

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
Minister for Veterans



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HELPING COUNCILS KEEP LOCAL COMMUNITIES SAFE

Councils across Victoria this week received increased funding allocations to help them prepare for emergencies, with support made available for planning, education, COVIDSafe initiatives and the hiring of specialist personnel.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* allocated an extra \$1 million to the *Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program*, taking total program funding for Victoria's 64 rural, regional and outer-metropolitan councils this financial year to \$5.56 million.

The program pays for planning, communication and co-ordination work to make sure communities are well prepared and resilient. Funding can be used for a variety of emergency planning work, including education for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in at-risk areas.

Councils have been allocated between \$73,200 and \$146,400 based on factors including environmental risk.

Councils routinely use the funding to appoint an emergency management specialist, with some councils collaborating with neighbours to fund a specialist position across their areas. This year, grants can also be used to ensure that emergency work can be done in a COVIDSafe environment.

Councils' extensive local knowledge and close connection to communities makes them a vital part of Victoria's response to emergency events.

Before, during and after emergencies, council responsibilities include support for vulnerable people, running relief centres and enabling economic and social recovery, while ensuring that important services continue to be provided.

The Andrews Labor Government is undertaking a 'Councils and Emergencies' review to enhance councils' ability to perform their emergency management role.

The review is considering all aspects of council emergency capability. Work on the third phase was delayed due to the 2019-20 bushfire season and the coronavirus pandemic and is expected to be completed in 2021.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"Councils did amazing things to support their communities and keep people safe during last summer's devastating bushfires."

"We've now provided even more support to make sure councils have the staff, resources and tools they need in times of crisis."

"Councils also play a vital role in community recovery and that's been clearly demonstrated across the state over the past 12 months."