

# Heatwave Health Warning and Messaging

Guide for Heat Health Stakeholders – Dec 2024

## December 2024 Update

- An expanded heatwave health stakeholder kit for the 2024-2025 season has been made available by Queensland Health, with additional pram safety, hydration and “how heat affects your body” assets included.

## Introduction

This Heatwave Health Warning and Messaging Guide has been developed for heat health stakeholders<sup>1</sup> to accompany the Queensland Health Heatwave Management Sub-Plan<sup>2</sup>. It focuses on the heatwave health warnings and messaging arrangements Queensland Health undertakes as primary agency. It aims to keep stakeholders up to date and outline resources available.

## Heatwave Health Communications Thresholds

The Bureau issues [heatwave warnings](#) for severe and extreme heatwaves only. Queensland Health also monitors for low heatwave conditions.

Following the Bureau issuing the heatwave warning, Queensland Health will issue AWS-compliant heatwave health warnings (for extreme severity) or heat health messaging (for low-severe severity as required).

Hospital and Health Services (HHS) will lead communications, issuing heatwave related communications and local heatwave engagement strategies for low and severe heatwaves in line with their local plans and arrangements. When the HHS issues messaging, local stakeholders are encouraged to share with their communities. In line with the Heatwave

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<sup>1</sup> This guide has been developed for heat health stakeholders (external to QH). There is a separate guide for disaster management stakeholders (that includes information on internal disaster information systems).

<sup>2</sup> [Heatwave Management Sub-plan](#) Section 7 of the Heat Management sub-plan provides the Communication Protocol to be used by Queensland Health throughout the heatwave season and aligns with the Bureau’s [National Heatwave Warning Framework](#).

Management Sub-Plan, the Department of Health will issue heatwave health warnings for Extreme heatwaves, alongside the affected HHSs.

Term	Lead	When	Considerations <sup>3</sup>
Low	HHS	Only occasionally	Due to their frequency over summer, messaging for low heatwaves may be considered if prolonged (i.e 4-7 days). If there are surrounding HHSs in severe, the HHS with a low heatwave may wish to do messaging in this circumstance.
Severe	HHS (unless very widespread)	Most of the time	Will include social media and might include communications out to stakeholders, radio interviews etc
Extreme	DoH (unless isolated to small area)	Always <sup>4</sup>	<p>Extreme heatwaves will require a SCB website publication on the “<a href="#">QH newsroom</a>” (AWS-compliant Emergency Warning). Emergency Warning level of AWS is used in line with the National Heatwave Warning Framework.</p> <p>Affected HHSs will then share these warnings, as well as DoH. External stakeholders are also encouraged to share/promote widely.</p>

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*Heatwave messages can be shared by local stakeholders with their audiences at any time. To support this internal and external heat messaging, Queensland Health has developed a **Heatwave Communications Toolkit** which is provided to a broad range of stakeholders for their own communication<sup>5</sup>*

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[Heat Safe](#) is Queensland Health’s advisory site detailing the physical risks and impacts of heat on people and their bodies and the resulting possibility of heat-related illness.

<sup>3</sup> While this table includes general principles, the decision regarding messaging needs may vary if there have been other recent heatwaves and heatwave comms that has occurred

<sup>4</sup> Exceptions: In very rare circumstances, if there is only a very small patch of extreme over a very low populated area, discretion can be used (as outlined in the national framework) to not issue an AWS-compliant warning.

<sup>5</sup> [Asset Library | Queensland Health Heatwave Stakeholder Kit 2024 update](#)

## Heatwave Forecast and Risk Mapping

There are a number of heat mapping and heat health risk mapping initiatives occurring.

The Bureau produces a 7-day forecast on heatwave severity - [Bureau's Heatwave Severity index grid \(7-day forecast\)](#).

The [Australian Climate Service - Heat Health Risk Index](#) was released in 2024. It provides a static risk index using community-level data such as housing and access to transportation, language spoken and cultural background, socioeconomic and health status and factors like vegetation and available services.

## Heatwave Management Resources

There are a wide range of heatwave management resources available to support all stakeholders in heatwave preparedness and response. The table below provides a brief overview.

Source/audience	Resource
Advice for the public	<a href="#">Heatwave - Get Ready Queensland</a> and the <a href="#">Get Ready Queensland Heatwave Preparation Checklist</a> A suite of Queensland Government online resources providing advice to the community about the risks associated with heatwaves and how to plan and prepare for them to reduce the impacts
	<a href="#">HeatWatch</a> The HeatWatch web app has been available for all Australian locations since December 2023. It calculates a personalised heat health risk, including current heat conditions and existing health conditions. This is included on the <a href="#">Heat Safe website</a>
	<a href="#">Queensland Heat Health Community of Practice</a> A professional working group focused on increasing awareness, investment and uptake of heat adaptation policy across Queensland.
	<a href="#">Work Safe Heat stress</a> Information about the causes and sources of heat stress, types of heat-related illness and control measures.
	<a href="#">Managing Excessive Heat in Schools</a> Education Queensland site dedicated to addressing the impact of heatwaves on students, staff and schools including heat related health problems
	<a href="#">Heatwaves and Hot Weather - Australian Red Cross</a> Online community information resources about heatwaves and their risk to people's health and wellbeing. The site provides practical advice around being prepared, adapting activities, and having a plan to keep cool

Source/audience	Resource
Queensland Government for stakeholders	<p><a href="#">State Heatwave Risk Assessment</a></p> <p>The SHRA2019 aimed to provide a clear, consistent, and foundational heatwave risk assessment for all tiers of government, non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations, and disaster management groups</p>
	<p><a href="#">Healthy Places, Healthy People   Queensland Health</a></p> <p>The Healthy Places, Healthy People initiative is the result of a collaborative undertaking led by QH and the Office of the Queensland Government Architect. As part of this initiative, the <a href="#">Shade Tree Guidance   Queensland Health</a> was developed following the QH commissioning of academic research with the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). It identifies optimal tree species to maximise UV radiation protection and shade provision and provides other information about shade.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Queensland Future Climate Dashboard   Long Paddock   Queensland Government</a></p> <p>Heatwaves are prolonged extreme humid-heat events impacting many sectors of the Australian community. Understanding how heatwave characteristics may change across Queensland in future is important. The Future Climate Dashboard provides long-term scenarios for heatwave characteristics in Queensland (2030-2090)</p>
The Bureau	<p><a href="#">Daily Weather Observations for Queensland (B)</a></p> <p>The Bureau records and provides the maximum and minimum temperatures recorded throughout Queensland with locations listed alphabetically.</p>
	<p><a href="#">The Bureau Archive of Daily Maximum Temperatures for Queensland</a></p> <p>The Bureau provides a map of the observed maximum and minimum temperatures across Queensland on specific days, where you can select days of particular interest.</p>
The Planning Institute of Australia	<p>The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is the national body representing planning and the planning profession. PIA produce these information resources as part of their 'Practice Note Series':</p> <p><a href="#">Practice Note 1: Understanding Heat Hazard</a></p> <p><a href="#">Practice Note 2: Role of Planning in Mitigating Heat Risk</a></p> <p><a href="#">Practice Note 3: Case Studies and Further Information</a></p>
Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils	<p><a href="#">Cool Suburbs Assessment</a></p> <p>Funded by the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund. A tool which provides a heat resilience rating for developments to enable industry and Government to minimise heat impacts through urban design.</p>

For assistance with or questions about heatwave health warning and messaging, the Department of Health Disaster Management Branch can be contacted on:  
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