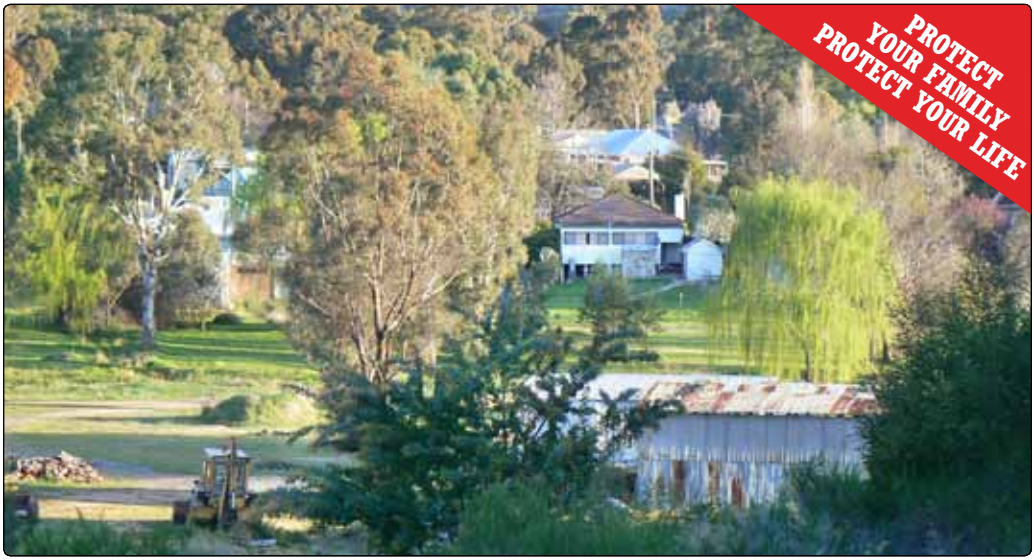
Chewton

Community Information Guide - Bushfire

Prepare · Act · Survive



Why Chewton is at risk of bushfire

Fire Authorities have assessed Chewton as having an EXTREME bushfire risk. Local residents and visitors should be prepared for fire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is SEVERE, EXTREME or CODE RED.

This community information guide includes a map containing key elements of Chewton's bushfire risk. At the time of publication, there are NO designated Neighbourhood Safer Places – Places of Last Resort at Chewton.

Important community bushfire safety information is provided to help you make informed decisions about how to survive a bushfire, whether you're a local resident or a visitor to the area. Planning and preparation can save lives in a bushfire. Use this community information guide to help you and your family to prepare.

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL

CFA

Prepare

It's important if you live, work and travel in this area, to plan what you will do if a bushfire threatens.

Understand your bushfire risk

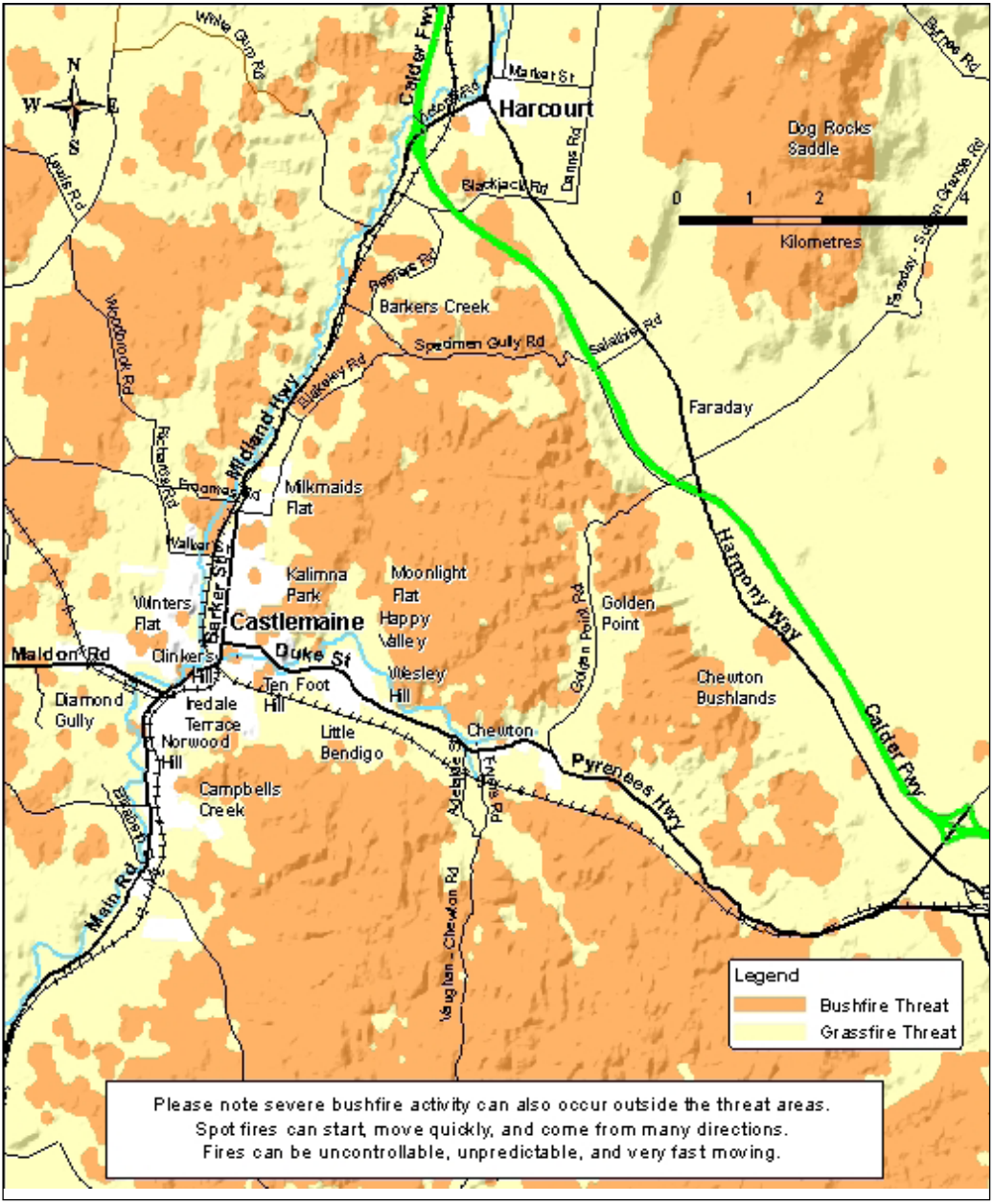
- Chewton has been assessed as having an EXTREME bushfire risk in accordance with the Victorian Fire Risk Register.
- Learn about the bushfire risk and history in your area.
- Assess and prepare the capability of your property to withstand a bushfire.
- Be aware it is impossible for emergency services to protect every individual home or property.
- Remember your usual travel routes may be limited or blocked. Know your local roads.
- In extreme wind conditions, and without any occurrence of fire in the area, roads and tracks may become blocked by falling trees, preventing residents from leaving early.
- Know the daily Fire Danger Rating in the district where you live or travel **www.cfa.vic.gov.au**

Reduce your bushfire risk

- Homes with too much vegetation and other flammable materials close to them are difficult to protect from bushfire.
- Take advantage of rubbish removal and green waste disposal opportunities.
- Prepare your home and property against bushfire, burning embers and radiant heat.
- Even if your plan is to leave early, a well-prepared home has a greater chance of not being destroyed by bushfire.
- Assist your neighbours to reduce their bushfire risk, as this may help make your property safer.
- **Develop and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan.**
- **You will also need to plan for your pets' safety.**
- You can attend or join:
  - A local Fire Ready Victoria meeting
  - A Bushfire Planning Workshop
  - A neighbourhood Community Fireguard Group
- **The Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool is available to help individuals assess the bushfire risk on their own property.**

You can download the CFA FireReady kit, containing the full Leaving Early Planning Template from **cfa.vic.gov.au**, or call **1800 226 226 (TTY 1800 122 969)**

Chewton Bushfire Threat Map



Prepare

FACT

It is your responsibility to prepare yourself, your family and your home for the threat of bushfire. You need to act decisively in accordance with your **Bushfire Survival Plan** when bushfires threaten. Your survival depends on your preparations and the decisions you make.

Leave early

Leaving early is always the safest option.

Leaving early is more important when:

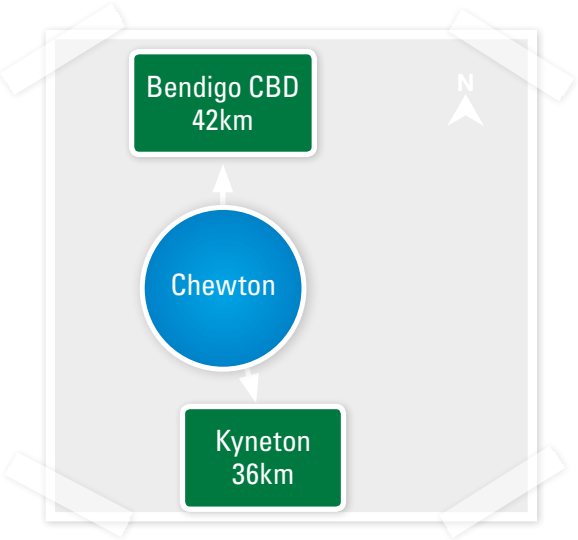
- The Fire Danger Rating is CODE RED. Homes aren't designed to withstand a bushfire during these conditions. Any fire that starts and takes hold will be so intense that you won't be safe to stay and defend your home – no matter how well prepared it is.
- There are children, elderly or disabled people in your home. People who are vulnerable due to age, health or any other reason, should always leave early.
- You have not prepared yourself or your property to give you and your home the best level of protection from a fire.
- Your house is not defendable. Some homes are not safe to defend because of their location or construction.

If you plan to leave, then you should leave well before a fire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. Follow the actions recommended for the Fire Danger Rating of the day (see pages 6 and 7). **Visit CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au**

Where will you go?

- Is it a safe choice? You may choose somewhere that suits your personal needs and circumstances, e.g. a family member's house in an urban area with a backyard for your pet, or shopping centre complex, or central business district of a large regional centre.
- If you don't have any other options, you may wish to consider the centre of the following townships away from bushland: **Bendigo and Kyneton.**
- Identify people in your street who might need more help. Know your neighbours – encourage them to have support networks and offer to help them fill out a Bushfire Leaving Early Plan.

If you - or someone you care for - will need help to prepare and leave early when there is high fire risk, obtain a Red Cross **Bushfire: Preparing to leave early guide** at **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or request a copy by phoning the **VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226**



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

PREPARE. You must make important decisions before the fire season starts.

ACT. The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the conditions.

SURVIVE. Fires may threaten without warning, so you need to know what you will do to survive.

- When travelling on high risk days avoid heavily treed roads; stick to main roads and freeways.
- Roads will be congested and may be blocked during a bushfire.
- Bushfires in this area can travel fast and may impact you and your family without warning.

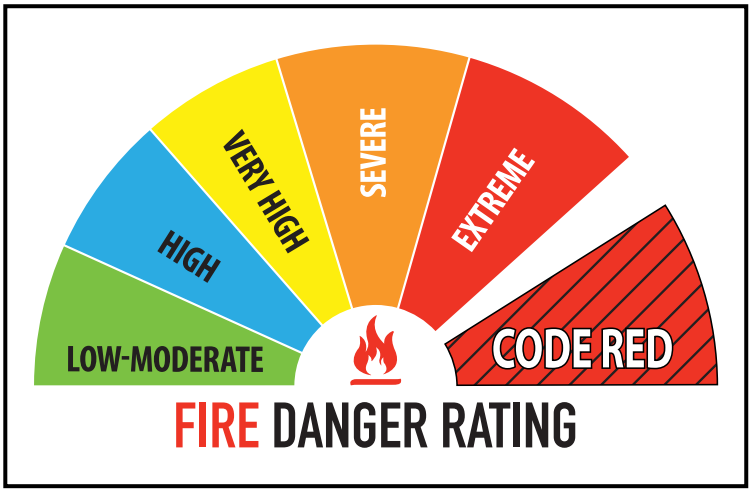
How you can stay in touch

- Bookmark the VicEmergency webpage (www.emergency.vic.gov.au).
- Follow CFA on Twitter (www.twitter.com/cfa_updates).
- Join the CFA Facebook page (www.facebook.com/cfavic).
- Access the CFA mobile website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/mobile
- Download the VicEmergency app if you have a smartphone or tablet Apple (App Store) and Android (Google play).
- Beware, cordless home phones will NOT work if the mains power supply is cut.
- Wireless communications, internet and landlines may vary between service providers.
- Mobile phone coverage in and around Chewton is generally good, but may not be accessible during times of emergency and may vary between service providers.
- There are no community-alerting sirens operating in this township.
- Sirens sounding nearby are a trigger for you to seek information, as they may indicate fire activity in your area. When you hear a siren, further information may be available via ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, and SKY News TV (see page 16).

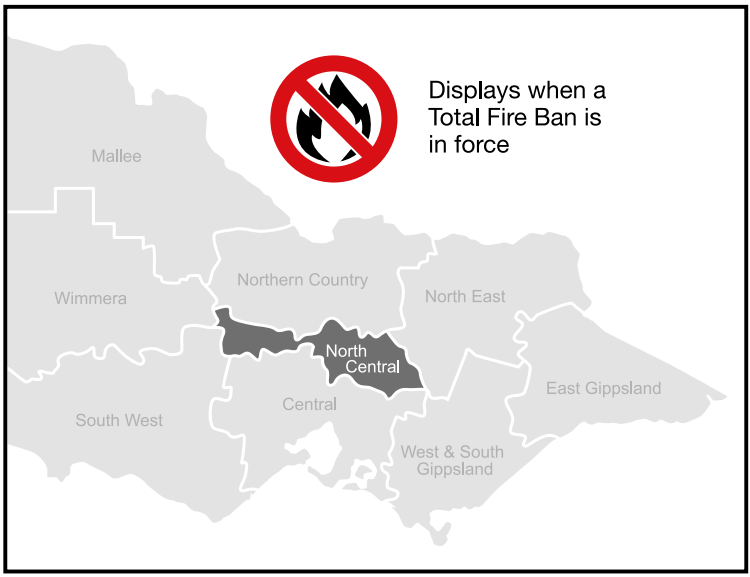
A written fire plan may save your life - would you remember a plan that's just in your head if your surrounded by smoke, heat, flame and noise?

Act

Note your district's Fire Danger Rating daily as your trigger to act.



Chewton is in the North Central Fire District



Triggers

Actions

What does it mean?	What should I do?
These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.	Leaving high risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day is your safest option – do not wait and see. Avoid forested areas, thick bush and long, dry grass. Know your trigger. Make a decision about: –when you will leave –where you will go –how you will get there –when you will return –what you will do if you cannot leave
Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and will come from many directions. Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	Consider staying with your property only if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your home needs to be situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, you are well prepared and you can actively defend your home if a fire starts. If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option. Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**
Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – check your bushfire survival plan. If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire prone areas early in the day is your safest option. Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or call the VicEmergency Hotline on **1800 226 226**
If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety. Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk. Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.	Check your bushfire survival plan. Monitor conditions. Action may be needed. Leave if necessary.

Act Planned Emerge

Understanding Warnings

- A warning will be issued when any type of emergency could impact you or your property.
- Warnings aim to provide you with the best advice and information on what is happening to help you make good decisions to protect yourself and others.
- Remember: don't rely on an official warning to leave. Emergencies can start quickly and threaten you within minutes.
- Always use more than one source for your emergency information.

Evacuation

You may be advised to evacuate by police or emergency services. In fast-moving situations, you may not always receive a warning or recommendation to evacuate. Stay informed, aware of local conditions and the Fire Danger Rating, so that you can plan ahead and make the right decision in a bushfire. Leaving early is always the safest option. Refer to 'Community Evacuation Information', available at **www.police.vic.gov.au**

Should a recommendation to evacuate be made, the following advice would apply:

- A fire is rapidly advancing.
- If advised, travel to the evacuation destination as advised by emergency services.
- Strictly follow all instructions and advice.

Community information

- A newsletter containing updates for communities affected by an emergency.
- Can also be used as notification that an incident has occurred but there is no threat to community.

Advice

- An incident is occurring or has occurred in the area. Access information and monitor conditions.
- Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.

Warning (Watch & Act)

- An emergency is developing nearby. You need to take action now to protect yourself and others.

Emergency Warning

- You are in immanent danger and need to take action immediately.

Prepare to evacuate/evacuate now

- An evacuation is recommended or procedures are in place to evacuate.

ncy Service Actions

Fire Agencies

- Protecting life is the highest priority
- Issue advice and warnings via official channels (see page 16)
- Control and manage fire fighting activities
- Where safe to do so, protect:
  - Identified community assets
  - Property
  - The environment

Victoria Police

- Keep people safe and property secure
- Control traffic in bushfire areas
- Manage evacuations
- Register people who have evacuated
- Work with other agencies to keep the community informed

Chewton

- Residents and visitors, know your risk and act in accordance with the Fire Danger Rating triggers on pages 6 and 7

Mt Alexander Shire

- Assign Council resources and equipment to emergency support activities
- Activate emergency relief centres when required
- Support the community to recover from the emergency
- Some council services may be reduced or closed on Code Red days

Vic Roads

- Manage arterial road closures on advice from Police and Fire Agencies. This information can be found on the Vic Roads website
- Undertake safety inspections of roads prior to re-opening

Red Cross

- Look after people at Emergency Relief Centres (ERC)
- At ERC, provide basic care and comfort (personal support) to evacuated persons
- At ERC, assist VicPol with registration of evacuated persons
- At ERC, provide catering and emergency first aid services

Bushfire Survival

WHAT TO DO

Leave Early

- When the Fire Danger Rating is Code Red, leaving early is always the safest option
- Leave early destinations could include homes of families & friends who live outside the risk area, a nearby town or built up area

Always the safest option

Well Prepared

If leaving the high-risk area is no longer an option, there may be options close to where you are that could protect you. These include:

Your safety is

For more information on how to prepare your own

www.cfa.vic.gov.au **VicEmergency Hotline**

Options

- A well prepared home (yours or your neighbours') that you can actively defend on Severe & Extreme Fire Danger Rating days only
- Private Bushfire Shelter (bunker) that meets current regulations
- Designated community fire refuge

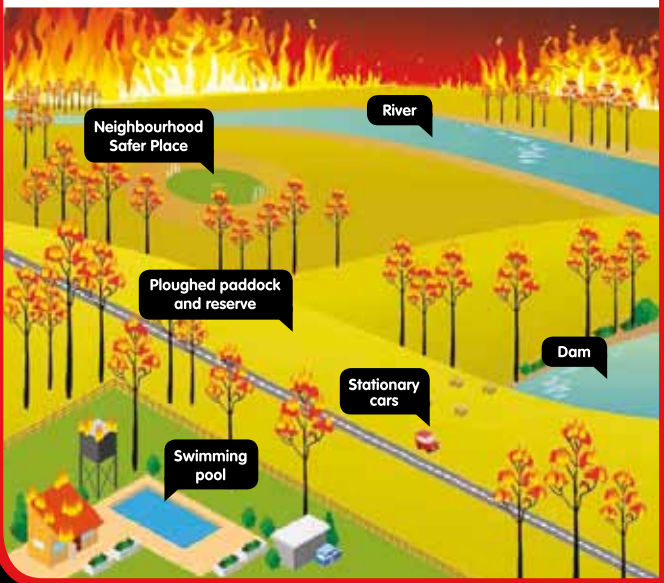
not guaranteed

Last Resort

In situations where no other options are available to you, taking shelter in one of the below may protect from radiant heat:

- Neighbourhood Safer Place (place of last resort)
- Stationary car in a clear area
- Ploughed paddock or reserve
- Body of water (i.e. beach, swimming pool, dam, river, etc.)

High risk of trauma, injury or death



Bushfire Survival Plan:
1800 226 226

Survive

Fire may threaten without warning, so you need to know what to do to survive.

Community Fire Refuges

- A Community Fire Refuge is a place that is a building open to the public that can provide short-term shelter from immediate life-threatening effects of a bushfire event.
- There is no Community Fire Refuge located in Chewton.

Activate your bushfire survival plan early

- Remember, bushfires can happen when least expected. Planning and preparation are essential.
- A last-minute decision may cost you and your family your lives.
- **You may not receive an official warning about a bushfire.**
- Do NOT expect a fire truck at your property.
- Your survival and safety depend on the decisions you make.
- Protecting people will always be more important than property.
- Always tell someone what you are planning to do.
- Observe the weather, including the direction the wind is blowing.
- Watch what is happening around you and where a bushfire may be located.

Leaving late is DANGEROUS

- Travel on roads in this area during a fire is dangerous.
- You may be impacted by fire, and visibility may be poor due to smoke.
- The roads may be blocked due to falling trees, collisions or emergency vehicles.
- Usual travel routes may not be accessible.
- Don't assume you can turn back, as the road may have become blocked behind you.
- Lives are more likely to be lost when people make a last-minute decision to flee a bushfire.
- The risk of being overrun by bushfire is very real.
- People caught in the open are likely to face severe and often fatal levels of radiant heat.
- Leaving late is a DEADLY option.

There is no Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort in Chewton

It is important that you plan to leave early (see page 4). Assemble a relocation kit.

Your relocation kit

Have a relocation kit with essential items already prepared and make sure it is stored in an easily accessible place.

Some of the things that you might like to include in your kit are:

Relocation checklist

- Protective clothing made from natural fibres ☐
- Woollen blankets ☐
- Water and medications ☐
- Toiletries and sanitary supplies ☐
- Mobile phone and charger ☐
- Important documents ☐
- First aid kit ☐
- Cash, ATM/credit cards ☐
- Valuables and photos ☐
- Battery powered radio ☐

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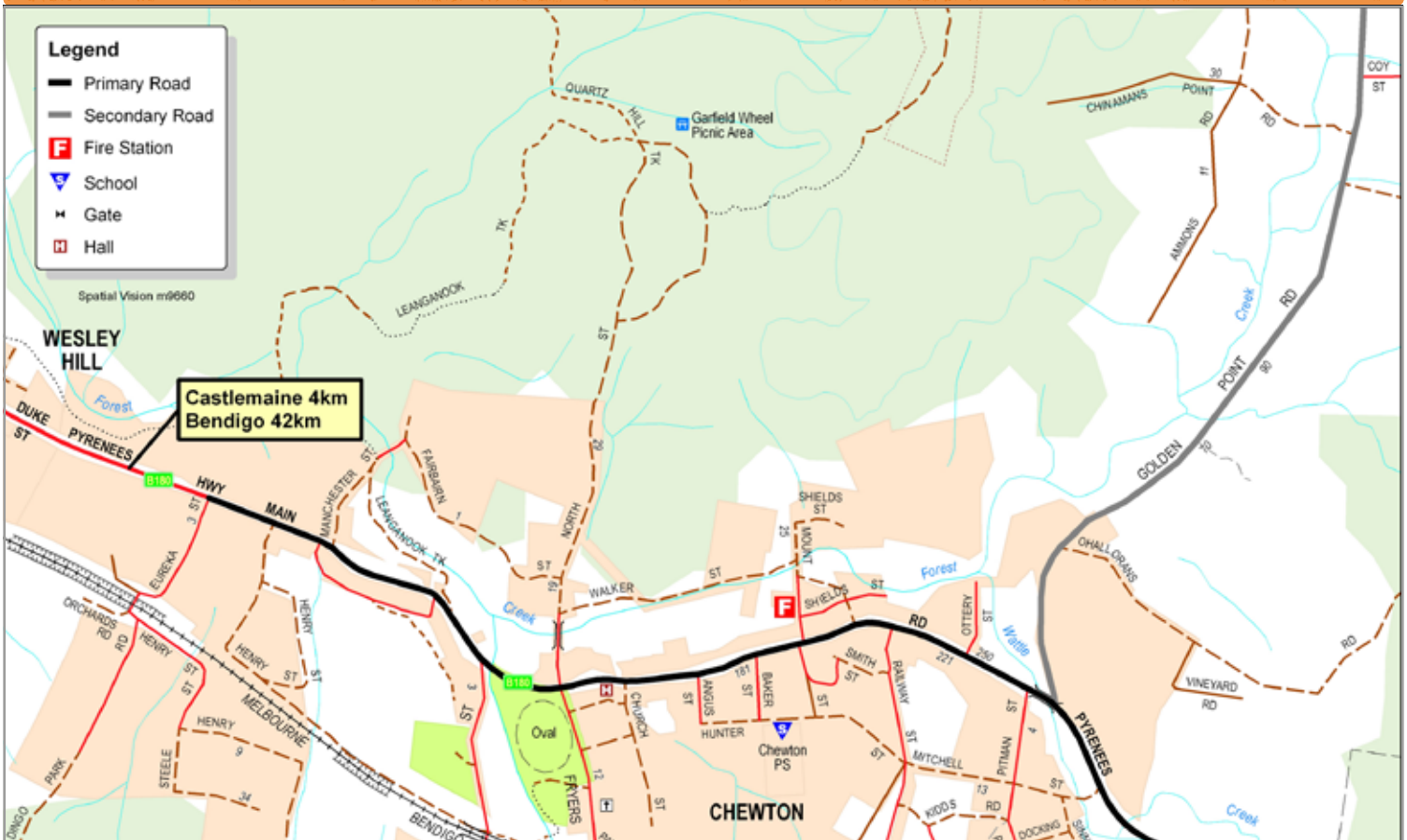
Chewton Community Map



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In EMERGENCY dial 000 (TTY 106)

Do not call Triple Zero for information or advice. Calling Triple Zero unnecessarily may put others who are in a genuine emergency situation at risk.

VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226

Emergency Contact Information

Download the VicEmergency app, the official Victorian Government App for access to community information and warnings.

Monitor the VicEmergency App and tune into your emergency broadcaster and VicEmergency website (www.emergency.vic.gov.au) on days of high fire danger ratings is the most reliable way of staying informed. Mains power may be unavailable, or fail, during fire and emergencies – keep a battery powered radio available.

Emergency Broadcasters: Sky News TV, ABC 91.1 FM, ABC 107.9 FM, ABC 774 AM, EasyMix 1071 AM, 3BO FM 93.5, 91.9 Star FM.

Road closures:	13 11 70 www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
National Park, State Forest and Park closures:	13 19 63 www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
School, early childhood services and bus route closures:	www.education.vic.gov.au
24 Hour Wildlife Emergency:	13 000 WILDLIFE or 1300 094 535
24 Hour NURSE-ON-CALL:	1300 60 60 24

Bushfire Information:

VicEmergency website:	www.emergency.vic.gov.au
CFA website:	www.cfa.vic.gov.au
Follow CFA on Twitter:	www.twitter.com/cfa_updates
Join the CFA Facebook page:	www.facebook.com/cfavic
FFMVic website (Planned burning):	www.ffm.vic.gov.au

Further Information

Dept of Human Services:	www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency
Forest Fire Management Victoria:	13 61 86 www.ffm.vic.gov.au
Weather:	www.bom.gov.au
CFA District Office:	(03) 5430 2200 **(non emergency calls only)**
Mt Alexander Shire:	(03) 5471 1700 www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired? **Contact the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677** if you use a **TTY, 1800 555 727** if you use Speak and Listen, and then ask for: **1800 226 226**

Community Information Guides are dynamic documents which are updated regularly, please visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/guides to confirm the most up to date version.