

Foster Community Resilience & Emergency Planning Information



Foster Community Resilience & Emergency Planning Information

Local township and area information to help you get prepared for an emergency

- Introduction 3
 - About this document 3
 - About emergency planning and management 3
 - What you can do 4
- Get in the know 4
 - Foster..... 4
 - Understand Emergency Risks 5
- Get Connected..... 8
 - About Foster 8
 - People..... 8
 - Tourism 9
 - Employment 9
 - Transport..... 9
 - Community Services/ Community groups and networks 9
 - Community Communication Channels..... 12
- Get Organised 12
 - Emergency planning resources 12
 - Make a plan 13
 - Staying updated - Victoria’s warning system 14
 - What you can do now 15
- Get Packing 16

Introduction

About this document

This plan was developed as an outcome of work completed as a result of RediCommunities session which identified opportunities for emergency services agencies, essential infrastructure owners and South Gippsland Shire Council to share information on planning completed in relation to emergency incidents. It aims to build community resilience and prepare for emergency events. This information can be used by the Foster community and visitors to help develop a personal or family emergency plan.

No single person or agency can know or be responsible for what happens or what may be required before, during and after an emergency. The planning process used to develop this document supports more integrated planning around emergency events and supports resilience building activities that will help our community prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Some of this information may be familiar to you but may not be obvious to others in the community. This plan is designed for a wide range of people including visitors and new community members, to ensure a shared understanding of risk across our community. The document follows the Red Cross RediPlan format that has been designed to provide an easy-to-follow set of actions to help you plan for emergencies – see redcross.org.au/prepare. Feedback on the document can be provided to em@southgippsland.vic.gov.au

About emergency planning and management

Most emergencies in South Gippsland (such as fires in the home, road accidents and small storms and bushfires) are routinely controlled using local resources and without broader community consequences or communications needs.

The Victorian State Emergency Management Plan sets out the roles and responsibilities of various agencies in response to local emergencies. In South Gippsland, CFA respond to grass fires and bushfires, fires in homes, buildings and sheds and lead or support road accident rescues. VICSES respond to storms, floods, earthquakes and landslides throughout Victoria, and provide the largest road rescue network in the State.

Some emergencies like large destructive storms (for example, the February 2024 storm event) and bushfires have implications beyond the local level. They need more resources, have greater consequences for the community, economy or environment and need messages sent to broader groups of people. These emergencies may mean the community needs to be evacuated and access emergency shelter, food and water, material aid, psychosocial support and health and medical services. In these situations, emergency management arrangements may be enacted to support the response to an incident and coordinate community recovery services after the emergency.

South Gippsland Shire Council works with emergency services and agencies to develop and regularly review a Municipal Emergency Management Plan that outlines these arrangements. More information about how agencies plan for emergencies can be found online at South Gippsland Shire Council - Emergency Management Planning. At all times, information and warnings to the community about the response is provided through Victoria's integrated warning system. See Staying Updated – Victoria's Emergency Warning System below.

What you can do

Individuals, households and visitors can take action before, during and after an emergency.

Before an emergency

Find out about and stay aware of potential risks in your environment. Take protective measures including taking out insurance. Develop personal/family emergency plans to improve your safety and wellbeing during emergencies and keep them current and ready to implement – see the [Get Organised – Emergency Planning Resources](#) section. Consider where you may relocate during an emergency, you are encouraged to go to family and friends in a location well away from the emergency area.

During an emergency

In the event of an emergency, be as self-reliant as possible: in the first instance, agencies will prioritise those most vulnerable. Individuals and families should act on emergency information and warnings and implement plans as required to protect yourself and your family. Where possible, and if safe to do so, consider how you might support your neighbours and your local community, in particular people who are most vulnerable.

After an emergency

Meet your own recovery needs wherever possible. Engage with recovery services through Council or Emergency Recovery Victoria. Review and improve personal/family emergency plans after an event.

Get in the know

Foster

Foster is located in the South Gippsland Shire Coastal Promontory Ward. It is 174 km southeast of Melbourne; 39 km southeast of Leongatha; 14 km west of Toora. Foster is the gateway to South Gippsland's spectacular natural attractions. The town is just 30 minutes from Wilsons Promontory National Park and a short drive to other popular destinations including Shallow Inlet, Corner Inlet, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay. Foster is a destination for international visitors as well as Melbourne residents. In summer, the town's temporary population can increase by as much as two and a half fold due to tourism.

Understand Emergency Risks

What emergencies have impacted Foster in the past, and what types of emergencies are most likely to impact us in the future?

Severe Weather – storm, high winds, heavy rain, hail and power outages

September 2024

Damaging winds led to significant power outages occurring throughout the Shire. Properties off power for 3+ days. Telecommunications were impacted due to power outages. Several roads were closed by fallen trees, reducing the community's ability to effectively travel.

February 2024

Damaging winds associated with thunderstorm activity brought trees down across the Shire. Significant power outages occurred throughout the Shire. Properties were off power for 3+ days. Telecommunications were significantly impacted due to power outages and damage to infrastructure for several days. A large number of roads were closed by fallen trees reducing the community's ability to effectively travel.

October 2021

Severe flooding and winds heavily impacted the Shire on 29 October 2021. Significant power outages occurred throughout the Shire. Isolated properties off power for 3+ days.

June 2021

A cold front crossing southeast Victoria bringing damaging winds and heavy localised rainfall was forecast for Wednesday 9 June 2021. Severe flooding and winds impacted the Shire between 9-10 June 2021. Significant power outages occurred throughout the Shire with isolated properties off power for 3+ days. Over 641 roads (essential public assets) were impacted by trees down, flooding and landslips.

March 2018

South Gippsland experienced significant damage as a result of a wind event that occurred on Sunday 18 March 2018.

July 2016

Stockyard Creek rises just north of Foster and runs south through the township and flooded earlier in July 2016 after the area received 79 millimetres of rain over a 24-hour period. Major roads affected were houses backing onto Stockyard Creek at Boundary Road and then reaching Boyd Court.

February 2016

27mm of rain fell in a matter of minutes causing flooding across the Shire. Mossvale Park can be flooded by the Tarwin River West Branch. Berrys Creek may be impacted by limited flooding in significant rain events.

June 2011

Foster was subject to sudden onset flooding due to an upstream dam break, causing evacuations and over-floor flooding in the town. Road closures can occur at Black Swamp Road due to flooding.

July 2011

57 millimetres was recorded at Foster, with the Foster SES Unit deploying sandbags to many homes to prevent flood water entering.

Drought

2015 – 2016

Drought – water restrictions in place

2007 – 2010

Drought – water restrictions in place

Bushfire/Grassfire

Victoria is one of the most fire-prone areas in the world. Understanding your level of risk is the first step in knowing what to do before and during a fire.

Foster may be impacted by running grass fires or from direct fire impact from burning bush from the north and northwest through to the northeast, this is likely to include ember attack.

Risk is most extreme if you live surrounded by or near forest that is difficult to see through. However, all forest or woodland presents a bushfire risk. If you live in a built-up area on the edge of grassland – whether it's open grassland, parks, paddocks or reserves – you could be impacted by grassfire over summer.

Source – [Am I at Risk? | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)

Smoke can affect people's health. People with heart or lung conditions (including asthma), children, pregnant women and older people are more sensitive to the effects of breathing in smoke. For more information see www.epa.vic.gov.au.

Fire history in Foster and South Gippsland

There is no history of major bushfires for Foster and surrounds however and there have been numerous grass and bushfire fire ignitions in the last 5 years.

1944 – 1964

Significant fires affected the South Gippsland area.

1941 – 1942

Fires in South Gippsland killed one person at Foster and another at Hedley, destroyed several houses including 19 in Yarram, where fires burnt on a 60-mile front.

1930 – 1931

Fires at Wonthaggi, Koo Wee Rup, Foster, Haunted Hills at Yallourn, and Trafalgar.

1925 – 1926

Forest fires burned across large areas of Gippsland throughout February and into early March. Many lives were lost in addition to widespread damage to farms, homes and forests. In January, fires occurred at Leongatha, Wonthaggi and Foster. By the 10 March, bushfires were within quarter of a mile of Wonthaggi Post Office and there was a large fire at Foster North.

Extreme heat

Days of extreme heat and heatwaves are periods of unusually hot weather that can worsen medical conditions or cause potentially fatal health problems, like heatstroke. Extreme heat can affect everyone. Those more at risk are people over the age of 65, babies and young children, pregnant women, people with acute or chronic health problems, and people who are socially isolated.

Extreme heat can also affect community infrastructure (such as power supply and public transport) and other services. More information to help your planning can be found at <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/extreme-heat>.

Biosecurity

Exotic pests and diseases can threaten the agricultural sector and animal industries that are important to Foster and surrounds. A farm biosecurity plan is a simple tool to help minimise the risks of diseases, pests and weeds on your property. Starting a farm biosecurity plan doesn't need to be complicated. If this is relevant to you, see <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/> for more information.

Other risks

Emergencies come in many forms and more information on general risks are included at <https://www.emergencyprepare.com.au/>.

Calling for help

Is someone seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help? Is your life or property being threatened by bushfire? If you answered YES call Triple Zero (000).

If you need emergency help in a flood or storm because:

- A tree has fallen (tree down) and caused structural damage to your home or vehicle.
- There is damage to your roof, or it is leaking significantly.
- A tree or large branch has fallen and is preventing you from entering or leaving your home.

- Your property is flooded or about to flood

Call VICSES on 132 500. Your request for assistance will be logged by a 24/7 call centre. A local volunteer may then contact you for further details.

If **NO**, depending on your situation you should:

- Contact your insurer to make a claim or arrange permanent repairs.

Contact a professional tradesperson to repair damage or remove debris, if required.

Get Connected

Get to know and grow your community. Identify support networks and those who might need your help.

About Foster

Details	Foster
Local Government Area	South Gippsland Shire Coastal Promontory Ward
State or Territory	Victoria
Fire District	West and South Gippsland Fire District
Location	174 km southeast of Melbourne, 39 km southeast of Leongatha, 14 km west of Toora
How many people live here	2,044
Where do people stay here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prom Country Lodge • Prom Central Caravan Park • Wilson Promontory Motel • Various B&Bs • Short term accommodation providers (Stayz, Airbnb)
Peak tourism/visitor periods	School holidays Summer season Weekends, public holidays and long weekends Major and community events – see below under <i>Tourism</i>
Access	Primary – South Gippsland Highway Secondary – Fish Creek-Foster Road and Foster-Promontory Road

People

- Foster has a diverse population of residents from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- In 2021, Foster had a total population of 2,044 people living in 1,109 dwellings.
- Most residents speak English as their first language.
- Foster's population is 2044 but this increases during the summer.

Tourism

Visitors are attracted to Foster for a variety of reasons – including to visit cafes, wineries and breweries, sports, entertainment, a monthly farmers market, music and special events, and the Grand Ridge Rail Trail. Many travellers pass through Foster enroute to the South Gippsland Coast, Wilsons Promontory and on day trips around the Strzelecki Ranges. The Grand Ridge Road is a popular drive and passes through Foster. The Grand Ridge Rail Trail traverses the Strzelecki Ranges and commences in Mirboo North and continues towards the forested areas to Boolarra. A number of tourist coaches travel through this area.

Weekends and long weekends can be busy as well as times when there are events on in town, including the monthly Foster Craft Market (from November to April).

Employment

Main industries of employment include:

- Aged care residential services
- Childcare
- Dairy and beef farming
- Education services (kindergarten to Year 12)
- Government agencies (Parks Victoria, DEECA, South Gippsland Water, SGSC)
- Healthcare
- Supermarket and grocery stores.

Transport

Public transport services

- Butterfly Passenger Service
- Gippsland Taxis
- Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) community transport
- School buses
- V/Line bus services – Yarram to Melbourne

Community Services / Community groups and networks

Aged care

- Prom Country Aged Care

Banking

- Australia Post banking services available
- Bendigo Community Bank, Toora & Foster
- Commonwealth Bank

Community services

- FAMDA (Foster Arts, Music and Drama Association)
- Foster and District Historical Museum
- Foster and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society
- Foster Basketball Stadium
- Foster Bowling Club
- Foster Chamber of Commerce Inc
- Foster Corner Inlet Mens Shed
- Foster Country Women's Association (CWA)
- Foster Cricket Club
- Foster Football Club
- Foster Golf Club
- Foster Library (Myli)
- Foster Netball Club
- Foster Outdoor Swimming Pool
- Foster and District Probus Club Inc
- Foster Racecourse and Recreation Reserve
- Foster Recreation Reserve and Showgrounds
- Foster RSL sub-branch
- Foster Senior Citizens Club
- Foster Swimming Pool
- Foster Tennis Club
- Foster War Memorial Arts Centre
- Great Southern Rail Trail
- Manna Gum Community House
- Mt Nicholl Lookout
- New Zealand Hill Nature Conservation Reserve
- Pearl Park
- Prom Coast Soccer Club
- Prom Coast Visitor Information Centre
- Rotary Club of Foster
- South Gippsland Conservation Society (Foster branch)
- South Gippsland Landcare Network
- South Gippsland Shire Council depot
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Stockyard Gallery
- Whipstick Gully Natural Features Reserve

The [Foster Mobility Map](#) shows safe and accessible pedestrian routes and the facilities available in Foster.

Emergency services

- Ambulance Victoria
- Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) response staff
- Foster Fire Station (CFA)
- Foster Police Station
- Foster SES

Faith organisations

- Foster Anglican Church
- Foster Apostolic Church
- Foster Uniting Church
- Prom Coast Community Church.
- St Joseph's Catholic Church

Fuel supplies

- BP Service Station
- Murray Goulburn
- Endeavour Petroleum

Medical

- Foster Medical Centre

Pharmacy

- Foster Pharmacy

Schools and education

- Foster Primary School
- Foster Secondary College
- Prom Coast Centre for Children

Supermarkets and food

- Aherns Fruit Market
- Bakeries
- Butchers
- Fishmonger
- Foodworks

- IGA
- Various cafés, restaurants and pubs

Community Communication Channels

Communication channels and media that are commonly used by the community to share news and updates include:

- Community Noticeboard on [Foster Community Online](#)
- Community Noticeboards – outside supermarket (no keys), two southern side of main street
- Foster Community Noticeboard (Facebook)
- [Prom Coast News](#)
- Library (Myli)
- Manna Gum Community House
- Manna Gum Community House (Facebook)
- Manna Gum manage the Community Noticeboards for the Hospital, located in various locations across Corner Inlet – updated quarterly
- Sporting groups or interest group social media pages i.e. football, cricket, schools
- Visitor Information Centre

Get Organised

Emergency planning resources

The following links contain many helpful tools to assist you in creating an emergency plan:

- <https://www.redcross.org.au/prepare/>
- <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/before-and-during-a-fire/your-bushfire-planemergencyprepare.com.au>
- <https://www.emergencyprepare.com.au/>
- <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe>

If you need help to get started or know someone who may need extra help:

- If you live with disability or care for someone with disability, see <https://collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep-old/>
- Fire safety information in multiple formats and languages: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/fire-safety-translations>

Additionally, an Emergency Information sheet has been prepared by Council to help with the development of your Emergency Plan in the ‘before an emergency’ section of Councils website https://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/emergency_management.

Pets

Your pets are your responsibility. Failing to plan ahead for your pets' safety during an emergency puts everyone's lives at risk. Information relating to planning for your animals in emergencies can be found at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Make a plan

Information about Foster to consider when making a plan

Access issues

- Getting in to and out of Foster in most instances is good, however you should seek information from the Vic Emergency Hotline 1800 226 226 or emergency.vic.gov.au in an emergency that may provide advice on what to do.
- There is very limited public transport and therefore very limited connectivity without access to a private vehicle.
- In significant storm events, it may take some time for roads to be cleared by services. Consider being prepared to assist yourself. Updates relating to access may be provided through the Vic Emergency App and reported road closure information at <https://traffic.transport.vic.gov.au/>
- If you are relocating during an emergency, you are encouraged to go to family and friends in a location well away from the emergency area, a nearby town or other built-up area.
- In a larger scale emergency events Council may open an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC). An ERC is opened so the community can access essential supports. This may include, shelter, food, water, material aid, first aid and emergency information.

Communication issues

- Mobile phone communication around Foster is generally good but can be impacted by location and provider.
- Internet and phone coverage can be impacted by strong winds.
- There are some telecommunications black spots in the Foster area.
- Commercial and ABC radio reception in the area is good.
- Local community radio from South Coast FM is received into Foster (88.1MHz – Central: Korumburra, Leongatha, Wonthaggi, Inverloch).
- In extended power outages (over 24 hours) Manna Gum Community House may be open if there is power to the building where mobile devices can be charged and Wi-Fi accessed.

Loss of power

- When significant widespread power outages occur, priority is given to getting power back to as many houses as possible. If you live at the end of a road or outside town, it may take longer for power to come back on.

- Stay informed during power outages with updates and restoration times at <https://www.outagetracker.com.au/>. To get SMS updates from AusNet, make sure your electricity retailer has your mobile number.

Water

- Some outlying properties are on tank water (no reticulated/mains supply) and also have septic tanks.
- Emergencies involving power outages can mean water access and supply is disrupted. People should limit water usage to essentials such as toilet flushing and hand washing.
- Power outages can also impact on the pumping of water to water troughs for livestock.
- Outside of town: unless your tank is gravity fed, no power = no toilet flush. Be prepared.

After an emergency

- After a major emergency or natural disaster, support is available through the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 or VicEmergency on 1800 226 226 providing information on immediate relief supports, what to do, and how to find out about available services. South Gippsland Councils may be coordinating services locally.
- It's crucial to wait for clearance to return home, check on your neighbours, take precautions when cleaning up due to hazards, and contact your insurance company if you have one.

Staying updated – Victoria's warning system

Victoria has an integrated warning system which provides information and warnings to communities through a range of channels and arrangements – the Vic Emergency App, Vic Emergency Website or Vic Emergency Hotline. Information is also provided to emergency broadcasters (this can take time), or in extreme situations through emergency alerts (a warning system that is used to send people a voice message to landline telephones and a text message to mobile phones).

During an emergency event, it is advisable to source information from credible sources. Using credible sources is very important because the accuracy and reliability of information can significantly impact decision making, public safety, and the effectiveness of response efforts.

Accurate information saves lives

During a disaster, timely and accurate information can be a matter of life and death. Credible sources provide verified data on the magnitude, location, and potential impacts of the disaster, allowing authorities to make informed decisions and issue appropriate warnings and instructions to the public.

Prevent panic and misinformation

Reliable sources help prevent the spread of rumours and misinformation, which can lead to panic and chaos. Clear and consistent information from credible sources helps maintain calm and ensures that people receive accurate guidance on what actions to take during the emergency.
















The Emergency Information sheet at the end of this document contains contact information and details of how to access emergency information and alerts.

What you can do now

- Download the VicEmergency App to your smart phone and electronic devices.
- Save important contact numbers into your phone such as family and friends and the VicEmergency Hotline 1800 226 226.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible and your driveway is accessible for emergency service vehicles, and that your address can be communicated to emergency services by people in your house.
- Develop and practice your emergency plan with the whole family, pets included.
- Pack an emergency kit and keep it somewhere easily accessible. Have some non-perishable food at home and some cash if you can.
- Practice packing your car so you know how long it might take you in an actual emergency.
- Get insurance and review what it covers. Consider household, business and income protection insurance.
- Would you or your family need extra assistance/check in during an emergency event? Who will check in on you?
- Get to know your neighbours and build connections in your local community. Talk to your neighbours about your emergency plans and see if there are ways you can assist each other. Look for local volunteering opportunities or other community groups you can get involved in.

Get Packing

Pack your emergency kit – have your own food, water, medication and other essential supplies to be able to look after yourself and your family for at least 72 Hours. An emergency kit must be prepared to suit your family’s needs.

 WATER	 MEDICATION	 RADIO & BATTERIES	 TORCH	 DOCUMENTS
 FOOD	 FIRST AID	 CLOTHES	 TOILETRIES	 MONEY
 PHONE & CHARGER	 PET'S NEEDS	 CHILDREN'S NEEDS	 GLASSES	 WHAT ELSE?