

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

Edition 10 - December 2020



Tintaldra CRC project honours soldiers

Tintaldra's Avenue of Honour has been a project of the Community Recovery Committee (CRC) since its inception and is edging closer to fruition with the help of three grants. About 15 years ago, Deodar Cedar trees planted to honour WWII soldiers were found to be diseased and removed. Then last summer, Ponderosa Pines planted during WWI were cut down after being damaged by bushfire.

After the fires, the community considered placing a commemorative statue, made from the rescued timber, in the village. The timber however wasn't suitable, so the CRC further developed the idea into an Avenue of Honour. Two rows of 10 October Glory Maples, set apart by a walking path, will be completed with interpretative storyboards and a picnic shelter, then more trees will connect Murray River Rd to both village entrances.

Resident Kim Winter has a deep and passionate interest in Australian soldiers' service on the frontline and says she hopes the avenue of established trees will be planted in May 2021. Kim's interest began when she took a writing course after her daughter was born more than 30 years ago. She wrote a short story about a boy who took his horse to war. The story evolved into 400 pages and began a lifetime of research.

Kim has poured through archives, service records, the

Australian War Memorial, and personal recollections. And she's travelled to Gallipoli and the battlefields of Europe where she stood on the ground at Mouquet Farm where her great uncle survived a gunshot wound to the head. "All these men ... for Australia, for God, King and Country, or their own reasons, got up out of the trenches and went forward into certain death," she said. "The courage that must have taken..."

Tintaldra farmer Arthur Clarke (1894-1969) left home at 22 years old to fight in WWI. He was gassed at the Somme in 1916 and returned to Tintaldra after the war. "(Arthur) spent his whole life going into town once a month, raised his kids on that farm and worked his guts out," Kim said. "He went because that's what you did." Others went for fun and adventure; some sat back and then joined later. "And they came back and suffered with their nightmares. There was no help back then," Kim said.

It is not known how many men connected to Tintaldra went to war, but Kim believes it's about 50, including two women - horsemen, farmers, publicans, teachers, accountants, clerks and more. Now with help from the Border Trust, joint State/Federal Local Economic Recovery, and the Victorian Government's Veterans Branch their memory will be honoured by the future they fought to defend.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Please note that this will be the final newsletter of 2020. Towong Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria wishes you a happy and safe holiday period. We'll see you in 2021.

Grants closing 31 January 2021

\$10,000 Small Business Bushfire Support Grants

Small Business Bushfire Support Grants of \$10,000 are available to assist with the costs of maintaining businesses, including covering salaries, rents and utilities, seeking financial advice and making the adjustments required to continue after the bushfires.

The grant is available for small businesses and primary producers in Towong Shire who have experienced significant income loss as a result of this season's bushfires.

- Businesses both directly and indirectly affected by fire can apply.
- It only takes a few minutes to apply online.
- You don't need to upload financial documents if you don't have them right now.
- You can be assessed under exceptional circumstances if you don't meet the eligibility criteria.

\$75,000 Primary Industries Grants

Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries Grants of up to \$75,000 per farm business are available to assist primary producers directly affected by this season's bushfires.

Eligible activities include rebuilding or replacing damaged or destroyed on-farm infrastructure.

Further changes have been made so more people are eligible to apply, including:

- Adjusted off-farm income threshold making it easier to be eligible.
- Allowing extra time for applicants to reach the 50 per cent income threshold in recognition of long lead times required by some sectors to reach full production.
- Applicants are no longer required to be registered for GST but must still hold an ABN.
- Businesses earning more than 50 per cent of their income from a combination of primary production and goods made directly from that produce will now be eligible for assistance.

These changes mean more primary producers will be able to access help with direct impacts of the bushfires. To find the eligibility criteria for either of these grants, or to apply, please visit: vic.gov.au/financial-support

Tackling uncertainty and anxiety

As the new year and anniversary of the fires approaches, memories are being stirred, as is our sense of safety in our environment. On top of that, we are very, very tired. For some people, this will be a very challenging time. Others carry the expectation that recovery should be complete.

Dr Rob Gordon is a clinical psychologist working in disaster recovery since the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983. He is a consultant to the Australian Red Cross and worked closely with communities after the Port Arthur shooting, Bali bombings, Black Saturday, Christchurch earthquakes and Black Summer fires of 2019/20.

He says emergencies are about the damage caused, but equally about an altered sense of safety and security. To understand more about managing the uncertainty and anxiety, see Dr Gordon's talk at www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZi5-fpv35w.

Time to take a break

It's time for a well-earned break. It's been an almighty year and although much has been achieved, the journey continues into 2021. We're taking a break too. **The Upper Murray Recovery Hub will be closed from 23 December to January 4.** Happy Christmas from all of us and here's to a safe and productive new year.



Getting into the Christmas spirit

With Christmas just around the corner, plans are well underway for the Upper Murray Christmas Market and late-night shopping. The annual event is set to go ahead on December 18 from 5-9pm.

Hosted by the Corryong Traders Group, there will be markets, the shops will be open late, Santa will make an appearance and there will be a scavenger hunt for the kids. Organisers will contact traders shortly to get involved in a window decorating competition. Mark your diary for the first time the whole community can come together in 2020.

Landcare helping landholders and the environment

The Upper Murray Landcare Network has had Fire Recovery Land Management as a focus since February when EOIs for land management requirements were invited. Since then 87 property visits and assessments have been completed.

The visit also provides an opportunity to meet and speak with landholders to understand immediate needs like water quality protection, erosion control, and to prioritise future works.

Landcare projects underway include 23 days of blackberry control works across the Upper Murray supporting landholders already engaged with the North East Blackberry Action Group program and those who have signed on to three-year management agreements. Landcare has also funded replanting of the Colac Colac Bike Path.

Volunteers planted 230 seedlings (understorey) and 400 grasses and lilies. In October, year 5 students stepped in to help. 30 landholder on-ground projects and 29 events over two years have been funded by the Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants. Successful applicants, based on property visits, were Cudgewa Creek Landcare Group, North East Blackberry Action Group, Koetong Landcare Group, and Upper Murray Network (2).

The grants will fund:

- A partnership with Birdlife Australia to establish a Birds on Farms program over several years.
- Vegetation Assessment at Pheasant Creek Flora Reserve to monitor recovery and weed control.
- 27.2 km exclusion fencing protecting 75.2ha of remnant and revegetation on private land
- 19,300 plants in 2021 for new sites and refurbishment of previously planted areas and remnant vegetation.
- 6.4 ha of contractor blackberry control on identified sites.

Field Days later this year and in early 2021 will focus on farm dams, soil health, soil carbon, revegetation techniques, pastures, bush regeneration, and frogs and reptiles. Any landholders who have not completed an EOI for property assessments can email umlandcare@bigpond.com or call 6072 7502.



Masterplan for exciting Cudgewa project well underway

As the year draws to a close, Cudgewa is a big step closer to an exciting recreation park for visitors and locals. BRV funding will help to develop a master plan to construct the park on the site of the old Cudgewa School Park. Council play equipment in the park was destroyed in the bushfires and now a staged plan to upgrade and beautify the park is well underway.

Ingrid Sharp, from the Cudgewa School Park committee of management, said the first stage would replace what was burnt, tidy up the remaining BBQ area and toilet block, and build a "trains, trikes and pedal bikes" track for beginners and younger children.

A pump track for those who want a more challenging ride is also on the plan. Another BBQ area, gardens, undercover playground sections, artworks, drinking water and interpretative signs to tell the Cudgewa story will add to the park.

Two rounds of community consultation are complete, a focus group formed, and once the master plan is finished, the committee will go back to the community for further consultation. The committee has worked closely with Cudgewa CRC and Towong Shire Council, and Ingrid says everyone is "on the same page". A Memorandum of Understanding has also been signed to install an emergency water tank on site for use by the CFA.



Pictured: Cudgewa CFA Captain Paul Carkeek on the proposed site for the emergency water tank.



Pictured: Ingrid Sharp, Marja Jarvis, Melissa Whitehead and Deanne Brown (Towong Shire Council Technical Officer).

Recovery Contacts

Support Hotlines and Websites

Speak to someone by calling:

Bushfire Counselling | 1300 514 811

Corryong Health | 02 6076 3200

Tallangatta Health | 02 6071 5200

Family Violence 1800 RESPECT 24/7 | 1800 737 732

Albury Wodonga Mental Health Triage

Line 24/7 | 1300 104 211

Lifeline Bushfire Helpline | 13 43 57

MensLine Australia | 1300 789 978

Beyond Blue | 1300 224 636

Standby, Support after Suicide 24/7 | 0439 173 310

Headspace | 1800 650 890

Or visit:

DHHS | www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19

Australian Red Cross | www.redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19

Beyond Blue | www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

Phoenix Australia Centre for post-traumatic mental health | www.phoenixaustralia.org/coronavirus-covid-19/

Towong Shire Bushfire Recovery Team

Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub

Phone: 1800 518 222 (Mon to Fri 9am-4.30pm)

Email: recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

Website: www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery

Facebook: facebook.com/towong.shire.council

Local Area Recovery Officers

If you are yet to speak to your Local Area Recovery Officer, reach out directly:

Tanya Aramini – Thowgla, Towong, Biggara | 0457 726 595

Kaye Nankervis – Walwa, Mt Alfred, Guys Forest, Pine Mountain, Tintalra | 0436 445 187

Tony Irwin – Colac Colac, Cudgewa, Berringama/Lucyvale | 0427 869 019

Jai Edwards – Corryong, Nariel, business community | 0438 762 442

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Free Helpline: 1800 560 760

Email: connect@brv.vic.gov.au

Website: www.brv.vic.gov.au

Agriculture Victoria (Recovery)

Phone: 0428 975 728

About This Newsletter

This fortnightly newsletter brings together the latest updates and information to support Towong Shire residents and businesses through bushfire recovery. This newsletter is a joint initiative by Towong Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria, with thanks to community members and supporting agencies including DELWP, Agriculture Victoria, Environment Protection Authority Victoria, CFA, Regional Roads Victoria and Parks Victoria.

Get In Touch

We are continually reviewing and improving the recovery information we provide and how we provide it. If you have feedback, or have a story you would like to share, call **1800 518 222** or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au.

Subscribe Today

To subscribe to the digital newsletter, email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. For past editions of this newsletter go to www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery.

Please note: All photos in this newsletter were taken in compliance with COVID-19 regulations.