisations and service providers

Coordinate support, where possible, for people experiencing homelessness, financial hardship, social isolation, or other barriers to staying safe during extreme heat.

Share Information

Share timely, accessible information about heat risks, available services, and practical ways to stay safe

Collaborate with partners to identify emerging needs, service pressures, and opportunities to help within available resources and agreed responsibilities.

Learn and Improve together

Review how partnerships and support arrangements worked following significant heat events

Identify gaps, challenges, and lessons through feedback from City teams, partner organisations, and community service providers

Use these findings to improve future preparedness, coordination, and heat management arrangements.


city of
Rockingham
where the coast comes to life