# Appendix 2C – Exercise Scenario Guide

Heatwave Discussion Exercise

The guide supports the facilitator guide (appendix 2A) and slide deck (appendix 2b).

## Scenario Planning Guide – Heatwave Discussion Exercise

|  | Storyline | Trigger questions |
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| General idea | **Time: Tuesday 10 December**  It is mid-December in New South Wales (NSW). The region has experienced prolonged, above-average temperatures since late spring, with no significant rainfall and drought-like conditions persisting since late winter. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) recently reported critically low rainfall in October and November for the region, declaring a "seriously deficient" status for these months.  Local healthcare services are under strain. Public health authorities report a rise in heat-related illnesses, with hospitals and clinics at capacity on several days and experiencing frequent surges in patients. NSW Ambulance has had to redirect crews from other Zones to handle an increased call volume, primarily due to heat impacts on vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly. The NSW Rural Fire Service has also noted heightened bushfire activity across the local area, exacerbated by the dry conditions and persistent high temperatures.  Early weather forecasts on Thursday, 5 December, indicate that heatwave conditions may develop across large parts of the region starting mid-next week, persisting for several days. Preliminary projections suggest that temperatures could exceed 42°C for consecutive days, with little to no relief during the nights. NSW Ambulance is mobilising in anticipation of an official warning, preparing for significant strain on health and ambulance services statewide.  Compounding this situation, a local music festival is scheduled for Saturday, 14 December, in a central town within the Emergency Management Committee's area. The event, which has been planned for 18 months, is a major economic driver for the region and is expected to attract 3,000–5,000 attendees from NSW and interstate. Its emergency plan, pre-approved by the LEMC and REMC, includes on-site support from a private first aid provider for minor medical issues, while severe cases will require transport by NSW Ambulance to nearby medical facilities. | N/A |
| Special Idea 1 | **Tuesday 10 December:** The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issues an official Heatwave Warning for severe heatwave conditions forecasted from Friday, 13 December, to Monday, 16 December. The warning encompasses most of the state, including your Emergency Management Committee area. Temperatures are projected to reach 43°C daily throughout the warning period, with overnight lows not expected to drop below 25°C. | 1. What steps should the LEMC/REMC take to ensure clear and timely public messaging about the heatwave warning, particularly for vulnerable groups and at-risk communities? 2. How can the LEMC/REMC work with functional areas and supporting agencies to ensure coordinated preparations for the anticipated impacts of consecutive days of extreme heat? 3. What key resources and logistical considerations should be addressed now to ensure adequate support during the heatwave, including medical, water supply, and cooling facilities? 4. What actions can be taken to encourage community preparedness ahead of the heatwave, particularly for high-risk groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and outdoor workers? 5. What steps should the designated combat agency take to prepare for the forecasted heatwave, and how can the LEMC/REMC support these preparations to ensure an effective response? |
| Special Idea 2 | **Friday 13 December:** By early afternoon, local hospitals report a surge in presentations for heat-related illnesses, with many facilities in your region exceeding 90% capacity. NSW Ambulance confirms that local units are stretched near their limits, managing a high volume of priority cases. Additional ambulance crews have been redirected from other areas to assist, but wait times for non-urgent cases are significantly increasing. | 1. What role can the LEMC/REMC play in supporting local hospitals and NSW Ambulance to manage the surge in heat-related illnesses and alleviate pressure on their resources? 2. How can the LEMC/REMC coordinate with functional areas and supporting agencies to facilitate the deployment of additional resources, such as cooling shelters or medical support teams, to ease the strain on healthcare services? 3. What public messaging strategies can the LEMC/REMC implement to help reduce non-urgent presentations to hospitals and ambulance services during the peak of the heatwave? 4. How can the LEMC/REMC identify and address emerging risks in real-time to prevent further escalation of the strain on local healthcare and emergency services? |
| Special Idea 3 | **Saturday 14 December:** The music festival begins on Saturday morning, with event organisers actively promoting heat awareness messages and implementing measures to keep the crowds cool. Early in the day, a temporary drinking water shortage arises, exacerbated by the bottled water shortage and the depletion of drinking water tanks used to operate sprinklers for the crowd.  Despite this setback, the event initially runs smoothly. However, as the day progresses, the number of attendees presenting to first aid for heat-related conditions steadily increases. By early afternoon, while the onsite first aid team is still managing, the onsite Ambulance Liaison identifies a growing risk that resources could become overwhelmed if conditions worsen. | 1. What actions can the LEMC/REMC take to support the event organisers and first aid teams in addressing the growing demand for medical resources and drinking water, particularly if conditions escalate further? 2. How should the LEMC/REMC work with the combat agency to prioritize resource allocation for the festival attendees, particularly in light of hospitals nearing capacity and ambulance services being heavily strained? |
| Special Idea 4 | **Tuesday 17 December:** In the aftermath of the heatwave, the LEMC receives extensive feedback indicating that many locals and visitors felt unprepared for the severity of the event. Numerous reports highlight a lack of awareness regarding practical steps to prepare for prolonged extreme heat exposure.  Community members are calling for enhanced public education initiatives, particularly targeting non-local attendees of large events, to improve readiness and reduce impacts during future heatwave conditions. | 1. What steps can the LEMC/REMC take to develop and implement a community engagement campaign that raises awareness of heatwave preparedness, particularly for vulnerable groups and non-local attendees of large events? 2. How can the LEMC/REMC effectively capture and document insights from this heatwave to inform future emergency planning and improve the community's resilience to extreme heat events? 3. What practical measures should the LEMC/REMC prioritise to address the gaps identified during this heatwave, and how can they ensure these actions are integrated into future planning and response frameworks? |

## Injects

Below injects can be used by the facilitator to further guide participants. The facilitator can choose the timing of injects based on the exercise as it progresses.

|  | Storyline | Trigger questions |
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| Inject 1 | **Wednesday 11 December - Midday:** State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) has been advised by Energy & Utility Services Functional Area Coordinator (EUSFAC) that the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) intends to implement load shedding from 1400 hours on Friday 13th Dec. The State Emergency Operations Controller (SEOCON) has requested information from the REOCON/LEOCONs/REMCs regarding areas with sensitive facilities that should be protected from outages | 1. How would the LEMC/REMC coordinate their response to the SEOCON's request for information regarding sensitive facilities? 2. What processes would you use to identify and prioritise sensitive facilities within your area? 3. What key considerations should be addressed when evaluating the community impact of load shedding, and what implications does the LEMC/REMC need to consider in relation to public messaging? |
| Inject 2 | **Thursday 12 December - Afternoon:** Reports begin to emerge that supermarkets across the region have run out of bottled water as residents engage in panic buying. Concerns are raised that some residents and community groups may face shortages of drinking water during the upcoming heatwave. | 1. What actions can the LEMC/REMC take to address potential drinking water shortages, particularly for vulnerable community groups, and how can they coordinate with local suppliers and agencies to mitigate the impact of panic buying? |
| Inject 3 | **Friday 13 December - Afternoon:** A large disability group home in the area experiences a power outage after an excavator damages a main power line nearby. An urgent triple-zero call is received from a support worker at the group home, reporting that eight non-ambulant residents with physical disabilities are showing signs of heat illness. | 1. What immediate actions can the LEMC/REMC take to support the combat agency in responding to the critical situation at the disability group home, and how can they ensure the welfare of residents during the ongoing power outage? |
| Inject 4 | **Friday 13 December - Afternoon:** The first load shedding event starts affecting areas at 14:30 , with approximately 4,000 homes, businesses and schools without power. | 1. What considerations should the LEMC/REMC address in response to the first load-shedding event, particularly regarding the immediate needs of affected homes, businesses, and vulnerable facilities, as well as potential cascading impacts on critical services and vulnerable populations? |
| Inject 5 | **Saturday 14 December - Evening:** The Ambulance Liaison Officer at the music festival formally notifies the Ambulance Duty Operations Manager that the onsite first aid provider has reached capacity. In the last 30 minutes, they have been inundated with patients, and at least nine critically dehydrated and heat-affected individuals now require urgent hospital transport. | 1. How can the LEMC/REMC assist in coordinating additional resources or alternative transport options to manage the critically heat-affected patients, given the strain on ambulance services and hospitals? |
| Inject 6 | **Saturday 14 December - Evening (Late):** As festival attendees begin leaving town, a major motor vehicle accident (MVA) on one of the main highways results in a complete road closure. Traffic quickly builds, and despite the late hour, there are growing concerns for the welfare of stranded motorists enduring the hot conditions in their vehicles. | 1. What immediate steps should the LEMC/REMC take to address the welfare of stranded motorists and mitigate risks associated with prolonged exposure to heat while traffic remains gridlocked? |
| Inject 7 | **Sunday 15 December - Morning:** Police and local council receive reports of significant damage to a major road leading out of town, likely caused by the combined effects of extreme heat and heavy festival traffic. Sections of the road have softened, resulting in tyre and undercarriage damage to multiple vehicles. Concerns are raised that other major roads in the area may sustain similar damage. | 1. What strategies should the LEMC/REMC implement to coordinate and prioritise damage assessments across a wide area, ensuring timely identification of critical infrastructure issues and planning for repairs or mitigations? |