



Council services to be suspended on Code Red days

With the hot summer months upon us, Murrindindi Shire Council is urging all residents to review their bushfire prevention and preparation plans.

Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Sandice McAulay said to ensure it is prepared for the fire season, Council endorsed an updated 'Service Provision and Fire Danger Ratings Policy' at its meeting on 28 November.

"The Policy specifies that on days the Bureau of Meteorology declares 'Code Red' fire danger for the North Central District, Council services to the community will be reduced or cancelled. This is because on 'Code Red' days fire behaviour, if one starts, is likely to be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. The 'Service Provision and Fire Danger Ratings Policy' aims to ensure our employees, Councillors and the general public are not placed in potentially risky situations on fire risk days," Cr McAulay said.

"We want to minimise any unnecessary travel. This means limiting the public's travel to access Council services and minimising travel by Council officers to deliver services. This is likely to affect the operations of the outdoor, community safety and planning and building inspection teams. It will also affect the mobile library service and the maternal and child health services outside of Yea and Alexandra.

"As well as ensuring Council's operations do not unintentionally cause a fire, the Policy aims to ensure Council will have sufficient staff on the ground who can be re-deployed for emergency response and support in the event of a fire.

"In addition, this Policy will see all scheduled Council meetings (Ordinary, Special and Briefings), as well as Council's delegated Committee or Advisory Committee meetings, automatically cancelled on 'Code Red' days. Cancellations on 'Severe' and 'Extreme' days may also be required – our CEO Craig Lloyd will decide this based on local conditions and advice from emergency services, Cr McAulay said.

"It is common for public services – including schools, kindergartens and pre-schools – to be cancelled on 'Code Red' days. We expect employment across the Shire will be disrupted under these conditions too, as people heed the advice of the CFA and enact their bushfire preparedness plans.

"Council offices in Alexandra, Yea and Kinglake will remain open, as far as practicable, on 'Code Red' days. As the Alexandra and Yea townships are the only areas in the Shire not considered 'bushfire prone', some people may choose to come into these towns on 'Code Red' days. In this case, Council officers will do their best to keep recreational services – such as swimming pools and libraries – open," Cr McAulay said.

To read Council's 'Service Provision and Fire Danger Ratings Policy' or any of our other policies, please see www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/policies

