



SHASA  
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance



AUG + SEPT 2026

# THE SPARK NEWSLETTER

## PREPARING FOR AN

***El Niño***

## SPRING & SUMMER

You may have heard talk of a “Super El Niño”. It sounds dramatic, but the message is practical: El Niño can bring drier, warmer conditions to Australia, so it is worth preparing early without panicking.

For many communities, the biggest concern is fire danger. Dry vegetation, hot days and wind can increase bushfire risk. The good news is that preparation works: clean your gutters, reduce fuel around homes, update your bushfire plan and follow official advice.

Warmer days can increase heat stress, especially for older people, young children and outdoor workers. In hot weather, plan heavy jobs for cooler times, drink water and check on neighbours. Get to know your local Heat Haven and have a plan for the hottest part of the day. Power supply may be affected, so what will you do if you can't run your air conditioner?

Less rain (and less snowfall) can dry out farms, gardens and pastures, putting pressure on water supplies, and sometimes pushing up the price of fruit, vegetables and meat. We can help by shopping seasonally, reducing food waste, supporting local producers and using water wisely.

In cooler weather, clearer skies bring cold nights and more frosts, so cover tender plants and watch local forecasts. There may be positives too: El Niño often means fewer tropical cyclones around Australia, reducing chances of damage in northern regions.

Every El Niño is different, and “super” does not automatically mean disaster. Staying informed, saving water and looking after each other can help the Eurobodalla community stay safe, resilient and positive.

## EL NIÑO: WHAT WILL IT MEAN FOR WEATHER IN OUR REGION?

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El Niño typically triggers severe drying, extreme heatwaves, and an elevated bushfire risk across eastern and southern Australia.

By weakening the Walker Cell and trade winds, it reduces moist easterly airflows, often resulting in below-average winter and spring rainfall.

### HEALTH IMPACTS OF HEAT

**Heat stress** is a leading cause of weather-related deaths. It can exacerbate underlying illnesses including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental illness, asthma, and can increase the risk of accidents. **Heatstroke** is a medical emergency with a high case-fatality rate.

The number of people exposed to extreme heat is growing exponentially due to global warming. Heat-related mortality for people over 65 years of age increased by approximately 85% between 2000–2004 and 2017–2021. During heatwaves in 2011 and 2019, hospitals across NSW experienced a 14% rise in admissions.

**Heatstroke** is a serious condition that can result in seizures, organ failure, and more. Before you get heat stroke, you'll experience a milder condition called **heat exhaustion**. Both conditions occur when the body overheats.

Normally, our bodies try to cool us down by bringing hot blood from our core to the surface of the skin, where we radiate that heat into our environment. The evaporation that results from sweating also helps to cool our skin. We get into trouble when the environment is too hot or too humid for these mechanisms to cool us down.

### SMOKE FROM WILDFIRES

Bushfire smoke contains microscopic particles and toxic gases that travel deep into the lungs and bloodstream. Exposure causes short-term irritation (coughing, sore throat, burning eyes) and significantly exacerbates pre-existing conditions like asthma, emphysema, and heart disease.

# The Climate Times

NSW SOUTH COAST

1ST AUGUST 2026

People at the highest risk include the elderly and those over 65, young children, pregnant women, and individuals with pre-existing heart or lung diseases. These groups can experience worsened symptoms even at low smoke concentrations.

## HEAT AND SMOKE HAVENS

Over the past seven years, SHASA has been working with community groups to upgrade their facilities to operate as Heat and Smoke Havens during extreme weather events. The purpose of the Havens is to reduce health impacts of exposure to heatwaves and smoke from wildfires on more vulnerable members of our community.

The Havens have:

1. independent power systems so that the buildings have electricity when the grid fails
2. air conditioning for temperature control
3. HEPA filters to keep the air clean
4. kitchen facilities

Currently there are 10 operational Heat and Smoke Havens in the Eurobodalla. SHASA is currently seeking grant funding to expand the network to 12 Havens to include Roundsquared disability support organisation in Moruya and Club Tuross.

## HAVEN HELPERS NEEDED

Many of these community organisations running the Havens have a limited number of volunteers.

SHASA is encouraging people to sign up to be Haven Helpers during extreme weather events. Being available for a couple of hours can make a real difference to the more vulnerable in our community.

Haven Helpers are vital to enable Havens to be open +/- open for more hours. If you would like to put your name down as a Haven Helper for one of the Havens, please get in touch: email [contact.shasa@gmail.com](mailto:contact.shasa@gmail.com) or ring 0467 558 645

## DISASTER READY FUNDING

In May 2026, SHASA secured Disaster Ready Funding to undertake further infrastructural upgrades to Havens and provide three years of operational support to the Havens. This includes increasing awareness in the community of the existence and benefit of using Havens during extreme weather events.

SHASA is recruiting a part time Haven Coordinator to act as a conduit between the Havens and SHASA's Haven Team and to assist Havens during extreme weather events.



# ***Eurobodalla***

## ***Heat and Smoke Haven Network***

The Havens are intended as community-based places that offer localised support and sit alongside the Eurobodalla Shire's official emergency centres. Instead of developing new, purpose-built infrastructure, our focus is on enhancing existing spaces and supporting the organisations involved to work together effectively.

### **Uniting Church Catalina\***

2 Catlin Ave, Batemans Bay  
Melinda Hume-Cook, 0416 251 312  
melindahc2@gmail.com

### **Southern Life Church Moruya\***

2837 Princes Highway, Moruya  
Julie Brown, 0417 457 388,  
Julie@southernlife.org.au or  
Sue Wilson, 0468 785 228,  
sue.wilson@7mail.com

### **Red Door Hall, Anglican Parish Moruya\***

15B Page St, Moruya  
Lindsay Boydon, 0417 613 689 or  
Ruselle Wannell, 0411 424 931,  
Anglican.moruya@gmail.com

### **Moruya Surf Club\***

2 Charles Moffitt Dr, Moruya Heads  
Marco Cardinale, 0408 846 880  
Bert Hunt 0412 440 763  
info@moruyasurfclub.org.au

### **Broulee Surf Club\***

Heath St, Broulee  
Allan Veness, 0447 431 111  
allan.veness@icloud.com  
rveness@ozemail.com.au

### **Narooma Community Men's Shed\***

41A Barker Parade Narooma  
Liz Clydesdale,  
naroomamensshed@gmail.com

### **Moruya Preschool Kindergarten**

15 Campbell St, Moruya  
Georgie Shepherd, 4474 2431  
moruyapreschool@southernphone.com.au

### **CWA Moruya**

64 Queen St, Moruya  
moruyacwa@outlook.com.au

### **CWA Narooma**

96 Campbell St, Narooma  
Sally James, 0429 305 905  
cwa.narooma@gmail.com

**\* OPEN TO GENERAL PUBLIC, OTHER FACILITIES ARE MEMBERS ONLY.**



# SHASA

Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance

The Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA) is an alliance of Eurobodalla community members. Formed in 2014 SHASA's key focus is to highlight and support action to mitigate climate change for our region.

[shasa.com.au](http://shasa.com.au)  0467 558 645

find your closest  
Heatwave Haven



## ***Know your Haven***

1. find your nearest Haven
2. ring ahead to see if the Haven is open
3. make your way to the Haven
4. look out for the Heat Haven banner.



## ***Future Havens***

SHASA has secured Disaster Ready Funding to upgrade the following buildings:

- Anglican Parish Batemans Bay (Stage 3)
- Uniting Church Catalina (Stage 5)
- Roundsquared, Moruya

# ***Haven Goody Bags***

SHASA is putting together 150 bags to distribute to Haven attendees.

We are seeking ideas on what to include in these bags. Ideas to date include:

**Hydralyte/Gastrolyte tablets** to rapidly restore vital salts and fluids lost through excessive sweating.

**Portable or battery-operated handheld fans, and microfibre cooling towels** that provide sustained cooling when damp.

**High-SPF, broad-spectrum sunscreens**, after-sun lotions (e.g., Aloe Vera), and barrier creams.



**Instant Cold Packs: single-use chemical ice packs or reusable gel packs.** These are excellent for active cooling (applied to the neck or armpits) and for keeping temperature-sensitive medications like insulin cool.

## **What else should go in?**

Text your ideas to 0467 558 645, or  
Email your ideas to [contact.shasa@gmail.com](mailto:contact.shasa@gmail.com)

# ***NET ZERO COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS SHASA CASE STUDY***

The Net Zero Commission's second Spotlight Report delivers rigorous analysis on the impact of extreme heat and humidity in NSW. Drawing on independent research and engagement with key stakeholders, the report identifies nine findings across five action areas that would significantly strengthen the state's resilience to heat stress.

The report uses the SHASA Heat and Smoke Haven network as a case study of local-level implementation of heat responses.

## Heat Stress Spotlight Report

Adapting to extreme heat and humidity  
events in NSW

April 2026



Net Zero Commission



***Scan the QR code  
to link to the report***

# NET ZERO COMMISSION

## HIGHLIGHTS SHASA CASE STUDY

### 8.1.4 South-Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance – Smoke and Heat Havens

The Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA) is a not for profit, registered charity in the Eurobodalla on the NSW South Coast undertaking practical projects to achieve a more resilient community and a low carbon economy.

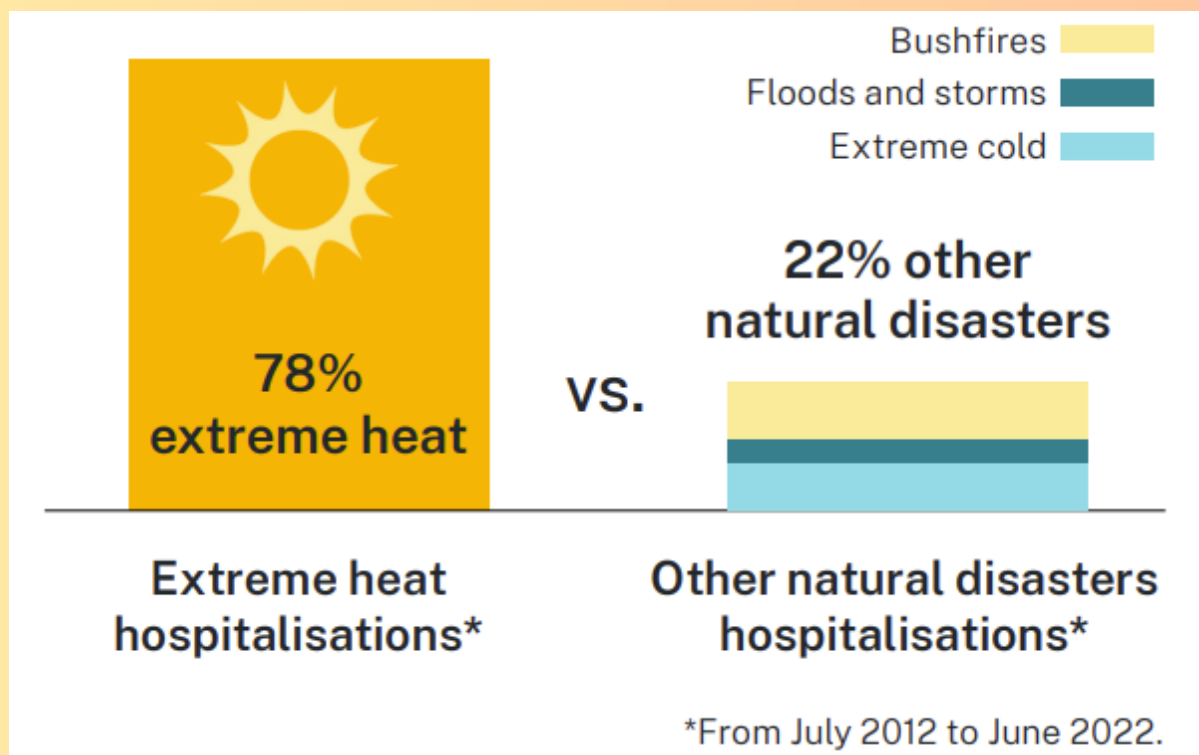
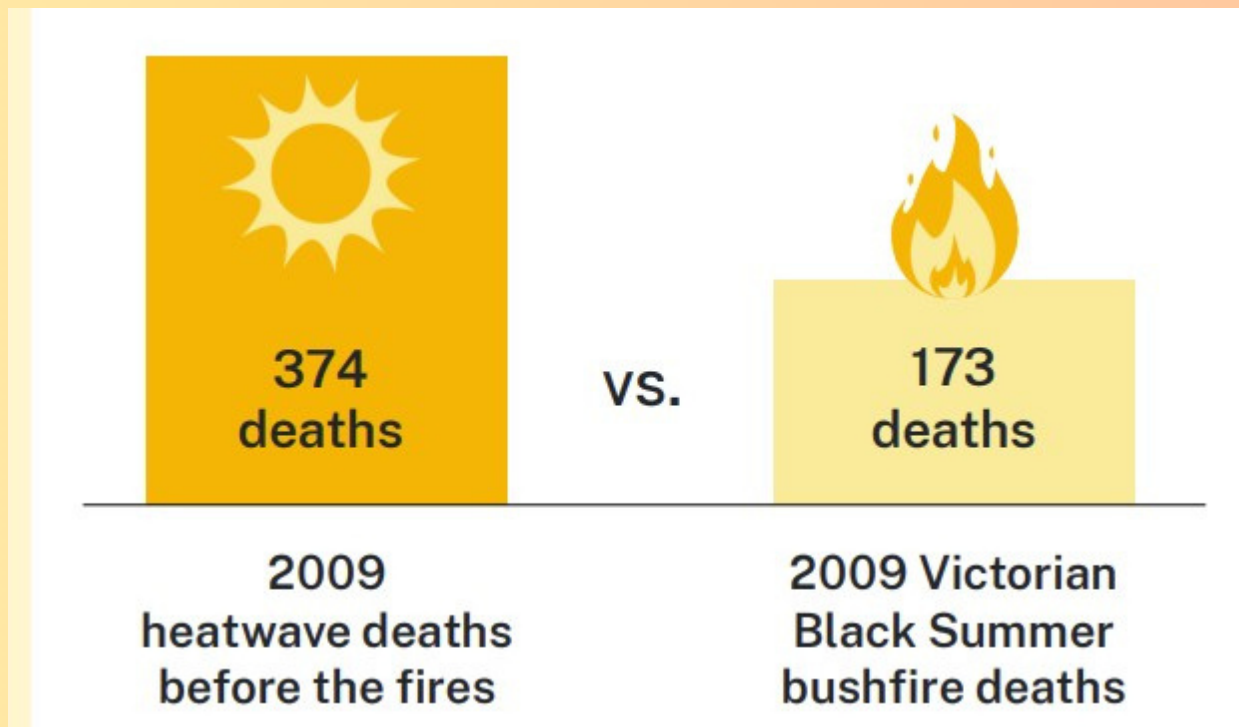
The need for community smoke and heat havens emerged after the 2019-20 bushfires and associated heatwaves, which had significant health and social impacts across the region. SHASA heard consistently from community members that local health services were overwhelmed during these events. In response, SHASA tried to engage with the local council to explore options for supporting vulnerable community members during extreme heat and bushfire conditions.

When it was found institutional support was not available, SHASA developed and implemented the Eurobodalla Heat and Smoke Haven Strategy using its own resources and ad-hoc grant funding. Through this process, SHASA identified and prioritised existing community facilities for upgrades, establishing eight havens across the region to date. SHASA has secured Disaster Ready Funding (Round 3) to upgrade five havens, including three new havens. This will take the network of havens to 11. The Disaster Ready Fund Haven Project importantly provides three years of funding for operational support for the havens including training volunteers, developing

operational protocols for activation, and securing funding for satellite telecommunications to address frequent service outages during disasters.

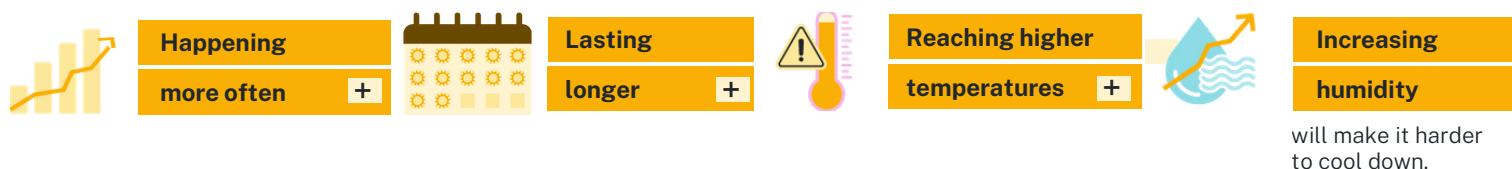
SHASA emphasised the importance of local expertise and volunteer capacity in overcoming these barriers, with members contributing skills in project management, engineering, grant writing, and government processes. Collaboration with other not-for-profit organisations in the region was also critical to the success and cost-effectiveness of the initiative.

# Extreme heat is Australia's deadliest natural hazard



It's going to get hotter, with impacts getting worse unless we prepare now

Extreme heat events are going to intensify in different ways:





# DR MICHAEL HOLLAND MP

MEMBER FOR BEGA

24 June 2026

Ms Kathryn Elizabeth Maxwell

cc-SHASA

Dear Kathryn

As your local Member, I have the opportunity to recognise, congratulate and thank individuals or groups within our community through a one-minute statement delivered during a Parliamentary sitting day.

These statements are known as Community Recognition Statements and form part of the official record of Parliament, recorded in the Hansard of the day.

I am pleased to write to let you know that I delivered a Community Recognition Statement in Parliament this week recognising you and your contribution to our community.

Please find enclosed a copy of the statement for your records. I hope this formal recognition serves as acknowledgement of the significant contribution you have made and the positive impact of your efforts.

Thank you for the role you play in strengthening our local community.

If I can assist you with any State Government matter, please feel free to get in touch with me at my office via [Bega@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Bega@parliament.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

**Dr Michael Holland MP**  
**Member for Bega**

(02) 6492 2056    [Bega@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Bega@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
122 Carp Street, Bega NSW 2550  
PO Box 37, Bega NSW 2550





# **DR MICHAEL HOLLAND MP**

**MEMBER FOR BEGA**

Kathryn Maxwell has been President of the Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance, or SHASA, in the Eurobodalla Shire, since 2018.

Under Kathryn's leadership, SHASA has been a practical contributor to improved resilience and sustainability in the Eurobodalla. With the mixed experience of her first project, a solar bulk buy scheme, under her belt, Kathryn set out to be more strategic in how SHASA would pursue opportunities. After the 2019/20 bushfires, she became the driving force behind a strategy to help a dozen community organisations fully electrify with solar, battery and clean air installations, so they could better shelter residents from smoke and heat in the next event. These upgrades also reduce operating costs, enabling organisations to better serve their community. In addition, and among other things, she established a food service for vulnerable families, organises regular shows promoting EVs and is now working on upgrading even more community facilities. SHASA secured over \$8 million in grant funding under her leadership.

Importantly, Kathryn has created a culture in SHASA that welcomes new volunteers in the organisation and motivates everyone to contribute to their ability. Her tireless volunteer work has had a great and positive impact on the local communities.

## SHASA EV EXPO well attended

The South Coast Health & Sustainability Alliance (SHASA) Electric Vehicle Expo held on Saturday at the Moruya Country Markets was well attended.

There was a wide variety of both private and new dealer models. There were private 17 cars and 7 from Coastal Auto Group (AMH). Andrew Everaard Vice President of SHASA said "we had six people take test drives."

I found people were asking a lot more detailed questions about owning a EV as awareness level has increased sharply in recent months.

Rob Motbey from Coastal Auto Group there was "a lot of interest and test drives booked in for this week from the weekend."



**Are you in the market for buying an  
Electric Vehicle and would like  
to know more?**

**SHASA is happy to help!  
Organise a one to one chat with  
people who own and drive an EV ?**

SHASA President Kathryn Maxwell, SHASA Vice President Andrew Everard and SHASA Member Thomas Schild have a wealth of knowledge and are available to meet with you to advise you on which EV is right for your needs.

Learn about EV models available in Australia today

Discuss savings, costs and advantages of an EV

Chat about EV charging

Take a drive in an EV with the owner

Community resilience  
for the Eurobodalla

shasa.com.au

SHASA



**For more information and to register your interest  
please contact Kathryn Maxwell  
0467 558 645**

# Drew and Cate's MG S5 EV

**Q**

**What was it that got you excited about the car you chose?**

**A**

*I like driving again. The whole EV driving experience with instant torque, low centre of gravity and low running costs really swayed it. We wanted a car from a dealership located no more than 50kms from home, which excluded a lot of others for us. And with this car I can configure all the mandatory safety bings and bongs just how I like with only 2 clicks every time I start the car.*

**Q**

**What's the best thing about being an EV driver?**

**A**

*Not worrying about fuel costs and just how fun they are to drive.*

**Q**

**Is there one negative you would like to mention?**

**A**

*Not really, the car has some software quirks but a lot of cars all have their own little quirks. Overall, the positives far outweigh the negatives.*

**Q**

**When did you first seriously think about buying an electric car?**

**A**

*When our previous novated lease was coming to an end and I looked at the cost savings of switching to an EV. We did 3 months of research including test drives, and then waited for 3 months for the car to arrive.*



**Q**

**What would be your advice to someone thinking about an EV right now?**

**A**

*They're not for everyone, but they are a great option for most people. Go for a long drive in one and don't listen to the naysayers. Range anxiety is a myth, just plan your trip and enjoy the savings*

**Q**

**What's the best, or funniest, or most memorable comment you've received from someone else about your EV?**

**A**

*Someone said to us 'I bet you're feeling a bit smug right now' that was right after the US war with Iran broke out. We'd had the car for 6 months by then and already loved it.*

# Introducing AusAlert™

In October 2026, the Australian Government is launching AusAlert – a new national warnings system that uses the latest technology to send emergency messages to compatible mobile devices.



## What is AusAlert?

AusAlert is a fast and reliable way to help communities be informed and better prepared during local and national emergencies.

## What is AusAlert for?

AusAlert gives the Australian Government and state and territory emergency services organisations the ability to send national or local alerts about disasters. These could be natural hazards such as bushfires, floods, cyclones and tsunamis, or events like public health emergencies, security threats or biosecurity incidents. It's just one of the many ways we're helping to keep Australians safer in times of disaster.

## How does AusAlert work?

AusAlert uses the latest technology to send near-instant emergency messages to compatible mobile devices during disasters.

## What are the different types of AusAlert?

There are 2 main types of AusAlert:

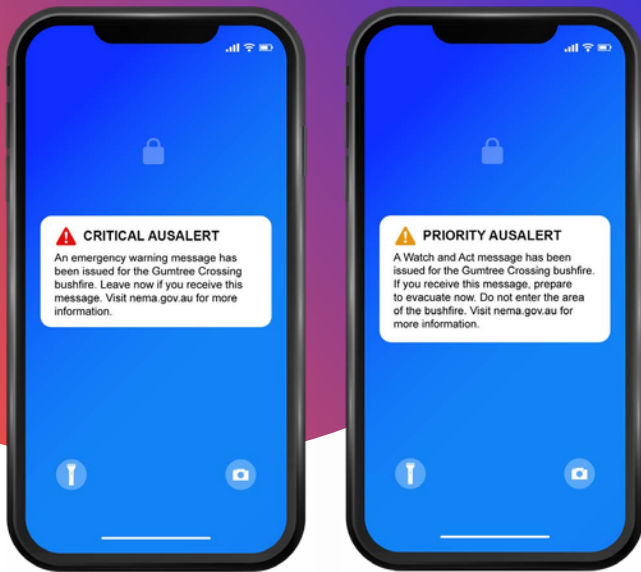
- **Critical Alerts** are used for the most serious emergencies. They can't be opted out of.
- **Priority Alerts** are used for emergencies where there is a heightened level of threat because conditions are changing. They can be opted out of.

## What will be included in an AusAlert?

An AusAlert will be written in English and will let you know the type of emergency, where it's located, how serious it is and how to respond. It will also tell you the name of the emergency organisation that has sent the AusAlert and where to find more information about the emergency.

## What does an AusAlert look like?

Depending on your device type and operating system, an AusAlert message will look something like this:



The AusAlert messages shown on screen are examples only and not real AusAlerts.

## What does an AusAlert sound like?

A **Critical Alert** will cause your mobile device to vibrate and will be delivered with a loud siren-like warning sound that lasts about 10 seconds. It will make this noise even if you've set your device to 'silent' or 'do not disturb' mode.

A **Priority Alert** may vibrate and include a siren-like warning sound, but exactly how it is delivered will depend on your settings, device type and operating system.

## Is an AusAlert a text message?

No, an AusAlert isn't an SMS or text message – it's an 'alert'. It will appear as a notification on your mobile device's screen and will show up during phone calls, app use, and on lock screens. You'll need to close the notification once you've seen the message, otherwise it will remain on your screen.

## What do I do if I receive an AusAlert?

You should read and understand the AusAlert and follow the instructions to keep yourself and others safe.

## Should I wait until I receive an AusAlert to act in an emergency?

It's important you don't wait to receive an AusAlert before acting in a disaster. You must still prepare yourself, have an action plan and be proactive. AusAlert is just one way to stay safe. Turn on local or national TV or radio, check emergency services apps, or search online for more information about the emergency.

## Will my mobile be able to receive an AusAlert?

Mobile devices such as compatible mobile phones and some tablets and smart watches will be able to receive an AusAlert message. AusAlerts are expected to work on iPhones 11 and up running iOS 16.0 or later and Android phones and tablets running Android 12 or later. Always install the latest software updates on your device when asked so you're ready to receive AusAlerts.

## What if I don't want to receive an AusAlert?

AusAlerts contain important information and should be turned on to help keep you safe. You can't opt out of a Critical Alert. The only way to not receive a Critical Alert is to turn your mobile device off or switch it to aeroplane mode. You can opt out of an AusAlert Priority Alert. For more information, visit [ausalert.gov.au](https://ausalert.gov.au)

## What if I receive an AusAlert while driving?

If you receive an AusAlert while driving or riding, stay calm and don't touch your phone. Mobile phone laws remain active – don't read or respond to the alert while moving. The AusAlert may make a siren-like sound for about 10 seconds. Only check the message when it is safe and legal to do so.

For more information, visit [ausalert.gov.au](https://ausalert.gov.au)

# WE'RE RECRUITING!

The Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA) is a successful not-for-profit organisation based in the Eurobodalla Shire on the beautiful NSW South Coast.

SHASA focuses on practical projects that promote sustainability and resilience in the local community. All our major work is funded by grants, with some smaller projects funded out of donations.

Grant amounts generally vary between \$20k - \$500k, and we have been successful in over 70% of our applications. Over the past few years, we have upgraded ten community buildings to be more resilient during heat and smoke events, and have the funding to upgrade another two.

## VOLUNTEER GRANT WRITER

We are seeking a volunteer grant writer to help us further expand our funding, in particular with competitive government grant opportunities. Ideally, you will have:

- experience in writing competitive grants in a not-for-profit or higher education setting
- ability to assess and prioritise grant opportunities
- contract negotiation and contract management experience
- ability to work collaboratively with other volunteers, often through video conferencing
- strong project management skills
- a passion for a sustainable society and resilient local community

If this is a role that excites you, we want to hear from you. Please submit your application, including your resume and cover letter, outlining your relevant experience. Applications will be reviewed as they are received, and we'll close the position once we find our ideal candidate.

# Further reading

Three in four people struggle to cool their homes as heat crisis worsens



Source: ACOSS

Cities are rehearsing for deadly heat. Will it help when disaster comes?



Source: Grist

Source:  
The Guardian



Experts alarmed as BoM says gathering El Niño could be strongest on record

Source:  
Net Zero Commission



Heat Stress Spotlight Report

# Further reading



Europe's Nuclear  
Plants Can't Beat  
the Heat



Source:  
Oilprice.com

Source:  
Reuters



Europe recorded 10,000  
excess deaths during  
late-June heatwave

Heat exhaustion  
vs  
Heat stroke



Source:  
Lifehacker  
Australia

# Further reading

The Best of  
Australia



Source:  
Snarky Gherkin

Source:  
UN-HABITAT



Substantial air  
quality improvements  
are not just possible;  
they are replicable

Source: ABC



Rising insurance costs  
risk turning Australian  
retirements into a  
'prison'

The 13 biggest  
myths about  
heatwaves – and  
how to bust them



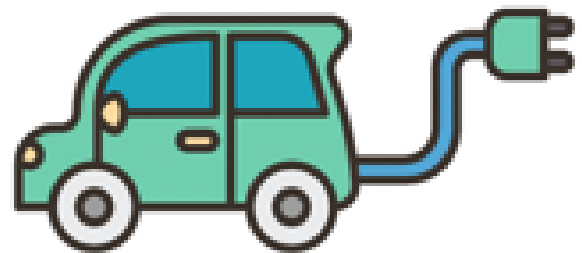
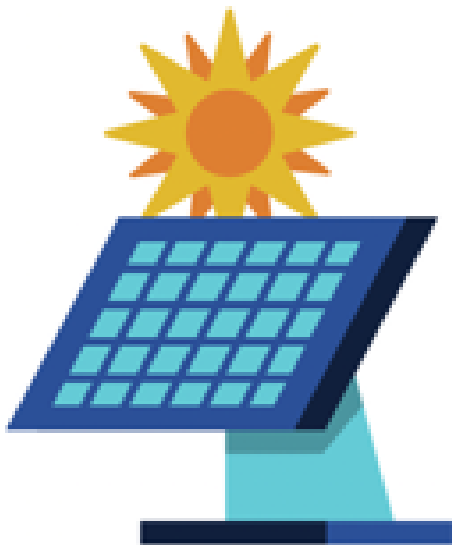
Source:  
The Guardian



# **SHASA**

## **HOW TO CONTACT US AND FIND OUT MORE!**

**Southcoast Health & Sustainability Alliance  
(SHASA) is a local Eurobodalla community group  
which undertakes projects  
to achieve a more resilient community  
and low-carbon economy.**



**Website: [shasa.com.au](http://shasa.com.au)**  
**Facebook: Southcoast Health &  
Sustainability Alliance**  
**email: [contact.shasa@gmail.com](mailto:contact.shasa@gmail.com)**  
**Phone: 0467 558 645**  
**or scan the QR Code for more information**