

# Venus Bay Emergency Planning Information



2023

*Local Township Area Information for Emergency Planning for Communities*

## Background

This Plan was developed as an outcome of the funding provided through the Emergency Recovery Victoria Community Led Recovery Funding program, 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.

The Plan will be used to help integrate planning for emergency events and to support resilience-building activities within the Venus Bay community. The Plan will be recognised as a Community Emergency Management Plan in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and will be reviewed as part of the MEMP three-yearly review cycle.

Feedback on the document can be provided to [em@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:em@southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

## Local Area Information

| Name of Community: | Local Government Area:        | State or Territory: |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Venus Bay          | South Gippsland Shire Council | Victoria            |

Venus Bay is a small remote residential/coastal hamlet tucked behind some of the largest recorded sand dunes in Australia. It is positioned on a narrow peninsula located in the South Gippsland Shire Council's Coastal Promontory Ward, 40 kilometres south of Leongatha and 174 kilometres south east of Melbourne.

The Venus Bay township is in a residential/coastal setting with its boundaries defined by Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Point Smythe Coastal Reserve, Anderson Inlet and Inverloch Venus Bay Road. A large part of the area is located on coastal dune, which is heavily timbered with coastal scrub and open farmland to the east.

The township can be split into three distinct areas: Venus Bay Estates No. 1, 2 and 3. The town is predominantly flat and the separation distance between vegetation and dwellings is typically a lot less than 20 metres.

Access and egress is limited due to one road (Inverloch Venus Bay Road) in-and-out of the township and between the first and second estates (Lees Road).

Due to Venus Bay having a large proportion of short stay accommodation and unoccupied houses, properties may not be well prepared; residents/owners/occupiers may be unaware of the extreme risk and community messaging regarding fire danger ratings and the 'leave early' directive. A large percentage of people will be unfamiliar with the area, the lack of services and utilities and dependence on power for water and communications whilst staying in Venus Bay.

### [Venus Bay Community Profile](#)

| How many people live here?   | Where can people stay here?   | Identify any peak periods for tourists and/or visitors.   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Official population data is difficult to ascertain due to changes in the part-time and full-time population post-COVID not being reflected in the 2021 Census (900 full-time). Venus Bay's current full-time population is estimated to be between 1,200 and 1,500. This expands to between 5,000 and 8,000 over peak times, this includes day visitors.</p> <p>Number of dwellings: 1,828 with official data stating 515 permanently occupied and 72% unoccupied. This data gap is an ongoing challenge.</p> | <p>There is a high proportion of short stay accommodation available, as well as the Venus Bay Caravan Park. Some people camp on undeveloped blocks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak Summer period (November to February).</li> <li>• Long weekends.</li> <li>• Easter.</li> <li>• School holidays.</li> </ul> |

## Tourism

Venus Bay is a popular tourist destination in the summer, with many holiday homes and day-trippers using the numerous beach car parks and access track managed by Parks Victoria. As well as being known for its wild beaches, the area is also visited for its various popular fishing, birdwatching and walking attractions. It is a holiday retreat for people from Melbourne and is close to other popular South Gippsland tourist spots such as Wilson's Promontory and Phillip Island.

Many visitors are unfamiliar with the area and not aware of the risks associated with the dynamic and minimally serviced coastal environment. Many tourism hosts do not offer information regarding these risks.

## Employment

Industries of employment include:

- Trades.
- Tourism.
- Hospitality / retail (i.e. pub / supermarket).

## Roads and Transport

Venus Bay has only one road connecting the three estates.

The Venus Bay Inverloch Road is the only road in-and-out of Venus Bay.

### [Tarwin Lower Community Profile](#)

#### Primary Access / Egress Roads

The solitary access/egress road is the Inverloch Venus Bay Road that then becomes Jupiter Boulevard. The section of this road through the township of Tarwin Lower is called River Drive.

#### Secondary Access Roads

- Canterbury Road.
- Lees Road.
- Centre Road.
- Fishermans Road (jetty access restricted by tide levels).

The only road access into Venus Bay is via Tarwin Lower.

#### Transport Services

- South Gippsland Regional Taxis.
- School buses operate within the Venus Bay area.
- The Venus Bay Community Centre operates a limited run beach courtesy bus for tourists and residents during the peak holiday period. This is to encourage tourists to swim between the flags at Venus Bay's only patrolled beach.
- Venus Bay Community Centre is undertaking a Community Transport pilot project (starting 2024) and has a 10-seat electric mini-bus that will be used to address transport needs.

## What services exist in this community to support local residents and visitors? *e.g. medical centre, local hospital, police station, primary school, community house etc.*

### Supermarkets and Food

- Small general store on Jupiter Avenue – First Estate.
- Various takeaway outlets.
- Tarwin IGA is the main supermarket for Venus Bay.

### Pharmacy

- Venus Bay Pharmacy.

### Banks

- Nil – closest is Inverloch, Leongatha and Foster.
- Tarwin Lower Post Office.

### Medical

- VERY LIMITED services at the [Tarwin Lower and District Community Health Centre](#) (Nurse Practitioner and various allied health professionals by appointment).
- Hospital – closest is Wonthaggi, Leongatha or Foster. Leongatha has no emergency department.
- Ambulance – closest Ambulance Stations are Wonthaggi, Leongatha or Foster. Community are assisted in first response by the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) – activated through 000.
- Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) a.k.a defib – located at 133 Jupiter Boulevard and other locations including Venus Bay Community Centre, Mens Shed, Angling Club and Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club.

### Aged Care

- Nil – closest is Inverloch, Wonthaggi, Leongatha and Foster.

### Fuel Supplies

- Tarwin Lower Service Station.

### Emergency Services

- Venus Bay CFA (satellite station).
- Tarwin Lower CFA.
- CERT – Community Emergency Response Team.

### Schools / Education

- Tarwin Lower Primary School.
- Koonwarra Village School.
- Inverloch Primary School.
- Secondary Education – Newhaven, Foster and Leongatha.

### Library

- Myli services run through the Venus Bay Community Centre from time-to-time.

### Churches

- Tarwin Lower Union Church.

### Accommodation

- There are a number of short stay accommodation options.
- Venus Bay Caravan Park.

### Other Services and Facilities

- Venus Bay Community Centre.
- Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club.
- Supported playgroup – Tarwin Lower.

## Describe the economic / social / educational / sporting / community networks that connect this community.

*This is a representative list – check local websites/social media for more information.*

- Venus Bay Community Centre.
- Venus Bay – Tarwin Lower and District Men's Shed.
- Tarwin Landcare.
- Wombat Walkers.
- Tarwin Lower – Venus Bay Tourism and Local Commerce Association (TALC).
- Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club.
- Venus Bay Angling Club.
- Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve Committee Inc.
- Tarwin Football Netball Club.
- Tarwin Lower and District Bowling Club.
- Tarwin Lower Mechanics Institute Hall.
- Tarwin Lower Pony Club.

## What communication channels and mediums are commonly used by the community?

*e.g. local publications, community or local radio, newsletters, community Facebook page.*

- Venus Bay Community Centre Facebook page.
- Venus Bay Matter of Fact Newsletter.
- Tarwin Lower / Venus Bay Community Voice (large part-time population).
- Sentinel Times.

## Other Information

- Access / egress into and out of Venus Bay is extremely limited.
- Police / Ambulance response times are restricted and there are limited medical services locally.
- Lack of public transport and connectivity.
- Mobile phone communication around Venus Bay is generally good, but during peak times it may become unreliable.
- Commercial and ABC radio reception in the area is good, local community radio from South Coast FM is received into Venus Bay (88.1MHz – Central: Korumburra, Leongatha, Wonthaggi, Inverloch).
- There are telecommunications black spots in the Venus Bay area.
- Utilities can be unreliable at peak periods.
- Properties are on tank water (no reticulated/mains supply) and all properties have Septic Tanks. In emergencies and power outages, this can cause significant issues with accessing water. People should limit water usage to essentials such as toilet flushing and hand washing.
- Venus Bay has a diverse population of residents from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- New population of residents living four days a week in Venus Bay where they were previously weekenders.
- Full time population is predominantly elderly retirees with few support services. There are also a number of young families moving into the area.
- Venus Bay's beach stretches over 20 kilometres and conditions across its length are ever changing throughout the day with rips, sand bars, deep channels and strong currents acting along the entire beach length. Please help us in keeping everyone safe and only swim between the flags on Beach 1.



## Describe the community's disaster risk profile (including any relevant disaster history)

### **Venus Bay has an Extreme Bushfire Risk Level.**

A bushfire burning under a north / northwesterly wind flow has the potential to impact the whole of Venus Bay township (all three estates) in a short time-frame. The following south westerly wind change will also directly impact the remaining developed areas of Venus Bay.

A major risk of ignition in the Venus Bay area is from an internal source which has the potential under high and above Fire Danger Rating conditions to develop quickly.

Due to the high fuel loads within and surrounding the township, and proximity of dwellings to vegetation, any fire ignition under the influence of the above wind pattern will develop quickly and be difficult to contain.

### **Flood and Inundation**

The Tarwin River can flood due to prolonged rain over a number of days, causing the river to rise and burst its banks. The southern floodplain and areas downstream from the town towards Venus Bay are more likely to experience flooding from storm surges. It should be noted here that the DEECA Cape to Cape Resilience Plan and South Gippsland Shire Council's Coastal Strategy identify increasing risks from storm surge flooding of egress / access roads.

The Tarwin River has a history of flooding, including the Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay area. In 2001, flooding in Gippsland cause the Tarwin River to burst its banks, isolating hundreds of people in the Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay area. During flooding, the Tarwin River can change flow direction as it is influenced by the tides. When the tide is rising, and the river is flowing quickly due to high rainfalls upstream, the river can change direction slightly crossing the Inverloch-Venus Bay Road south of the Tarwin River Bridge near the fishing platforms. This area is incredibly dangerous for drivers and often closes during flooding.

When the tide is rising and rainfall in the Strzelecki's is high, an important influence on the condition of the river levels is the wind direction, i.e. a south westerly wind will hold water in the inlet / river. The lowest point of land adjacent to the Tarwin River is at the intersection of School Road and River Drive. The highest point is at the Tarwin Recreation Reserve.

The only local aquatic rescue agencies are SES (primary) supported by the Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club, the SES is also responsible for a number of kayak rescues a year in Anderson Inlet.

### **Warnings for the Tarwin River**

The Tarwin River does not have tide gauges therefore its difficult to predict flood levels (refer SES).

Warnings issued by Bureau of Meteorology provide generic flood information, but not specifics such as river height predictions. Information about potential floods will also be available from the [SES Tarwin Lower Local Flood Guide](#). You can monitor rainfall and river levels on the [Bureau of Meteorology website](#).

## **Flood History**

### **16 August 2022**

The Tarwin River flooded over the Inverloch-Venus Bay Road and was heavily affected by flood waters for a period of five days. Residents from Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower had to travel on Walkerville Road via Meeniyan and Fish Creek to access main townships, which also impacted supply delivery into the Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay township.

### **February 2016**

27 millimetres of rain fell in a matter of minutes causing flooding across the Shire.

## **Fire History in South Gippsland and Venus Bay**

There is no major bushfire history for Venus Bay and the surrounding area and there have been 24 fire ignitions in the last five years. Under high and above Fire Danger Rating conditions, a fire is likely to spread and reach assets.

### **New Years Eve 2021**

A large grassfire ignited on New Years Eve 31 December 2021 on the farmland at the entrance of Venus Bay off Jupiter Boulevard and was contained. Approximately 40 people sought refuge at the Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club. No exit from Venus Bay due to Jupiter Boulevard and Inverloch Venus Bay Road being blocked.

### **2012**

Hallston fire.

### **2009**

Delburn fire – The Delburn Complex Fire was deliberately lit and directly impacted 128 properties in the Darlimurla, Mirboo North and Boolarra areas.

### **1944 and 1964**

Significant fires affected the South Gippsland area.

### **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.

Source: [Bushfires in Gippsland](#)

## **Severe Weather History**

### **29 October 2021**

Severe flooding and winds heavily impacted the Shire on 29 October 2021. Significant power outages occurred throughout the Shire. Properties were isolated, with some having no power for three plus days.

### **June 2021**

A cold front crossing south eastern Victoria with damaging winds and heavy localised rainfall was forecast for Wednesday 9 June 2021. Severe flooding and winds heavily impacted the Shire over the 9th and 10th of June 2021. Significant power outages occurred throughout the Shire. Properties were isolated, with some having no power for three plus days.

Over 641 roads (essential public assets) were impacted by trees down, flooding and landslips impacted the Shire.

### **March 2018**

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

### **2015 - 2016**

Drought – water restrictions in place.

### **2007 - 2010**

Drought – water restrictions in place.

## **CFA Local Information – Local Bushfire Risk Information**

[Local Information | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)

Select the 'Change Location' toolbar and set your location.

## **Municipal Emergency Management Planning Information – Municipal Risk Information**

[South Gippsland Shire Council – Emergency Management Planning](#)

# Venus Bay Communications and Engagement Plan

The following table provides links to local community groups that can provide information before and after an emergency event. During the emergency event, it is advisable to source information from credible sources.

Using credible sources during a disaster is of utmost importance 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.

**Prevents Panic and Misinformation:** Reliable sources help prevent the spread of rumors 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.

## VicEmergency App and Hotline

The **VicEmergency app** (available from the App Store or Google Play Store) aligns with the [VicEmergency website](#) to provide a centralised location for Victorians to access timely emergency information and warnings.

The **VicEmergency Hotline** (1800 226 226) also provides information during and after major incidents in Victoria. It offers information to help householders, landowners and small businesses plan for and recover from emergencies.

In a situation where you can see or smell smoke, the VicEmergency Hotline can also advise whether or not a planned burn is in progress.

## Emergency Broadcasters

During emergencies, emergency broadcasters will broadcast information which will help you make decisions based on the advice of emergency services. If necessary, emergency broadcasters will interrupt normal programming on the radio or television station.

**Radio** – ABC 828AM, ABC 774 AM, ABC 100.7FM, 3GV GOLD 1242AM, Triple M 94.3FM, 3TR 99.5FM, 3GCR Gippsland Community Radio 104.7FM, South Coast FM 88.1 / 89.1 / 89.5.

**Television** – SkyNews.

ABC Gippsland is also available to be listened to [online](#) or on the [ABC Listen app](#) if you have access to mobile data or WiFi.

It is important to understand that this is a guide only, as radio reception varies and may also depend on local weather and geographical conditions. In addition, you should always use more than one source of information to make sure you have the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.



| <b>Channels</b>  | <b>Municipality</b>   | <b>Venus Bay and District</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| Vulnerability<br>(Elderly, disability, tourists, other). | <a href="#">South Gippsland Shire   Community Profile.</a>  | <a href="#">About the Profile Areas   South West Coastal District.</a>   |
| Radio and Television                                     | ABC – 828FM / 100.7FM<br><a href="#">ABC Radio Gippsland Live</a><br><a href="#">South Coast FM</a> – 88.1 / 89.1 / 89.5  |  |
| Social Media   | <a href="#">South Gippsland Shire Council Facebook page.</a><br><a href="#">CFA Facebook page.</a><br><a href="#">CFA District 9 Facebook page.</a><br>CFA social media / Facebook – Brigades.<br><a href="#">Leongatha SES Facebook page.</a><br><a href="#">Foster SES Facebook page.</a><br><a href="#">SES East Region Facebook page.</a><br><a href="#">Bureau of Meteorology Facebook page.</a> | <a href="#">Venus Bay Community Centre.</a><br><a href="#">Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Lower and District Fire Brigade.</a><br><a href="#">Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower and District Men’s Shed Inc.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Lower / Venus Bay Community Voice.</a><br><a href="#">Common Ground Venus Bay Tarwin Lower.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Landcare Group.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Lower Pony Club.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Football Netball Club.</a> |
| Websites   | <a href="#">South Gippsland Shire Council.</a><br><a href="#">Vic SES.</a><br><a href="#">CFA.</a><br><a href="#">Australian Red Cross.</a><br><a href="#">VicEmergency.</a><br><a href="#">ABC Emergency.</a><br><a href="#">Bureau of Meteorology (BoM).</a><br><a href="#">FFMVic Website.</a><br><a href="#">Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club BeachCam.</a>  | <a href="#">Venus Bay Community Centre.</a><br><a href="#">Venus Bay Angling Club.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Lower and District Community Health.</a><br><a href="#">Tarwin Lower Primary School.</a><br><a href="#">Riverview Hotel.</a><br><a href="#">Venus Bay Caravan Park.</a><br><a href="#">Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club.</a>   |
| Newspapers   | <a href="#">South Gippsland Sentinel Times.</a><br><a href="#">Foster Mirror.</a>   |  |
| Newsletters and Bulletins                                | <a href="#">South Gippsland Shire Council – In the Know.</a>  | <a href="#">Venus Bay – Matter of Fact Community Newsletter.</a>   |
| Local Noticeboards                                       | N/A.  | Community Noticeboard at the Community Centre.   |
| Public Meetings  | Leongatha Council Offices.  | <a href="#">Halls   South Gippsland Shire Council.</a>   |
| Community Plans  |   | <a href="#">Venus Bay Community Precinct Plan.</a>   |
| Other Resources  | <a href="#">Community 55+ Resources.</a>  |  |

Information on agency-led and community-led emergency management engagement activities can be found in the [Municipal Emergency Management Engagement and Resilience Plan](#).

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