

Sandy Point Community Resilience & Emergency Planning Information



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

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Introduction

About this document

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 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.

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 are 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. Under what circumstances will you relocate before an emergency has occurred? Decide and be clear on when you will relocate due to the ‘potential’ of an emergency eg: when catastrophic weather conditions are forecast. You are encouraged to go to family and friends in a location well away from the emergency area. If you don’t have any other options, you may wish to consider the following townships – Leongatha (56km) and Foster (27km).

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

Sandy Point is located in the South Gippsland Shire Coastal Promontory Ward, located approximately 200 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, 2.5 hours’ travel along the South Gippsland Highway via Fish Creek, turning off at Meeniyan.

The long, sweeping beaches surrounding Sandy Point have to be some of the best in Victoria. Over summer, the beach is patrolled by surf lifesavers and entertainment is regularly provided at the Waratah Beach Surf Lifesaving Club.

The Shallow Inlet area to the east of the Sandy Point township is renowned for its kite- and windsurfing and other water-based activities. Drive out on to the beach to launch. The area is also popular with families with young children thanks to its shallow and gently lapping waters.

Sandy Point has a general store and additional shopping options are available nearby in Fish Creek and Foster.

Understand Emergency Risks

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

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

Sandy Point is frequently hit by periods of storm activity. The single road in and out can be flooded and can be impacted by falling trees. It may not be safe to leave during periods of high winds.

Storm surges can lead to high tides that impact the beach and Shallow Inlet. King tides can also lead to the single road in and out of Sandy Point being flooded.

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.

October 2021

Severe flooding and winds heavily impacted the Shire on 29 October 2021. Significant power outages occurred throughout South Gippsland. 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 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.

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.

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 Sandy Point and South Gippsland

Sandy Point has an Extreme bushfire risk level. A bushfire/grass fire burning with a north/north westerly wind will impact populated areas of Sandy Point together with outlying properties. There is no history in recent times of major bushfires for Sandy Point and surrounds but there have been a number of fire ignitions in the last 5 years.

Burning scrub, heath or other coastal vegetation can create hot, dangerous bushfires. If you live by, work by or travel to the coast you are at risk. Beaches, foreshores and shallow waters may not be safe or protect you from radiant heat. Often a fire will be burning between you and the beach.

What can you expect?

- Very hot and fast-moving fires
- Gusty ocean winds causing fire to behave erratically
- A lot of embers
- Fire reaching houses quickly
- Busy, congested coastal roads
- Radiant heat (the heat created by a fire)

What to do

- You need to prepare your property for fire before summer starts
- Decide when you will leave and where you will go on hot, dry, windy days when the risk of a fire starting is increased
- Stay informed on hot, dry, windy days by monitoring conditions outside and tuning into a local emergency broadcaster, checking [emergency.vic.gov.au](https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) regularly and by downloading the VicEmergency app
- Leaving early is the safest option to protect yourself and your family

Neighbourhood Safer Place – Bushfire Place of Last Resort

A 'Neighbourhood Safer Place' (also known as a 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort') is a place of last resort when all other bushfire plans have failed. These are locations that may provide some protection from direct flames and heat from a fire, but they do not guarantee safety. They are not an alternative to planning to leave early or to stay and defend your property; they are a place of last resort if all other fire plans have failed.

- The **Sandy Point Community Centre**, Corner Ocean View Parade and Church Parade, Sandy Point is a designated Neighbourhood Safer Place.

The building has limited capacity and there is no provision for animals. If you need to access the building in a bushfire emergency, call the phone number next to the keypad (03 5662 9200) which is located at the building entrance. Council does not send staff to open the centre in a bushfire emergency.

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>.

Drought

2015 – 2016

Drought – water restrictions in place

2007 – 2010

Drought – water restrictions in place

Biosecurity

Exotic pests and diseases can threaten the agricultural sector and animal industries which are important to Sandy Point. 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/>

Get Connected

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

About Sandy Point

Details	Sandy Point
Local Government Area	South Gippsland Shire Coastal Promontory Ward

State or Territory	Victoria
Fire District	West and South Gippsland Fire District
Location	190 km from Melbourne, 27 km from Foster, 56Km to Leongatha
How many people live here?	312 and 722 dwellings – significant population increase during holiday periods
Where do people stay here?	Lots of homes are owned by non-permanent residents and some are rented out as short-term accommodation.
Peak tourism/visitor periods?	School holidays Weekends, public holidays and long weekends Major and community events
Access	Primary Access/Egress Roads Waratah Road – is the only road in and out of Sandy Point

People

- Sandy Point has a typically Australian-born, English-speaking population of residents from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- In 2021, Sandy Point had a total population of 312 people living in 722 dwellings.
- During holiday periods Sandy Point has a significant population increase to approximately 3000. Visitors are a much more diverse group and may require communication in languages other than English.

Tourism

Facing the stunning coastline of Waratah Bay, Sandy Point is a small coastal village. The population swells in the summer months because of its surf beach, the sheltered waters of Shallow Inlet and close proximity to Wilsons Promontory.

The town is set behind rolling sand dunes, with coastal tracks carving their way down onto the sand. Visitors are attracted to Sandy Point, which has a high tourist population mainly staying in holiday accommodation.

Day trippers also come into the township to take advantage of the beaches.

Sandy Point has a large Surf Life Saving Club, a small shopping area fronting the foreshore, a Caravan Park and a Community Centre that hosts regular live music concerts.

Transport

There is no public transport connection to Sandy Point other than the volunteer-run e-bus. More information can be found at www.sandypointebus.com

Community Services

Community services

- Sandy Point Community Centre

- Sandy Point Community Group – sub-committees Wildlife in Sandy Point (WiSP), Habitat Group and Sandy Point Music
- Sandy Point Waratah Bay Foreshore Committee of Management
- Sandy Point Men’s Shed
- Sandy Point Community Garden

Emergency Services

- Fish Creek & District Fire Brigade
- Waratah Beach Surf Life Saving Club (WBSLSC)
- Marine Search and Rescue Service
- Foster SES

Fuel Supplies

- Sandy Point General Store

Medical

- Hospitals in Foster and Leongatha
- Medical Centres in Foster, Toora and Leongatha

Supermarkets and food

- Sandy Point General Store

Community groups and networks

Sandy Point has a number of clubs and organisations in the township; there’s an activity or interest for everyone who wants to be involved. For the social / educational / sporting / community networks that connect this community visit [Groups in Sandy Point – Sandy Point, Victoria](#)

Communication Channels

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

- Sandy Point News – community newsletter sent quarterly to 500+ e-mail addresses
- Sandy Point Community Group (www.sandypoint.vic.au, Facebook and Instagram)
- Sandy Point/Waratah Bay Community Noticeboard (Facebook)
- Sandy Point/Shallow Inlet Community Noticeboard (Facebook)
- Community Noticeboards – at the Foreshore and Community Garden in TP Taylor Reserve
- Where possible, community emergency information is posted at the Sandy Point Community Centre building which may be open as a Resilient Energy Centre in times of extended power outages

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 Council's 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 Sandy Point to consider when making a plan

Calling for help

Is someone seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help? Is your life or property being threatened? 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 our 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.

Access Issues

- 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
- Access/egress in most instances can be impacted by emergency events
- There is only one road out of Sandy Point
- Internal roads are narrow with heavy vegetation on both sides
- Width of roads can be reduced, especially in the foreshore area due to parking of vehicles on both sides
- A number of dead-end streets exist in Sandy Point
- School buses service Sandy Point and district daily to Foster and Fish Creek
- There is extremely limited public transport and therefore very limited connectivity without access to a private vehicle. The only 'public transport' available is a volunteer-driven, small (10-seater) community e-bus
- 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 road closure information at <https://traffic.transport.vic.gov.au/>
- In larger scale emergency events Council may open an Emergency Relief Centre (ERC). An ERC is open so the community can access essential support. This may include shelter, food, water, material aid, first aid and emergency information

Communication Issues

- Mobile phone communication in some areas of Sandy Point is not good and 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 Sandy Point area – particularly the southeast section of town.
- Commercial and ABC radio reception in the area is good
- Local community radio from South Coast FM is received into Sandy Point (88.1MHz – Central: Korumburra, Leongatha, Wonthaggi, Inverloch), however it can be patchy depending on your location

- In extended power outages (24+ hours) the Sandy Point Community Centre may be open as a Resilient Energy Centre 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 Issues

- Properties in Sandy Point are on tank water (no reticulated/mains supply) and also have septic tanks.
- Power outages will impact on the pumping of water from your tank to your home. Store some bottles of drinking water at your home and fill some buckets if power issues are likely (Storm/Heatwave predicted).
- In Sandy Point: unless your tank is gravity fed, no power = no toilet flush. Be prepared. Modern septic systems require power to operate pumps and filtration, usage during power outages can cause blockage.
- Emergencies involving power outages can mean water access and supply is disrupted. Know what works and what doesn't work when there is no power.

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.

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 support, what to do, and 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.

- Always check with the local authorities before entering Sandy Point after an event. If you are not in Sandy Point when the emergency occurs, please wait for clearance before returning to check on your property.
- Additional traffic into Sandy Point may result in unnecessary strain on already limited resources.

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, no internet means no ability to pay by card/EFT
- 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?