

Equity Trustees Limited, Small Grants Program

16 February 2026

Dear Equity Trustees

The Grampians Public Health Unit (GPHU) writes in support for the funding proposal by Clunes Neighbourhood House regarding testing the utility of its guidance document *HEATsafe Houses: a guide for Neighbourhood Houses*. Developed with Neighbourhood House Victoria, with support from the GPHU's *HeatwaveHELP* team, the *HEATsafe Houses* guide is designed to assist a Neighbourhood House to ensure those in their community who are at high risk from heat harm get the support they need to stay safe at times of heatwave or severe heat.

Research has shown that heatwave kills more Australians than all other climate-related events¹. The National Climate Risk Assessment, published in September 2025, identified millions being at risk of heatwave in coming years and decades². We know that it is often those most at risk of climate impacts who have least capacity to stay safe without the support of agencies such as Neighbourhood Houses. Because of their unique role in supporting people at especially high risk (many of whom have multiple risk factors for severe harm from heat) the development of the *HEATsafe* guide is an excellent resource for Neighbourhood Houses to expertly support locally-led harm reduction and climate adaptation efforts.

The GPHU aims to strengthen community adaptive capacity and resilience to threats to health and well-being; its *HeatwaveHELP* program has identified and trained community leaders to integrate resilience to heatwave into their existing functions and activities. Early evaluation of the *HeatwaveHELP* project has shown high confidence to act among the hundreds already trained to get beside and support to stay safe those in our community at high risk of harm from severe heat.

Neighbourhood House Clunes has been key in the work of the *HeatwaveHELP* project in Hepburn Shire, and, if resourced to do so, the GPHU would be able to both extend its support to other Neighbourhood Houses and undertake to evaluate (in two ways) the utility of *HEATsafe* guide in those additional settings. First that the *HEATsafe* guide *does* equip Neighbourhood Houses to support those at risk, as it aims to do, and second, that Neighbourhood Houses are then able to work to keep people in their communities safe in times of severe heat or heatwave. The GPHU could support additional Neighbourhood Houses and undertake this broader evaluation work for \$10,000.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should Equity Trustees Limited require any further information.

Yours sincerely



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Heatwave HELP Project Lead
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1. Coates, L., van Leeuwen, J., Browning, S., Gissing, A., Bratchell, J., & Avci, A. (2022). Heatwave fatalities in Australia, 2001–2018: An analysis of coronial records. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 67, 102671.

2. *National Climate Risk Assessment, 2025* <https://www.acs.gov.au/pages/national-climate-risk-assessment>