

I am speaking in relation to CAR23/017 Heat Havens

Why we need heat havens

At the outset, it is important to note that the population profile of the Eurobodalla Shire contains above average numbers of both older and socioeconomically disadvantaged people. Heatwaves disproportionately impact older people, children, people with disabilities, those with pre-existing or chronic health conditions, and those with greater [socioeconomic disadvantage](#).

The authoritative 2023 Lancet Countdown report released on Friday 14th November indicated that Heat-related deaths of people older than 65 have increased by 85 percent since the 1990s, according to modelling that incorporates both changing temperatures and demographics. People in this age group, along with babies, are especially vulnerable to health risks like heat stroke. As global temperatures have risen, older people and infants now are exposed to twice the number of heat-wave days annually as they were from 1986 to 2005.

Vital Attributes to operate as a heat haven:

- 1. buildings with air conditioning and Hepa filters** for the more vulnerable to go to escape heat and or smoke. This includes the elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant women, mothers with young babies and children and tourists staying in camping accommodation.

2. buildings where the **power will stay on during power outages** by having **independent power systems** (solar, batteries and back up either gas or petrol generators).
3. internet and communication facilities that work during power blackouts or after damage to mobile phone infrastructure (using Low Earth Orbit satellite connections or similar).

The Australian Energy Management Operator (AEMO) has warned that blackouts are likely this summer due to much hotter temperatures.

SHASA has collaborated with owners of 5 community facilities to upgrade their facilities to include these vital attributes.

Havens Report to Council

Now I will turn my attention to the section in the Heat Report to Council titled “Private and community based provision of heat havens by third parties”. SHASA would like to set the record straight on this section, which is about the havens established by SHASA in community-owned facilities. Council staff did not, I repeat did not, contact SHASA for an update on the Haven Project. As a result the material presented to Councillors today is inaccurate and not up to date.

Operational Plans for the Heat Havens

This section raises concerns about how these havens will operate. SHASA has only recently received grant funding

(from private funds) to produce operational plans for each of the havens. These will be developed in collaboration with the community organisations that own and run these facilities. We aim to complete these plans by early 2024.

The operational plans will include the conditions that will trigger their opening, opening hours, how they will be staffed, what support will be provided, communications strategy and operation of equipment etc. Training will also be provided to volunteers who assist with the running of the havens. SHASA has informed a Council staff member that, once completed, SHASA will provide the Council with copies of the operational plans.

SHASA looks forward to similar operational plans for the 19 “cool space” facilities listed in Table 4 of Council Report, also being made available by Council for public information, in particular, out of hours operations and operations during periods of power disruption.

SHASA has undertaken other measures to enhance the operations of the Heat Havens.

SHASA has recently provided:

- 2 heatwave haven kits (food & toiletries and art materials) to 3 havens.
- stretchers and blankets to 3 havens.

SHASA is currently working with local technology provider The Tec Exec to provide the latest satellite LEO (Low-Earth Orbit) technology - Starlink satellites, which we are calling SkyFi, to deliver fast and reliable internet connections for 3 of the havens in the event of a blackout or

telecommunications disruption.

SHASA is deeply concerned that the final sentence of the section titled “Private and community based provision of heat havens by third parties” implies that SHASA has misused public funds.

When SHASA sought grant funding from governments and philanthropists we made it crystal clear that the upgrades would provide multiple benefits which include:

1. Reduce running costs for these facilities that provide services to the most vulnerable in our community.
2. Improve the day to day functionality of these buildings for a range of community activities.
3. Enable these facilities to provide a place for the most vulnerable members of the community to escape extreme heat.

Who can access the havens?

The statement that one of the facilities Council has contacted will not be open to the general public does not tell the full story. CWA Moruya, CWA Narooma and the Moruya Pre School are not going to be open to the public for personal safety reasons. Older women and young children are highly vulnerable groups and need to be kept safe.

- Moruya Pre-School will be open for parents and children from the 3 Moruya Pre Schools. The CWAs will be open to CWA members and their families.
- Two of the havens will be open to the general community – the Uniting Church Catalina and the Anglican Parish Moruya.

Reference is also made in the section under discussion that these heat havens are not linked with Council's emergency management processes. This is because SHASA has been frozen out of these emergency management processes, despite many attempts by SHASA. It's outrageous to blame community groups for Council actions.

It needs to be understood that havens are alternative, complementary resources in addition to "cool spaces". The havens offer dedicated spaces that are suitable for the more vulnerable members of our community who would probably experience problems in a generic "cool space", and in this context Council needs to heed its own community goal set out at the beginning of this agenda paper, "Our community that welcomes, celebrates and supports everyone".

The havens are quite simply another resource helping to assist the more vulnerable in our community.

In Conclusion

SHASA is a small incorporated, registered charity, which relies on the hard work of highly skilled and dedicated volunteers to undertake practical projects to achieve a more resilient community in the Eurobodalla. This section of the Report is extremely damaging to our key asset, our branding.

SHASA requests that the section be removed.

If the Council is having a problem understanding the concept of heat havens and developing operational plans for its heat havens, SHASA is more than willing to help.