

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

June 2020



Photo courtesy Sandy Wojciewski, BlazeAid

Six Months On From the Upper Murray Bushfires

This June edition of the Monthly Recovery Newsletter marks six months since the Upper Murray bushfires. Disaster Psychologist, Dr Rob Gordon, says the milestone is an important time to look after yourself and offer help to those around you.

Dr Rob Gordon suggests "now is the time for everyone to get involved with the community and support networks and use the services available because the next year and a half is when health, relationships, social and family life can suffer and create unnecessary problems." Dr Gordon provides further advice on page 4.

There are many support services that are available to residents and you can access them free-of-charge.

Whether you have been directly or indirectly impacted by the bushfires, we encourage you to reach out to your Local Area Recovery Officer (contact details on the last page) to chat about your recovery journey and the support that is available to you. You can also access the free Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program by calling **1800 560 760**.

About This Newsletter

This monthly newsletter brings together the latest updates and information to support Towong Shire residents and businesses through bushfire recovery.

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 monthly newsletter or the weekly Upper Murray update go to www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery.

This monthly newsletter is a joint initiative by Towong Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria



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Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub Continues to Support

Recovery services have continued to operate virtually throughout COVID-19. Following the further easing of restrictions, the Corryong hub office space is now open for drop-in visits with limited numbers to maintain physical distancing.

Please continue to stay up-to-date with the latest health advice and avoid visiting if you are unwell. If you need one-on-one assistance in relation to a specific issue, please make an appointment so we can schedule the available space. Call 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au.

Supporting recovery agencies are also returning to the Hub - call ahead to check the weekly schedule.



The Recovery Hub at the old Corryong Primary School



Grocon crews clear a destroyed dairy near Cudgewa

Grocon Clean-Up Program - Registrations Close 30 June

Registrations for the free bushfire clean-up program will be closing on 30 June 2020. To register call 1800 560 760 or register online at vic.gov.au/bushfire-clean-up-program.

Clean-up has continued throughout COVID-19 with physical distancing in place. Seven contractors are now operating in Towong Shire and over 50 per cent of registered properties have commenced.

The clean-up program, being led by Grocon, must ensure the safe removal of asbestos. Licenced contractors engaged in clean-up activities are subject to a compliance code for removing asbestos, which includes strict measures to reduce risks, including wrapping all waste in trucks and suppressing dust with water.

Community Recovery Groups

The process of establishing Community Recovery Committees is underway. Thank you to local residents and businesses who responded to the call-out from Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria to take part.

Over thirty-five local residents and businesses registered to take part, with representation across Towong Shire.

Everyone who expressed an interest in participating will have received an email from the Director of Relief and Recovery, Nola Tudball, thanking you and outlining the next steps. This will involve a group workshop to take place in July, once COVID-19 restrictions have further eased.

Outputs and plans will be shared with the wider community following the session. If you would still like to register to join a group, contact the Recovery Team on 1800 518 222 or drop into the Recovery Hub.

Volunteer Fencing Efforts Continue

The tireless efforts of fencing volunteers have continued through Fencing for Fires, United Care Fencing, Rotary Belvoir Wodonga and BlazeAid.

BlazeAid have now returned to the Upper Murray, based at the Youth Club Hall, Donaldson St Corryong.

BlazeAid alone have cleared over 93km and constructed over 119km of fencing. More than 108 properties have commenced and 49 completed.

The mammoth efforts are all thanks to more than 3,594 total volunteers who have spent weeks, sometimes months, in the Upper Murray helping to rebuild fences.

From overseas backpackers from the UK and Brazil, to retired couples, farmers have been touched by the dedication of the volunteers.

Their work would not be possible without the generous support from Corryong Lions Club, who cooked over 4,500 evening meals for the workers.

Registrations are still being accepted for properties or volunteers - visit the Corryong Youth Club Hall or call 0408 552 768.



Alice and Greg Albert with BlazeAid volunteers Sandy, Peter and Maurice



Work continues in wet conditions in Colac Colac

Get to Know Your Local Recovery Team

Council's dedicated and passionate Recovery Team work together with Bushfire Recovery Victoria and supporting agencies to support you and your community. Get to know them.

Lizzie Star, Data and Reporting Analysis

Tell us a little about yourself

I grew up on a farm in the Cudgewa Valley and have a love of the wider region.

Tell us a little about your role

My role is to support the Recovery team through interpreting data and reporting on findings.

What part of working in recovery are you most passionate about?

In my current position I'm passionate about communicating the data at hand in a way that it is easy to understand and allows for informed decision making.

When things get tough, what drives you to keep going?

When things get tough take the time to sit down, remember what it is that you're working towards and adjust the plan.

Something you are proud of?

Proud of working with people who are resilient and continue to work for the benefit of the community and its individuals.



Wellbeing and Support

If you are finding the challenges associated with bushfire recovery and COVID-19 tough, it is important that you seek support.

Victorian Bushfire Case Support Program

Bushfire Recovery Victoria's Case Support Program is available to Towong residents free of-charge. You can access the Case Support Program by calling 1800 560 760.

Travelling the Road to Recovery

Disaster Psychologist, Dr Rob Gordon, discusses the emotional stages you may experience after an emergency and suggests strategies to manage these feelings throughout your recovery.

Now that six months have passed since this summer's devastating bushfires, it's time to slow down and ask ourselves how we are going. Fast recovery is not always a good way for laying foundations for the future. It's common to feel overwhelmed, like it's all a bit too much. It's common to feel a lot of stress when turning our minds to the next steps in the recovery and rebuilding journey.

Everyone experiences these events in different ways. But one thing that is universal to almost everyone is that sharing these feelings with others can help to lighten the load. Dr Rob Gordon suggests "now is the time for everyone to get involved with the community and support networks and use the services available because the next year and a half is when health, relationships, social and family life can suffer and create unnecessary problems."

Watch the full video from Dr Rob Gordon at <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/travelling-road-recovery-video-series>. Please reach out to a friend, neighbour or Recovery services to chat further.

Donated Winter Warmers

Some beautiful winter warmers have been generously donated to bushfire-affected families. The thoughtful gifts of knitted and crocheted beanies and scarves have been sent from Queenscliff Neighbourhood House. Visit Pat at the Relief Centre, located at the old Primary School in Corryong nextdoor to the Recovery Centre - enter from Towong Road.



Ruby (4) and Maggie (2) Klippel wearing beanies and scarves donated by Queenscliff Neighbourhood House.

Accommodation

Bushfire Recovery Victoria are working with the Department of Health and Human Services, housing assistance services and philanthropic organisations to assist in filling the gaps in local communities.

If you have urgent or immediate housing needs please call BRV's case support services on 1800 560 760 who can assist you to coordinate your housing requirements.

If your place of residence was impacted during the bushfires and you want to discuss your accommodation needs, call 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

Financial Assistance

Applications for some financial assistance grants close on 31 July 2020. We encourage you to contact the Recovery Team on 1800 518 222 or call 1800 560 760 if you need assistance applying for a grant, or working out which ones you might be eligible for.

Business Support Finder

An online support tool has been developed by Peter Williams and the team at Deloitte to help identify and understand what financial support may be available to you.

Deloitte is a large professional services firm, driven to make an impact that matters.

To access this free online tool, go to <https://au-deloitte.neotalogic.com/a/bushfire-support-finder?productid=94>.

Bushfire Rate Relief

Residents have started to receive their latest Rates Instalment Notice. If you are eligible for Bushfire Rate Relief credits will be automatically applied and displayed in the box on the notice called 'Bushfire Relief'.

Please refer to the 'Account Balance' box to determine if you have an amount payable to Council or not. If your account is in credit, this amount will be in brackets eg. (\$500) and nothing is payable to Council.

To avoid confusion please ignore the bottom part of the notice called 'Your Account' as this only shows the amounts owing prior to the Bushfire Rate Relief being applied. Visit www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfireraterelief for further information and a guide to reading your rates.

Grants Closing Soon

Red Cross Bushfire Primary Residence Repair Grant

The Red Cross has extended its Primary Residence Repair Grant to include destruction or damage to critical private water, septic and/or power infrastructure attached to your primary place of residence and located on your property.

To apply, visit www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/recovering-from-emergencies/grants or call 1800 RED CROSS (1800 733 276).

Applications for the Red Cross emergency, injury and primary residence repair grants close **30 June 2020**.

Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grant

The Victorian Government is continuing to support the recovery of bushland and biodiversity with a new grants program to help fund rehabilitation works following the bushfires.

The program not only provides funding for the rehabilitation of public land, but is also available to fire-affected private landowners focusing on environmental conservation on their properties. A total of \$900,000 is available and successful projects can receive up to:

- \$10,000 for private landholders (Stream 1)
- \$30,000 for environmental volunteer groups (Stream 2)
- \$50,000 for environmental volunteer networks (Stream 3)

For more information and eligibility criteria, visit www.environment.vic.gov.au/grants/BBRG.

Applications close 20 July 2020.

Directly Impacted Primary Producers Grant

Payments of up to \$75,000 are available to eligible primary producers, including apiarists, directly impacted by the bushfires.

These grants can help rebuild primary production enterprises, including replacing destroyed on-farm infrastructure (such as fencing).

To see the eligibility criteria and to apply, visit www.ruralfinance.com.au. **Applications must be submitted by 31 July 2020.**

Primary Producer Emergency Transport Costs Grant

Transport subsidies of up to \$15,000 are available to eligible primary producers directly impacted by the bushfires. Eligible primary producers (including apiarists) can claim the subsidy for eligible transport costs that directly address immediate animal welfare and safety needs, including:

- Transporting of emergency fodder
- Transporting of stock to agistment (including returning stock), sale or slaughter
- Transporting of stock drinking water

Applicants can apply for a combination of transport activities undertaken before 30 June 2020. Apply at www.ruralfinance.com.au/Industry-programs or call Rural Finance on 1800 260 425. **Applications close 31 July 2020.**

Directly Impacted Businesses and Non-Profit Organisations Grant

Payments of up to \$50,000 are available to eligible Victorian small businesses and non-profit organisations (NPOs) affected by the bushfires.

These grants are intended to help pay for costs of clean-up and reinstatement of eligible small businesses that have suffered direct damage as a result of bushfires.

Apply at www.business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance **before 31 July 2020.**

Other Financial Assistance Grants

\$10,000 Grants for Small Business and Primary Producers

The \$10,000 Small Business Bushfire Support Grant has been extended to four more local government areas – Indigo, Mansfield, Wellington and Wangaratta – and is still available in East Gippsland, Alpine and Towong.

Well over 1,000 Victorian businesses including 120 Towong Shire businesses have now received the \$10,000 bushfire support grant available to Small Businesses and Primary Producers who have experienced loss of income from the Victorian bushfires.

Provided by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments, the grant program is still open for applications through Rural Finance. It's easy to apply and you aren't required to upload any financial documents if you don't have them right now.

Visit www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/small-business-bushfire-support-grant.

Rural Finance can help you find out which grants you're eligible for. Contact Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or email governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au.

Red Cross Rebuilding Grant

The Red Cross Rebuild Grant announced 31 March 2020 provides \$20,000 to help homeowners experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of bushfires.

It assists with the early stages of rebuilding a primary place of residence. The \$20,000 grant is over and above the original \$20,000 grant that was available to people who lost their primary place of residence (including those renting). Visit www.redcross.org.au/bushfire-grants-questions.

Applications for the re-establishment grant close **31 August 2020**.

To apply or for more information call 1800 RED CROSS (1800 733 276) or visit www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/recovering-from-emergencies/grants.

RSPCA Animal Welfare

The RSPCA is here to help with support for your animals in this bushfire recovery period. They can assist with subsidising necessary veterinary care for your animals, providing water for animals, food and

fodder for your pets, horses and livestock on hobby farms, as well as other needs that you may have for your animals at this time.

Contact the RSPCA Victoria bushfire support line on (03) 9224 2222 or via the contact form at www.rspcavic.org/BushfireSupport.

Financial Counselling and Support

Financial counsellors are available from AgBiz Assist to provide advice on financial matters, available grants, help with applications and support accessing concessional loans.

This includes help applying for the \$75,000 primary producer's grant and the \$10,000 small business and primary producers grant.

Call 1300 834 775 to arrange a free, independent and confidential over-the-phone appointment.

Free financial counselling also continues to be provided through:

- **AgBiz Assist:** 1300 834 775 or email info@agbizassist.org.au
- **Anglicare:** 1800 244 323
- **Small Business Victoria:** 1800 413 828

Planning and Building

Rebuilding after a bushfire can be challenging for communities and landowners. Clause 52.10 has been introduced to all planning schemes to exempt some parts of the planning permit process and to streamline and simplify rebuilding.

You may need a planning permit to rebuild your home. The requirements for building permits, consents and other approvals may still apply. Your council can help you with the relevant requirements and exemptions and what needs to be provided when applying for a permit.

Features of the new permit assessment process for rebuilding include exemptions from giving notice of your application and third-party appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Additionally, the Chief Executive Officer of council will decide on your application.

Clause 52.07 of the planning scheme allows people to set up a temporary dwelling on their land without a planning permit. The clause also applies to damaged or destroyed businesses. It allows business owners to set up temporary premises without a planning permit.

There are still some things you will need to do before you can set up a temporary dwelling. For more information, visit: www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/bushfire-protection/rebuilding-and-recovery.

Requirements

While planning and building approval costs for bushfire affected applications have been waived, permits are still required on all structures to comply with State Government legislation.

Residents are asked to keep in mind that some aspects may take longer including flooding overlays or land inundation overlays. Planning and building approval costs for bushfire affected applications have been waived though there may still be some costs for those using private consultants.

To talk through your planning and building requirements, speak to Council's Planner, Elke Cummins by calling 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. Further information is also available at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery.

Replacing Tanks

In most cases a planning permit is not needed for water tanks and fees have also been waived for installation of septic tanks. Land capability assessments for septic tanks are now taking place. For more contacting a Council Planner, call 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au.

Waste Disposal Prescribed Waste – Houses and Structures

Please be aware that only Grocon contractors can use non-EPA permitted vehicles to transport waste to disposal locations approved by Bushfire Recovery Victoria. If you are transporting waste:

- All waste must be triple wrapped.
- 24 hours' notice must be given to nominated sites.

Call ahead - Wangaratta Landfill (03) 5722 0888 and Albury Landfill (02) 6043 5860.

Fencing Wire Waste Collection

Council has arranged for free collection and removal of fire damaged fencing wire from properties.

To arrange, drop into the Recovery Hub (Monday to Friday 9am-4pm), call 1800 518 222 or email



recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. You will need to provide your contact details, the address where the wire is to be collected from, and an indication of the amount of wire to be collected.

Please note that fencing wire will need to be free from any non-metal materials. Wherever possible the wire will be recycled. The wire should be left beside the road for collection as we are not able to enter properties to collect the wire.

Remember there are also free drop off locations available:

Corryong Transfer Station, Sugarloaf Road.

- Open Thursday 3-5pm and Sunday 12-4pm.

Walwa, Campbell Lane. End of Campbell Lane, off the Murray River Road

- Access between 7am-6pm Monday to Friday, or 9am-4pm on weekends. Strictly for fencing only.

Other Waste

Council Landfill and Transfer Stations are open, with physical distancing in place.

Corryong Transfer Station

- Sugarloaf Road. Open Thursday 3-5pm, Sunday 12-4pm

Tallangatta Transfer Station

- Hardy's Road. Open Thursday 3-5pm, Sunday 12-4pm

Hazardous Trees, Road Access and Firewood

Hazardous Trees on Private Land

While wet and muddy conditions over the last few weeks slowed some works, tree specialists from ETS Vegetation Management have now completed work at over three quarters of properties that were identified as having burnt trees that were hazardous

to dwellings, sheds or access roads. Some trees that were initially identified as potentially hazardous and marked with paint, were later reclassified on closer inspection and were able to be saved.

ETS can only remove trees that meet these criteria and all tree works are approved by Council. If you have any questions, contact the Recovery Team on 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au.

Benambra-Corryong Road Now Open

The final 25 kilometres of Benambra-Corryong Road near Nariel Valley has now reopened, a task that was impacted by several landslides that tore through the area in the months following the fires.

Following works to clear fallen trees and debris, hundreds of kilometres of damaged road infrastructure has now been reinstated thanks to a joint effort between Regional Roads Victoria, Council, DELWP, Forest Fire Management, Victoria Police, Parks Victoria, VicForests and the ADF.

With Benambra-Corryong Road now open, all arterial roads affected by the recent bushfires across North Eastern Victoria have been reopened.

The bushfire recovery response saw more than 250 road signs repaired or replaced, 3,795 guideposts replaced and 20 kilometres of tree trimming or removal along arterial roads in north east Victoria. Regional Roads Victoria's North Eastern Region also joined forces with Council to repair and reopen 67 council-managed roads that were affected by bushfires.

Motorists are advised to still take care when travelling on bushfire-affected roads. Visit www.traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au for more information.



All bushfire-affected arterial roads in North East Victoria are now open. Image: RRV.

Tintaldra to Commemorate with Soldier Carvings

Members of the Tintaldra community recently met to discuss future plans for Tintaldra's Commemorative Tree Avenue which was damaged by the bushfires. This was the first in-person community recovery meeting since COVID-19 restrictions and we thank residents for coming together safely with Recovery staff.

The group agreed that the wood from the trees would be repurposed into carvings of soldiers, as designed by the RSL. The carvings are planned to be placed on Back Tintaldra Road under a shelter to help protect the carvings.



Replacement trees will also be planted with a suitable species and a plaque put in place explaining the importance of the site and the trees that once stood in their place.

Council is now working through the tender process to find a suitable wood carver. For further information chat to Tintaldra's Local Area Recovery Officer, Kaye Nankervis on 0436 445 187.

Tintaldra's Commemorative Tree Avenue for WW1 Diggers which was damaged during the bushfires. Image: Mark Jesser, The Border Mail.

Project Rainwater Helps Twenty Families

"Twenty bushfire-affected families have been the grateful recipients of a new rainwater tank.

The initiative was first started by Dwayne Heath from Inspired Plumbing, who had close connections in the Upper Murray and was quick to volunteer his services following the bushfires. Finding a solution to provide a sustainable water supply was identified as a real need.

Dwayne was quick to round up his tradie colleagues and some donated materials, allowing him to begin providing water tanks and camp showers to community members.

As the initiative grew, the Recovery Team came on board which allowed the initiative to identify others in need. Other organisations also threw their support behind the project including Deloitte who stepped in to manage the project, Anglicare who donated the tanks, GIVIT who funded the installation through local plumbers and excavators and Reece who provided a grant to cover the plumbing materials.

Council's Recovery Team, in partnership with Bushfire Recovery Victoria, have arranged ongoing water cartage, providing a solution to challenges around ongoing access to water catchment. The project has helped over 20 fire-affected families in the area. It is a great example of collaboration between the community, government, organisations and individuals that all want to help."

Contributed by: Peter Williams, Volunteer Project Coordinator.



More Log Trucks in the Upper Murray

Log trucks continue to travel the Murray Valley Highway and Shelley-Walwa Road as they collect any timber that can still be salvaged by logging experts.

There are around 60 log trucks making up to 200 trips each day through this area to successfully extract the salvageable timber. The operation could run for the rest of the year.

Household Potable Water Delivery Program - Extended to 30 September

The Household Potable Water Delivery Recovery Program recognises that some fire-affected residents have had their potable water tanks destroyed and others are unable to pump water from local creeks because of poor water quality. The program aims to bridge this gap by providing access to immediate potable water supply. Funded by DELWP and administered by Council, guidelines are in place to ensure support is provided to those that need it most.

As every situation is different, please contact the Recovery Team to discuss your needs on 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. Funding has been extended from June 30 to September 30.

Agriculture Victoria Recovery Support

Agriculture Victoria continues to support on-farm recovery for fire affected producers across the North East. Farmers can access technical support on a range of recovery issues.

For more information contact Kylie Macreadie, Agriculture Recovery Manager on 0428 975 728 or email kylie.macreadie@agriculture.vic.gov.au. You can also find the contact details for relevant staff members at agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Bushfire Recovery Team

Council's Bushfire Recovery Team has farewelled Eden Cook and Jess Jarvis, who both brought great energy and passion to the team. Eden and Jess were committed to working with their communities at a time of distress. We thank them for their dedication and they can both feel proud of the positive contribution they made to the lives of many locals. We wish them all the best as they move onto exciting new personal opportunities.

The Recovery Team has also welcomed Christine McKee as Communications Officer.

A number of Recovery roles are currently available, visit www.towong.vic.gov.au/about-council/careers/vacancies.asp.



Bridget Hamilton with Cr Andrew Whitehead and Local Area Recovery Officer Kaye Nankervis at the Cross-Border Mobile Recovery Outreach in Tooma

Cross-Border Mobile Recovery Outreach

Two cross-border Recovery Outreach events were held on June 23 in Jingellic and June 25 in Tooma. The mobile outreach brought together a number of NSW and VIC agencies together in one place for border communities, with over 70 people in attendance across both Jingellic and Tooma events.

The mobile outreach was a collaboration between the Jingellic Hub and Bushfire Recovery staff from Towong Shire Council, Snowy Valleys Council and Greater Hume Council. There will be further cross-border collaboration and events to follow.

Agencies and services in attendance included the Salvation Army, BlazeAid, Department of Primary Industries, Bushfire Recovery Victoria, Rural Financial Councillors, Towong Shire Council's Planner, Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership, Agbiz, Legal Aid, Chaplaincy, Local Aid, Anglicare, Councillors and Recovery staff.

Thank you to the Holbrook Rotary Club for the barbecue lunch.

There will be further cross-border initiatives to follow.



Mayor David Wortmann at the Jingellic Hub for the Cross-Border Mobile Recovery Outreach

Lankeys Creek Resident on Recovery Challenges

Peter Naylor from Lankeys Creek was one of more than 50 people to register at the Cross-Border Mobile Recovery Outreach in Jingellic in the last week of June.

For Mr Naylor, who had never sent or received an email before the bushfires, the chance to meet face-to-face was welcomed.

The house, shed, 20 sheep and three chickens on his 100-acre property survived the worst of the destruction but fencing, the old house, poly pipe and the water turbine he relied on were badly compromised.

After battling on his own, he eventually connected with support via word-of-mouth from his neighbours. He said "without a doubt", help in the form of grants and materials from local land services had been really valuable.

"I'm still right in it. I've done hardly any fencing. I'm not one for working smartphones or computers so without face-to-face meetings I'd be left out of the picture".

"It's a bit overwhelming to be honest. There are a million jobs to do at my place. There is still a lot of work in front of me, the fences were pretty good and now they're pretty ordinary" Mr Naylor said.

The outreach showed Mr Naylor there were two further grants he could be eligible for as he pushes ahead to rebuild his property.



Peter Naylor from Lankeys Creek with BlazeAid Coordinator Ron Davies in Jingellic

Completion of the Upper Murray Events Centre

Hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into bringing the Upper Murray Events Centre to fruition, from the Steering Committee and community groups, to individual volunteers. The Centre will host Federals Football Netball Club, Corryong Football Netball Club and a Health and Fitness Centre by Corryong Health. It will also provide a valuable venue for events, as well as hosting the annual Corryong Show and the Man from Snowy River Bush Festival.

Mayor David Wortmann said the space could also be utilised as a Relief Centre for future emergencies with the right equipment including generators, a sprinkler system and telecommunications. "Council is advocating for the funding and has included the recommendation in our submission to the Royal Commission" he said.

An opening celebration will take place in September. For now take a video tour at www.facebook.com/towong.shire.council/.



The new Upper Murray Events Centre in Corryong

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

Council has participated in hearings for the Royal Commission with neighbouring Council's including Snowy Valleys and Snowy Monaro. The second part of hearings involves looking at the responsibilities of Local Governments in relation to natural disaster risk mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. For more information visit www.naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/.

Support Contacts

Speak to someone by calling:

- **Bushfire Counselling:** 1300 514 811
- **Corryong Health:** 02 6076 3200
- **Lifeline Bushfire Helpline:** 13 43 57
- **MensLine Australia:** 1300 789 978
- **Beyond Blue:** 1300 224 636

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

Phone: **1800 518 222 (Mon to Fri 9am-4pm)**

Email: recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

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

Facebook: facebook.com/towong.shire.council

Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub

**Cnr Donaldson St and Towong Rd, Corryong.
Monday to Friday 9am-4pm**

Local Area Recovery Officers

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

- **Towong, Thowgla, Corryong:** Pete Dikschei 0428 950 739
- **Tallangatta Valley, Mitta Valley, The Peninsula, Biggara, Cudgewa, Berringama, Lucyvale:** Tracey Farrant 0419 636 596
- **Nariel:** Jenny McCoy 0407 293 907
- **Tintaldra, Tooma, Walwa, cross-border:** Kaye Nankervis 0436 445 187

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Free Helpline: **1800 560 760**

Email: connect@brv.vic.gov.au

Website: www.brv.vic.gov.au

Share Your Story

To share a story or contribute an update on your community recovery, contact **1800 518 222** or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au.

