

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

Edition 8 - November 2020

Getting back on your horse

"We laughed, we cried, we hugged, and we rode our horses," said Cudgewa's Marja Jarvis. "I didn't know all of the women, but at the end of the weekend we became a sisterhood."

On the weekend of October 24-25, Marja and five other women came together at Tullimbar Log Cabins near Bullioh for a two-day horsemanship clinic. It was the second of three clinics and for some, it was the first time they had been on their horses since before the bushfires.

"Each one of us had gone through the bushfires ... each of us then had to deal with COVID and all its restrictions ... and each one of us had been touched by cancer, either personally or through a relative or friend," Marja said. "We shared our stories by the open fire at night and we bonded as we realised how strong and resilient each of us is. It was a humbling and exhilarating experience."

The clinics grew from an idea at Corryong Baptist Church, with funds from the Baptist Union of Victoria and the Commonwealth Bank. Organiser Sharon Roberts said they had noticed that a lot of 'horsey people' had not been on their horses since the fires and needed some time out in their own backyard.

"On horseback, it's very easy to social distance but still connect with other like-minded people," Sharon said.

Clinician Barry Chambers, famous for his Animal Wranglers shows, came out of retirement to conduct the clinics at a reduced cost. Barry readily admits he loves a challenge and uses his gentle but insistent approach to re-educate horses and riders. Some had lost their confidence, some had horses with behaviour issues, and all learned a lot from their time together. Since then they have formed a Facebook group and plan to continue their new-found friendships with trail rides in the local area.

The final clinic is being held on November 14-15. To find out if there are any free spaces phone Sharon on 0429 145 498. *(Pictured is Marja Jarvis and her mare, Molly.)*



LOCAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM - APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

Find out how you can apply on page 3.

Caution: turtles crossing!

Just a reminder to motorists to be careful driving as turtles are crossing the roads. They are an endangered species and we want to look after them.

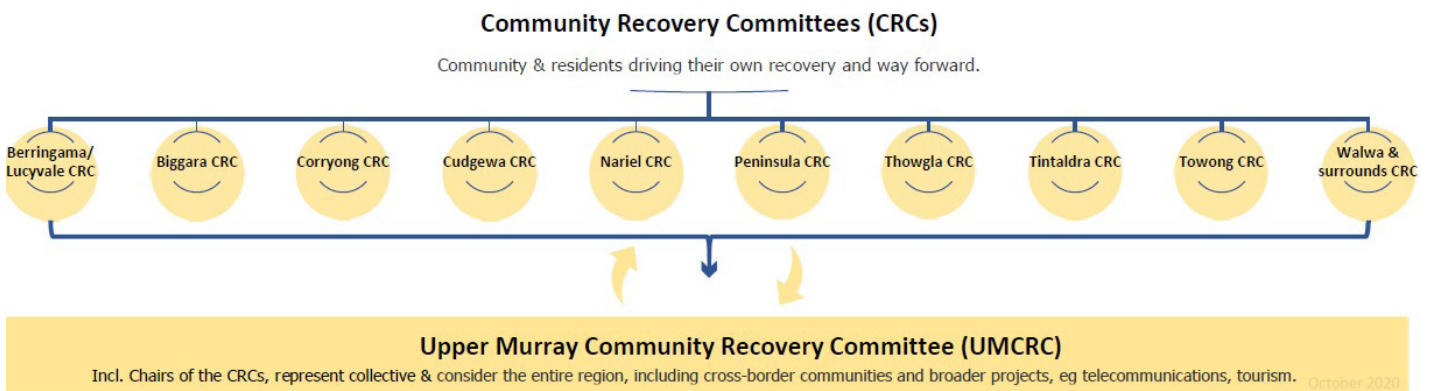
CRCs – what it means for you

Data flowing into the Upper Murray Recovery Hub and the Australian Red Cross indicates there is still some confusion around Community Recovery Committees (CRCs). What are they all about, who can join, what is their purpose and where do you go if you have a great idea?

Towong Shire differs from Alpine Shire, which has one CRC to guide their recovery. Towong Shire Council adopted a model which allows each of the small towns and valleys to guide their own recovery priorities. The Upper Murray CRC, which includes representatives of individual CRCs, considers entire region priorities, eg telecommunications and tourism, and includes cross-border communities.

CRCs are now established in Corryong, Thowgla, Towong, Cudgewa, Lucyvale/Berringama, Biggara, Tintaldra, Walwa and surrounds, Nariel Valley and the Peninsula. Right now, the CRCs' primary role is to consult as extensively as possible within their areas to determine ideas and priorities to move towards a safer, more resilient and liveable community into the future.

Each CRC is supported by a Local Area Recovery Officer (LARO) who is employed by Towong Shire Council and funded by Bushfire Recovery Victoria. Both organisations work together to provide whatever assistance may be necessary, as determined by the CRCs themselves. If you would like more information or to find out who your LARO or CRC chairperson is, contact Keryn at the Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222.



CFA door-knocking Upper Murray residents

Over the coming weeks, the CFA's Community Safety and Response Team will be door-knocking properties in Lucyvale, Upper Towong, Nariel Valley, Thowgla Road and Biggara to discuss summer fire preparation. Static displays will be set up in Corryong, Walwa, Cudgewa and Towong.

If you would like to contact the Team directly, call Andy Arnold on 0437 247 199.

Thank you!

The generosity since the bushfires has been incredible and we'd like to thank the Nariel Folk Festival Committee for their donation of \$30,000 to the Rotary Club of Corryong to help impacted residents.

We'd also like to thank Judi Walter and Julian Browne from Buxton, and the Marysville and Triangle Community Foundation who donated a ride-on mower to the Lucyvale Hall.

Stay informed in an emergency

Radio / Television

ABC Local 99.7 FM
ABC Local 196.5 FM
Sky News

Useful websites

VicEmergency | emergency.vic.gov.au
Vic State Emergency Service (SES) | ses.vic.gov.au
Bureau of Meteorology | bom.vic.gov.au/vic/warnings
Country Fire Authority (CFA) | www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Helpful apps

VicEmergency
VicTraffic
BOM Weather
Better Health Channel

Local Economic Recovery Program

The Local Economic Recovery Program (LER) is supporting large projects to boost business, jobs and industry across the region and smaller, local-level projects to benefit community recovery after the fires. It is divided into two streams:

1) Local Community Project Grants

These grants have been established to support local community recovery by funding projects that are important to achieving the aspirations and priorities of local communities.

Applications are open now at www.br.vic.gov.au. You can also get assistance on the phone at 1800 560 760 or at the Hub. These grants will be released in three stages so communities have time to consider their project ideas and prepare applications. The first stage opens October 29 and closes November 30.

2) Regional Economic Stimulus & Resilience Grants

These grants have been established to support regional economic recovery by stimulating economic growth and building economic resilience in bushfire affected regions.

Applications are open now, and you can see more information and how to apply at www.br.vic.gov.au.

Highs and lows of anniversaries

It's hard to believe it's been almost a year since the Upper Murray was devastated by bushfire. For some it's a time to celebrate milestones in recovery, but for others it's likely to trigger memories and emotions we'd rather forget.

"What we have to understand, the anniversary, because it's a symbolic moment, brings people face to face with the whole experience" (psychologist and disaster recovery specialist Dr Rob Gordon).

Anniversaries of disaster events can be upsetting, particularly if media coverage is intense. There may be formal events to mark the anniversary. There may also be informal events arranged by people affected. Both survivors – and the agencies who have worked with and supported them since the disaster – may

find these times difficult, so it is helpful to have a plan to reduce the impact.

Limit exposure to media coverage, plan your day with relaxing activities and make sure you have people available to support you, should you need it. Help is available online: <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/coping-after-a-crisis> or call Lifeline on 13 11 14. (Source: Australian Red Cross)

Hard-hitting campaign to encourage fire preparedness

In line with the upcoming fire season, the State Government is launching a hard-hitting *How Well Do You Know Fire?* campaign, designed to help Victorians better understand fire and fire safety.

Pre-campaign warnings running across TV, radio, print, digital, social, and outdoor media may be confronting for some. The Victorian Government has warned that, while there has been some significant rainfall in recent months, the risk of bushfire and grassfire is real, and Victorians need to be well prepared.

Additional resources and support this season include thousands of dedicated volunteer and career firefighters from across all agencies and a record fleet of 51 aircraft with a surge capacity of 100. Start preparing yourself and your loved ones now and visit vic.gov.au/knowfire to plan and prepare.

You should also download the VicEmergency app now to receive emergency information and warnings. If you have any concerns, or you or a loved one are emotionally affected by the campaign, support is available on the website, or by calling Lifeline on 13 11 14.



Emergency contacts

Emergency services

For a life threatening emergency dial 000. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impediment call 106.

Other support available

VicRoads | 13 11 70 - vicroads.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service | relayservice.gov.au

Nurse on Call | 1300 606 024

Translating and Interpreting Service | 131 450 - tisnational.gov.au

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:

Tanya Aramini – Thowgla, Towong, Biggara | 0428 950 739

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 Valley, business community, youth | 0438 762 442

Bushfire Recovery Vctora

Free Helpline: 1800 560 760

Email: connect@brv.vic.gov.au

Website: www.brv.vic.gov.au

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.