



## Our Municipal Emergency Management Plan achieves Best Practice

Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) has achieved Best Practice in seven categories, complying with all the relevant guidelines during its recent external audit process.

The five hour audit process consisted of providing relevant evidence to 24 questions. Auditor, Mark Somers, presented Council with a Certificate of Audit at its meeting last week where he also discussed a number of recommendations for continuous improvement.

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), with membership from emergency services, government agencies and departments, volunteer organisations, service providers, business and community representatives, is responsible for the preparation and review of the Plan annually. Council is responsible for ensuring it is maintained and accessible in the event of an emergency.

Councils have a key role to play in emergency management and supporting community safety. Council's Coordinator Grants/Emergency Management, Penni Ellicott, said the leadership of personnel from a range of agencies involved in the development of the MEMP was evident throughout the audit process and subsequent outcome.

"The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) is required to audit the MEMP every three years at a minimum and our Plan was audited by a team from the SES, Victoria Police and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)," Mrs Ellicott explained.

"The audit process is, understandably, a very strict and detailed one. To achieve Best Practice in seven categories and with no category falling short is a testament to the MEMPC's commitment to community safety and the partnerships that come with that."

The external audit process of the MEMP ensures compliance of the Plan with legislation and accountability by the MEMPC to have current processes and practices in place and embedded in the event of an emergency.

The annual review process of the MEMP mitigates the risk of information in the MEMP becoming outdated and ensures changes to Emergency Management practice and legislation will be translated into the Plan in a timely manner.

"The audit process is important in that it also presents us with a number of recommendations for continuous improvement," Mrs Ellicott added. "Council's Emergency Management team is currently reviewing these and will be assisted by the staff of the VICSES East Regional Headquarters in implementing them."

**PR1709 23/09/2015**