

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

September 2020



WILLING WORKERS: Cathy Ross and Thea Newton are excited about a new future for Playles Hill.

Playles Hill

It's been just four months since the idea was floated to develop Playles Hill into a botanic park. Now the community and the council are embracing The Playles Hill Project and a plan to develop the area into "something really special".

Resident Thea Newton and her husband Tom first walked Playles Hill with interested residents to share a vision for what the park could become, and the work involved. The following week they were joined by Rachael Gadd, Council's Director of Infrastructure and Environment, and Pete Dikschei from the Bushfire Recovery Team. "Rachael suggested we get an arborist to check the health of the trees, and then we got permission for a working bee to clear weeds and rubbish plants on the northern boundary fence line," Thea said.

Three working bees have since been held since then. Council staff have produced mapping using a drone and spent two days with machinery clearing dead trees and removing weedy shrubs. Council staff also helped to develop a master plan. The group has applied for a grant to identify all trees with their botanical and common names on aluminium plaques.

Plans to date include filling the gaps in the avenue of pear trees and planting bulbs beneath them, seating along a walking path winding its way from Donaldson St, upgrades to existing facilities, a bike track for BMX and mountain bikes and wheelchair friendly access to areas at the top of the park.

"This transformational project appeals to all age groups. We'd love to see the whole area as an educational experience, a place everyone can use," Thea said. For more information call Thea on 0418 869 156 or email her at tnt.newton@bigpond.com.

About This Newsletter

This monthly 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.

**THE FREE CLEAN-UP OF DESTROYED
AND DAMAGED PROPERTIES IS NOW
COMPLETE IN TOWONG SHIRE.**

578
structures
cleaned up

183
properties
cleaned up

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.

Tanya Aramini, Coordinator Recovery and Resilience

Tell us a little about yourself

I was born and raised in the Riverina NSW then moved to the UK and lived in London for 10 years. In the last 12 years I worked in the community service sector, ranging from complex case management, mental health support, community development, migrant and refugee support and youth engagement. I volunteered with Midnight Basketball, animal rescue and various homelessness projects. I am fascinated by the human condition, behaviour and characteristics, and enjoy sitting at the coffee shop and people watching. I am a keen roller skater with many interests that I continue to grow and explore.

Tell us a little about your role

My role is to provide effective support and leadership to the Local Area Recovery Officers, contribute to solution-focused outcomes for the Upper Murray communities we work closely with, and advocate for proactive community inclusion, capacity building and development.

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

Walking alongside individuals and communities, recognising and supporting their unique strengths and determination. Being part of the process to reach the best outcomes and planning for the future. Leading with humility, authenticity and open to learning from the depth of experience and knowledge of community members.

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

Knowing that one person can in fact make a big difference and knowing that the simplest idea or gesture can have the greatest impact.

What have you learned so far?

The true meaning of the quote, "none of us is as smart as all of us" (Kenneth H Blanchard).

Something you are proud of?

Interesting and varied life experiences so far, not being afraid to challenge myself and take the leap into the next phase. I don't do this work because it's easy, I do it because I can't not do it.



BlazeAid

BlazeAid camps are now up and running at Jingellic and Walwa. More volunteers are still needed so if you have some time to give, call camp coordinator Natalie Trigwell on 0497 717 605. If you haven't registered for help, call into the camp at Walwa football oval or Jingellic showgrounds.



Ready to go: Camp coordinator Natalie Trigwell with some of the first volunteers to arrive last week.

Recovery support in Walwa

Local Area Recovery Officer, Kaye Nankervis, will be at the Walwa Bush Nursing Centre every Wednesday until 28 October. Kaye is available to talk about bushfire recovery, grants, available support, or just for a chat.

Call into see her between 10am – 3pm. If you can't make it during those times, call Kaye on 0436 445 187 to arrange another time.



Navigating the rebuilding process

More help is now available for people rebuilding homes destroyed or damaged by bushfire. The Victorian Building Authority has made registered building practitioner, Peter Collina, available to help bushfire impacted residents navigate the rebuilding process.

Peter is a registered building surveyor (unlimited) and registered domestic builder (unlimited) with experience helping people to rebuild after bushfires. He is available between 1-5pm Tuesday to Friday each week to answer building related questions. Email him at peter.collina@vba.vic.gov.au or call 0409 245 538.

This assistance is available alongside the rebuild support service which is provided by Towong Shire, in partnership with Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV). The free service offers information, guidance and support throughout the rebuilding process, including help with planning and building approval. Any landowner in Towong Shire rebuilding after fire damaged their property, is eligible.

Community Recovery Committees

Community Recovery Committees are now up and running in Cudgewa, Towong, Thowgla, Biggara,

Lucyvale/Berringama, Walwa/Jingellic (including Guys Forrest, Pine Mountain, Mount Alfred), Tintalra, Upper Murray and The Peninsula. A youth-specific working group is being developed and conversations have commenced with the Corryong and Nariel Valley communities about their aspirations for CRCs and recovery.

Each committee will work on ideas and priority projects to drive the recovery and renewal process. For more information contact the Upper Murray Bushfire Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222.

Boost to community fire safety

The Victorian Government is providing \$14 million for emergency services volunteers to fund new equipment and vehicles and support their tireless efforts keeping the community safe.

Grants can be used to help purchase new vehicles, trucks, tankers, watercraft and trailers, other operational equipment and facility improvements. Volunteer groups can also put the money towards minor facility improvements. For more information about Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program and to find out how to apply for a grant, visit www.emv.vic.gov.au/vesep.

Grants program a win for Towong

Towong Shire Council has awarded more than \$240,000 in round one of the Community Recovery Grants Program with 53 successful applications. Mayor David Wortmann said the response was overwhelming.

"My fellow Councillors and I have been blown away by the number of wonderful ideas that will genuinely make a difference to communities as they recover from the bushfires," he said. "About half relate to events, with the remainder relating to infrastructure and equipment."

Applications came from across the Shire from Community Recovery Committees, volunteer emergency services, community groups, sporting clubs and interest groups. The Community Recovery Grants Program is made possible through funding from the Commonwealth Government's Bushfire Recovery Program (\$550,000) and the State Government's Community Recovery and Resilience Grants stream of the Community Recovery Package (\$200,000).

See the list of successful applicants at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery. Submissions for the second round will close on Friday 12 February 2021.

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 (Monday to Friday 9am-4pm)

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:

Pete Dikschei – Thowgla, Towong, Biggara | 0428

 739

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



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

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.