



# HEATWAVE

INFORMATION





# FIVE STEPS TO GET READY FOR A HEATWAVE

## STEP ONE - UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK

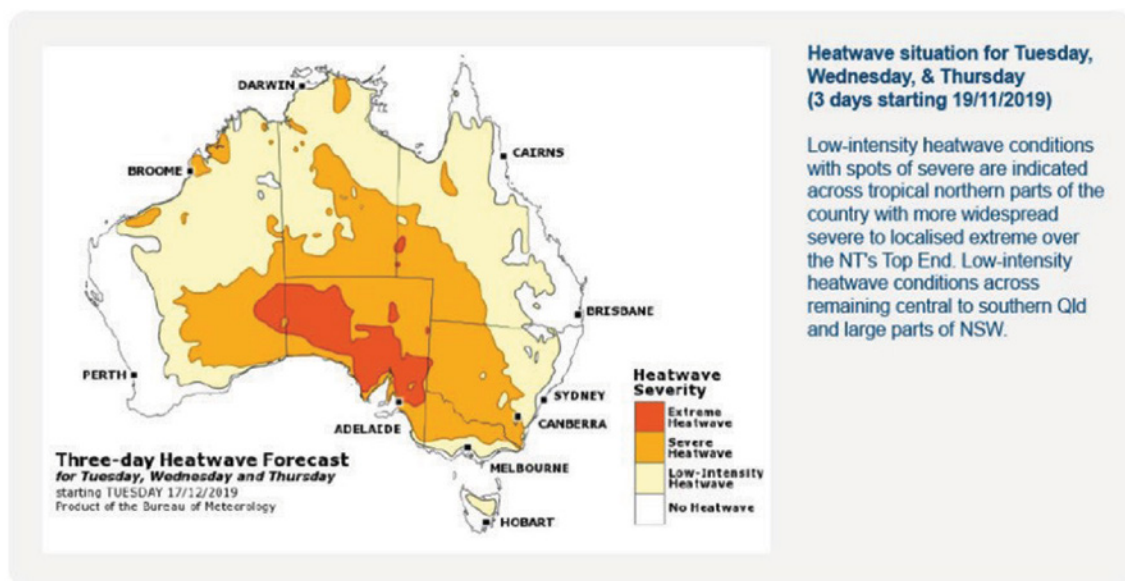
### What is a heatwave?

A **HEATWAVE** occurs when the maximum and the minimum temperatures are unusually hot over a three-day period. Heatwaves can impact anyone. Babies, young people, elderly people, pets, people working outdoors and those with medical conditions such as asthma are particularly vulnerable and need to take special care during heatwaves.



The Bureau of Meteorology classifies heatwaves into three types, based on intensity:

- **Low-intensity heatwaves** are more frequent during summer. Most people can cope during these heatwaves.
- **Severe heatwaves** are less frequent and are likely to be more challenging for vulnerable people such as the elderly, particularly those with medical conditions.
- **Extreme heatwaves** are rare. They are a problem for people who don't take precautions to keep cool—even for people who are healthy. People who work or exercise outdoors are also at greater risk of being affected.



Map: Example of a heatwave forecast map and text.

For more information on heatwaves, head over to the Bureau of Meteorology's [Heatwave Knowledge Centre](#).

## STEP TWO - MAKE A PLAN

During a heatwave it is unlikely that you will need to activate your household emergency and evacuation plan, however it is still important to get ready. Actions you can take are:

- If you have a medical condition, ask your doctor for advice on how to manage the heat;
- Think of simple ways to make your home or building cooler;
- Have air conditioners serviced before the beginning of summer.



## STEP THREE - PACK SUPPLIES

During a heatwave it is unlikely that you will need to use your Evacuation Kit however you can be ready by having your Emergency Kit stocked with certain supplies and by taking the following actions:

- Drink 2 to 3 litres of water a day at regular intervals, even if you do not feel thirsty;
- Limit intake of alcohol, soft drinks, tea or coffee;
- Eat as you normally would but try to eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit. Avoid heavy protein foods which raise body heat and increase fluid loss.

## STEP FOUR - PREPARE YOUR HOME

There is no better time than now to get your home prepared so you are ready for the next time a heatwave occurs. Actions you can take are:

- Stay inside and in the coolest rooms in your home. Block out the sun during the day and keep windows closed while the room is cooler than it is outside;
- Use fans and air-conditioners at home to keep cool, or spend time elsewhere in air-conditioning;
- Take frequent cool showers or baths and splash yourself several times a day with cold water.

## STEP FIVE - PROTECT YOUR PET

In emergency situations, pets are often the most vulnerable member of the family. It's important to consider what will happen to our pets in the event of a natural disaster. Actions you can take to protect your pet during a heatwave are:

- Provide access to extra shade areas for protection from the sun. This can be done by installing shade cloths and umbrellas in your backyard;
- If possible, bring your pets indoors where there is shade or air-conditioning to provide a cool environment to chill in. Do not under any circumstances leave pets unattended in locked cars, even if you are parked in shade or have the windows down;
- Apply pet-friendly zinc to the ears and noses of pets prone to sunburn, including cats and dogs with white fur and pink noses;
- Ensure access to plenty of fresh water. Fill multiple bowls of water and place them in cool places out of the sun for your pets;
- Place ice in their bowls to help cool their water sources but check that your pet is comfortable with the change in water temperature;
- Make ice blocks! Freeze some pet food in a takeaway container with water to make a delicious ice block that will cool and entertain your pet as it defrosts;
- Avoid exercising dogs in the middle of the day as this can lead to heat stress. Their feet pads can burn on hot surfaces such as cement and sand. Pay attention to flat-faced breeds (brachycephalic) such as pugs and bulldogs as they have a greater difficulty regulating heat;
- Pocket pets, such as guinea pigs, can benefit from ice bricks wrapped in towels and cooling mats placed in their hutches;
- Consider providing bird baths for our domesticated and wild feathered friends to frolic and cool off in.

**For more information on how to get ready for a heatwave or other natural disasters visit [Council's Emergency Dashboard](#).**



**Queensland  
Government**