Blayney Shire Community Adverse Events Plan

Policy	Strategic
Officer Responsible	General Manager
Last Review Date	

CONTEXT

Blayney Shire Community Adverse Event Plan (the Plan) has been prepared by Council in response to the requirements of the Federal Government's Drought Communities Programme. This Plan has been designed to meet the needs of our community, with special consideration given to the following:

- natural resource management (i.e. managing water supply, ground cover, trees, erosion, biodiversity)
- economic diversification and community resilience (i.e. infrastructure planning, tourism investment, diversifying local industries, capacity building for local leadership)
- communication and coordination (i.e. how to let people know what's available – now, and in the future; how do you communicate in hard times and for recovery) and facilitating the involvement of local community support groups, Non Government and Not for Profit Organisations in delivering volunteers, charitable activities and distributing financial and other support.

The principles in this Plan are consistent with:

- The State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 (SERM Act);
- The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR);
- The Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA); and
- The NSW State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN).

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Plan is to provide guidance for Council and the community to prepare for, and manage adverse events that directly and indirectly affect Blayney Shire.

2. SCOPE

The Plan describes the key strategies and actions at the local level to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from adverse events.

These events may be events for which Blayney Shire Council has full or partial responsibility or external events which are the responsibility of another agency (eg. Rural Fire Service, Area Health Service) that may involve a commitment from Council. Recovery needs vary according to the scope of the adverse event and will change and evolve over time. Therefore recovery activities will be directed by ongoing needs assessment with the community and supporting agencies.

This Plan shall be considered in conjunction with other relevant Blayney Shire Council plans and policies, including:
- 9D 'Incident Response Procedures and checklists'
- 9H 'Business Continuity Plan'
- 2I 'Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Plan'
- 3L 'Community Engagement Strategy'
- 9A 'Work Health and Safety Policy'
- Central West Regional Emergency Management Plan

3. DEFINITION

An adverse event is an incident, emergency or prolonged negative or harmful condition that have a negative impact on the wellbeing of the community.

Adverse events may include events such as fire, flood, drought, severe weather and pandemic disease and/or sudden and unforeseen trade or public health restrictions resulting from an adverse event.

Adverse events range from an individual, local, regional to nationwide level; with the degree of involvement of other government agencies dependent on the scale and impact.

The role that Council plays is subject to the particular adverse event.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Plan are to:

- Plan for building community leadership capability and community resilience and capacity to adapt and cope with chronic stresses and acute shocks caused by adverse events.
- Identify key strategies and actions to be undertaken by Council and other relevant stakeholders, in order to prepare for and manage adverse events that affect Blayney Shire.
- Standardise the approach of Council to meet the needs of the community in dealing with adverse events.

5. PRINCIPLES

As the closest form of government to residents, Council as the representative body is the most suited to determining the recovery needs for the residents living and businesses operating in the shire. Council supports a collaborative approach with government agencies from both State and Federal Governments in returning businesses to normal and operations as quickly as possible, noting the new normal may be different.

Risk management lies with individuals, local communities, local government and industry; and these groups must take all reasonable steps to mitigate and manage risks. Blayney Shire Council's response to an event will vary with the type, nature, location, duration and scale of the incident.

Each adverse event will vary in terms of:

- Seriousness of the event
- Longevity of the negative or harmful conditions being experienced
- Numbers of people impacted and involved
- Risk exposure
- Financial impacts
- Media interest
- Need to involve other stakeholders

Response to each adverse event shall be a community-led recovery. Recovery activities will be directed by ongoing needs assessment with the community and supporting agencies.

Working with affected community members and assisting them to identify their needs, identifying the resources (including social capital) within the community, identifying gaps or additional resources required in collaboration with other agencies and relevant stakeholders.

Communication protocols concerning any Adverse Events will be firstly in accordance with the Blayney Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy and Council's media policy.

Council will use a variety of communication media to provide the community with relevant information in relation to adverse events including print, radio and social media. Where a lead agency has been nominated communication strategies will be in accordance with their protocols.

The following principles are applied when responding to an adverse event:

a) Responsibility for preparation, response and recovery rests initially at the local level. If local agencies and available resources are not sufficient they are augmented by those at the state and federal level.

b) Control of adverse event response and recovery operations is conducted at the lowest effective level.

Stage 1: Prevention and Preparedness
Risk assessment of the operating environment and prevention are the first step in effective adverse event management.

Risk assessments should:
- Identify the hazards
- Evaluate the likelihood of potential harm,
- Evaluate the potential impact of the harm
- Evaluate the number of people that might be affected.

Stage 2: Response
Identification and immediate actions following an adverse event

Summary of immediate actions:
- Ensure a safe and secure environment is re-established as soon as possible
- Any urgent actions that may reduce the harmful impact of the event or its recurrence must be carried out immediately
- Further containment actions should be identified and carried out in a timely fashion
- The needs of the people affected should be met and support provided
- Involve relevant levels of government, response authorities, community groups, Non-Government Organisations

Stage 3: Recovery

Initial reporting and notification

- Adverse events should be reported to any external agencies, government and Non Government Organisations, as required by legislation or regulations
- Effective communication should be established and maintained with stakeholders and customers
- Initial reporting must be completed as soon as possible after an adverse event and within one working day, unless there are exceptional reasons for delay, for example the event was identified retrospectively following a complaint. All adverse events should be reported, even if some time has passed since the event occurred.
- Adverse events should be categorised to support decision-making processes and to inform the level of review required. Every event should be reviewed, but the level of review will be determined from the category of the event, the associated risk score and the potential for learning.   Adverse event reviews aim to establish the contributing factors of an adverse event, with a view to reducing the likelihood and/or impact of similar future events.

Stage 4: Review

The category of the event largely determines the level of review required. Information, communications, outcomes and associated actions from reviews will be stored within Councils electronic records system so that an audit trail is preserved.

Summary of improvement planning and monitoring actions:

- An agreed improvement plan should set out how each recommendation from the adverse event review will be monitored, implemented, measured and shared. The plan should include responsible owners, timescales for delivery and review dates.
- The outcome of the review and improvement plan should be shared with those who reported and were involved in the adverse event.
- Learning, improvements and best practice will be actively promoted and implemented

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Mayor

The Mayor has a civic leadership role and is the public face during an adverse event to communicate to residents via interviews, social media and public relations campaigns.

The Mayor is the lead advocate to other levels of government to communicate the issues, impacts on the local community and intervention measures that may provide relief, short term support and long term solutions.

Councillors

An individual Councillor must exercise due diligence and provide support to the Mayor and General Manager responding to an Adverse Event

General Manager
The General Manager must provide leadership and exercise diligence to ensure that Council fulfils its obligations arising from any Acts imposed or in places as a result of the Adverse Event; ie Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Public Health Orders and Emergency Management Orders.

Directors
Directors must exercise due diligence in responding to an Adverse Event and ensure that Council complies with its WHS duties. Directors must;

- Support their staff in response to an Adverse Event,
- Maintain an understanding of Council operations, hazards and risks,
- Ensure that Council has available and uses appropriate resources and processes to minimise risks,
- Ensure Council has, and implements, processes for receiving, considering and responding to information regarding incidents, hazards and risks, and
- Ensure that Council complies with any duty or responsibility under the WHS Act 2011 or associated codes of practice and regulations.

Managers, Supervisors and Contractors of Council
The responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors of Blayney Shire Council, Contractors of Council, or other affiliated groups of Council, include, but are not limited to;

- Implementing and monitoring WHS policy and procedures within their work group,
- Ensure that any Adverse Events are reported,
- Investigate an Adverse Event where required,
- Identify and control workplace hazards and risks, and
- Respond appropriately to any Adverse Event.

Workers
Responsibilities of a Blayney Shire Council worker include, but are not limited to;
- Taking reasonable care for his or her own health and safety,
- Taking reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons,
- Complying so far as reasonably able with any reasonable instruction that is given by Council to allow Council to respond to an Adverse Event, and
- Reporting Adverse Events promptly within Council's prescribed guidelines.

Others
Persons deemed to be other persons at a workplace must;
- Take reasonable care for his or her own safety,
- Take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons, and
- Comply as far as the person is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by Council to allow Council to ensure the safety of all persons during an Adverse Event.

7. ADVERSE EVENTS RISKS SUMMARY

The Blayney Shire Adverse Events Plan identifies the following hazards as having risk of causing loss of life, property, utilities, services and/or the community's ability to function within its normal capacity.

These hazards have been identified as having the potential to create an emergency.

Hazard	Risk Description	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Priority	Combat / Responsible Agency
Agricultural Disease (Animal/Animal)	An agriculture/horticulture incident that results, or has potential to result, in the spread of a communicable disease or infestation.	Likely	Major	Extreme	Department of Primary Industries
Communicable Disease (Human)	Pandemic illness that affects, or has potential to affect, large portions of the human population	Likely	Major	Extreme	NSW Department of Health
Earthquake	Earthquake of significant strength that results in localised or widespread damage.	Rare	Major	High	LEOCON
Drought	A prolonged serious or severe rainfall deficiency.	Likely	Major	High	Office of Drought Response (DPIE)
Fire (Bush or Grass)	Major fires in areas of bush or grasslands.	Likely	Major	Extreme	NSW RFS FRNSW
Fire (Industrial)	Serious industrial fire in manufacturing, construction complexes within industrial land.	Possible	Moderate	High	FRNSW NSW RFS
Fire (Urban & Residential)	Serious commercial fires in shopping centre, mainstreets and adjoining residential housing, aged persons units, nursing homes and hospital.	Possible	Major	Extreme	FRNSW NSW RFS
Hazardous Chemical Release	Hazardous material released as a result of an incident or accident.	Possible	Moderate	High	FRNSW

Hazard	Risk Description	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Priority	Combat / Responsible Agency
Heatwave	A sequence of abnormally hot conditions having the potential to affect a community adversely.	Possible	Major	Extreme	SEOCON
Storm	Severe storm with accompanying lightning, hail, wind, and/or rain that causes severe damage and/or localised flooding.(includes tornado)	Likely	Major	Extreme	NSW SES
Transport Emergency (Air)	Aircraft crashes in LGA resulting in large number of fatalities, injuries and/or damage to property.	Possible	Major	Extreme	LEOCON
Transport Emergency (Road)	A major vehicle accident that disrupts one or more major transport routes that can result in risk to people trapped in traffic jams, restrict supply routes and/or protracted loss of access to or from the area.	Possible	Major	Extreme	LEOCON
Transport Emergency (Rail)	A major accident that results in environmental damage and may close rail routes for up to a week.	Possible	Major	High	LEOCON / ARTC
Utilities Failure	Major failure of essential utility for unreasonable periods of time as a result of a natural or man-made occurrence.	Possible	Major	Extreme	LEOCON

8. DELIVERY

The key strategies and actions within the Blayney Shire Community Adverse Events Plan respond to the objectives of the plan to build community leadership capability and community resilience and capacity to adapt and cope with chronic stresses and acute shocks caused by adverse events.

These adverse events impact upon the productivity and profitability of the agricultural sector which is the main source of employment within Blayney Shire. When farming experiences a downturn, local services and businesses suffer as less money is spent locally. This may lead to unemployment, some businesses closing, fewer new employment opportunities and some people leaving the community to access employment elsewhere.

Adverse events also have significant social and environmental impacts. Stress affects health and wellbeing of the whole community. Farmland and natural areas can become degraded as a result of adverse events.

This plan is intended to assist the Council and the community to prepare for adverse events.

The support of Federal and State Governments is essential to this process, as Local Councils do not have the capacity to respond to the full extent required to prepare their communities for future adverse events.

The outcome of responding to the key strategies and objectives is a stronger rural community and stronger local economy.

Key Strategies and Actions

Blayney Shire Council has identified the following key strategies and actions in order to prepare for and manage adverse events that affect Blayney Shire. The key strategies and actions are presented within the Federal Government's priorities framework.

Priority	Key Strategies and Actions
Council staff are trained and prepared to assist in managing the impacts of adverse events	• Council staff have received training relevant to their area of work to assist and protect the community in adverse events
Council owned resources are well maintained to manage the impacts of adverse events on facilities	• Continue to maintain Council facilities including roads and buildings in accordance with Council's maintenance schedules to manage impacts of minor adverse events, including minor storm events through drainage work maintenance • Respond to major repairs incidents in accordance with Council works procedures, including road and building repairs
Stewardship of important natural resources	• Continue to support Crown Reserves • Support and encourage workshops and seminars organised by Government agencies, including Local Land Services to assist farmer and farm businesses, including feed and pest management • Actively manage water assets within Blayney Shire, including use of recycled water for irrigation purposes
Informing farmers, communities and government	• Promote the delivery of local project, programs and services to the community through a range of media sources, particularly through social media

Priority	Key Strategies and Actions
Improving planning and decision making	• Support awareness of, and encourage access to, the Rural Financial Counselling Service • Connect local people to relevant services through the Blayney Interagency and provide contact details for relevant organisation and service details through Councils social media and website • Support awareness of available Government assistance • Promote communication with local businesses to provide advice and work cooperatively with clients during times of adverse events • Provision of Council policy that allows for deferral of Council rates with no penalty for those landholders experiencing genuine hardship as a result of an adverse event, who have a good rates payment history.
Building community resilience	• Support continued advocacy by Councillors and the General Manager towards Federal and State Government members of parliament in the interests of the Blayney Shire Community • Support a proactive Council that is innovative and progressive in responding to opportunities to diversify the local economy and improve the provision of local infrastructure, facilities and services • Support capacity and resilience of individuals to support others through mental health training and counselling services • Actively pursue grant opportunities that benefit the Blayney Shire Community in the long term • Support local contractors, and support local businesses • Recognise the important role local community groups, Non-Government and Not for Profit Organisations have in accessing volunteer support and charitable activities by facilitating their involvement to deliver community based resilience programs and funding.

9. LOCAL SUB PLANS, SUPPORTING PLANS AND POLICIES

The plans listed below are supplementary to this Plan, which shall be considered in conjunction with other relevant plans and policies, including:

Plan/Policy	Purpose	Combat / Responsible Agency
Blayney Local Emergency Management Plan	Details arrangements for, prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies	Blayney Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)
Canobolas Zone Bushfire Risk Management Plan	Bush & Grass Fire Response Plan (EOC support in a Section 44 level event)	NSW Rural Fire Service
Blayney Local Flood Plan	EM arrangements for flood operations	NSW State Emergency Service/Blayney Shire Council
Blayney Local Disaster Plan	Ensure the coordinated response to emergencies by all agencies	Blayney Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)
Blayney Risk Management Policy	Document Council's commitment to adopting risk management principles	Blayney Shire Council
Blayney Shire Disaster Workforce Recovery and Continuity Business Plan	Provide a systematic approach for the management of a disaster to re-establish services and operations	Blayney Shire Council
Blayney Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy		Blayney Shire Council
Blayney Shire Council Media and Social Media Policy		Blayney Shire Council

Adopted:	**Date:**	
Lasted Reviewed:	**Date:**	
Next Reviewed:	**Date:..**	