

# Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

*Edition 11 - January 2021*

## Bushfire Funding to Boost Upper Murray Energy Security

A vision to build enough renewable generated energy capacity to power the Upper Murray during disruptions to the grid has taken a big step forward.

Renewable energy can play a vital role in boosting electricity security in remote regions by ensuring critical infrastructure, such as emergency response offices, relief centres, banks and ATMs, fuel stations, and other critical locations, have access to energy even if the grid goes down.

This \$800,000 grant, funded under the Australian and Victorian Governments' Local Economic Recovery (LER) Program, will allow Upper Murray Inc (UMI) and Indigo Power to begin creating a series of micro grids around the region.

UMI Deputy Chair, Ian Cesa says the basic concept is a microcosm, or miniature version, of an electricity grid, and the initial grant is part of a much bigger plan.

"With the existing power infrastructure, the entire region is vulnerable to disruptions," he said. "During the event of a disruption, the microgrids would kick in so there is no disruption to power supply. We would end up with an island of power, disconnected to the grid, to run the region while the power is out."

To operate, a micro grid needs a localised power source created by a virtual power plant. With enough renewable generated capacity, mostly solar, sufficient power could be generated to power the region, 24 hours a day, anytime the grid is down.



**Pictured: Upper Murray Inc Deputy Chair, Ian Cesa**

"But we need to add to the existing capacity and this grant will help do that by putting solar panels on existing public buildings – it's that simple," he said.

For example, the Corryong Memorial Hall has received a grant for solar panels and a generator. Part of this grant will upgrade solar capacity and add a battery.

Corryong Health also has a grant for solar panels and UMI's grant will upgrade its capacity and add a 280kWh battery, which is the size of a shipping container.

Mr Cesa says that's no small thing and if enough capacity is generated, the system could stand alone "forever".

Indigo Power is a local, community owned social enterprise. Board Chair Ann Telford said "when there wasn't an emergency, the installations would save sites money, reduce carbon emissions, and could form the basis of a local microgrid, feeding power back into the grid."

Plans are now in place to locate micro grids, or nodes, in Corryong, Cudgewa, Tintalra, Biggara, Nariel Valley, Walwa, Towong and Lucyvale/Berringama.

The \$68.6 million LER program is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments to fund projects vital for community recovery, support economic stimulus projects, and boost industry and jobs across bushfire affected regions.

## Recovery grants approved in Towong Shire

Congratulations to the Tintaldra, Thowgla and Towong CRCs for their successful grant applications to Murray Primary Health Network (PHN). Tintaldra CRC will receive \$9,640 for a range of social connection activities to engage all age groups. These range from dance classes for children, 'palette to plate' drawing lessons with wine and cheese for the women, a golf day and barbeque at Waleragang for men and boys, and a community picnic.

Towong CRC received \$9,100 for social connection events with planning underway. Thowgla CRC received \$7,500 from a Vic Health Reimagining Health Grant for children's art classes and a series of art classes and workshops in different mediums for adults, and \$10,000 from Murray PHN to record local history.



**Pictured: Sheril Wilson and Ilma Clark celebrate the ongoing work at Corryong's Memorial Hall after receiving a \$25,000 LER grant for streetscaping.**

These grants come in the wake of more than \$2.23 million for Towong Shire projects in the first round of the Local Economic Recovery (LER) grants, jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments':

- \$800,000 to support Upper Murray Inc's plan to protect against power outages and reduce running costs by installing energy nodes
- \$544,645 to refurbish the Towong Soldiers Memorial Hall and provide better access
- \$473,838 to upgrade the Walwa Services Memorial Hall and enable it to function during emergencies
- \$387,384 to upgrade courts at the Corryong Tennis Club

Two further rounds of local community project grants of up to \$2 million open on 15 March 2021. To find out more, contact Bushfire Recovery Victoria on 1800 560 760 or [www.br.vic.gov.au](http://www.br.vic.gov.au), or contact the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222 or [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au).

In addition, the Corryong and District Memorial Hall received \$25,000 from Bushfire Recovery Victoria's recent bushfire recovery grants for community facilities, to develop the streetscape around the hall and memorial gardens with public art, information and a grassed area.

## Community grants close 12 February

Do you have an idea or initiative to support bushfire recovery in your community? Round 2 of Council's \$750,000 Community Recovery Grants Program is open until Friday, 12 February with grants up to \$5,000 available to fund projects and activities to support community recovery and renewal.

The program is open to not-for-profit organisations and community groups across Towong Shire including service clubs, Community Recovery Committees and action groups. The funds for the Community Recovery Grants Program are 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).

Projects and activities that demonstrate the following are encouraged:

- Support bushfire recovery
- Build community resilience
- Support social, economic and environmental recovery

- Support community events, activities and infrastructure projects
- Increase awareness of support services
- Enhance community health and wellbeing
- Attract visitors to Towong Shire
- Provide opportunities for skills development and/or information sharing
- Increase fire preparedness and mitigation (including equipment).



**Pictured: Corryong College students with one of four new shade sails funded by Round 1 of Council's Community Recovery Grants.**

### **Community grants close 12 February cont.**

To be eligible, applicants must be an incorporated community body or have an auspice body based in Towong Shire, have adequate public liability insurance and a risk management plan. The project or event needs to take place within Towong Shire and benefit the Towong Shire community.

Only one application per organisation/community group will be considered in each round and preference will be given to applicants that have not received funding from this program in previous rounds. Successful applicants will be decided at the Towong Shire Council meeting in March.

For more information and to apply go to [www.towong.vic.gov.au](http://www.towong.vic.gov.au), Council offices in Corryong or Tallangatta, or contact the Upper Murray Bushfire Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222. If you require a letter of support from your Community Recovery Committee also contact the Recovery Hub.

### **Fencing wire collection**

If you have fencing wire that needs collecting from your fire impacted property, there will be one last opportunity for free pickup in February. Wire needs to be free from non-metal waste and where possible, landowners should leave waste wire just inside their property gate, for ease of parking for a large truck and excavator. Wire for collection needs to be in place before the last week in February.

To register for collection, contact the Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222 or email [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au). Customers will be asked to provide their name, address, best contact number and an approximate quantity of wire.



### **Kids News bushfire poetry competition**

The 2019-20 summer bushfires affected all Australians in some way. If you're a primary or secondary school student, you can share your experiences through your own words, wherever you live.

Check out the Kids News ([www.kidsnews.com.au](http://www.kidsnews.com.au)) website for more information about the competition and ideas to help get you started.

The two winning poems will be published in a special book to commemorate the Black Summer bushfires, along with some other great prizes!

Entries close at 5pm (AEDT) on 20 February, 2021.

### **Free property numbering**

Free property numbering is now available for all rural properties in the Upper Murray. The small reflective signs, with a number and green band, make it easier for emergency services to find rural properties at night and in poor visibility.

You will need to provide your name, address and property number, which may be different from your address. Signs need to be placed somewhere visible from the road. Numbers are available to farms outside Corryong, Cudgewa central and Walwa central.

If you would like to order a sign, call the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222 or email [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au).



### **Landscaping for bushfire recovery**

The type and location of vegetation in your garden can significantly reduce the impact of a bushfire. Garden design and plant selection can help reduce the effects of direct flame contact and radiant heat on a house. To help you plan, design, plant and manage the area around your house, the CFA has produced a 'Landscaping for Bushfire' Guide.

Pick up a copy from Corryong Library or download from the CFA website at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/landscaping](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/landscaping).

### **Recovery Hub back open**

The Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub is back in full swing after the summer break. For any recovery related enquiries, or if you aren't sure who to contact or where to go, you can call the Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222, email [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au) or call in.

We're at the site of the former Corryong College junior campus on the corner of Hanson and Donaldson Sts, Corryong.

# 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](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19)

**Australian Red Cross** | [www.redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19](http://www.redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19)

**Beyond Blue** | [www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)

**Phoenix Australia Centre for post-traumatic mental health** | [www.phoenixaustralia.org/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://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](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery](http://www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/towong.shire.council](https://facebook.com/towong.shire.council)

### Local Area Recovery Officers

If you are yet to speak to your Local Area Recovery Officer, reach out directly to the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222 or email [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au) and we can put you in touch with the right person.

## Bushfire Recovery Victoria

**Free Helpline:** 1800 560 760

**Email:** [connect@brv.vic.gov.au](mailto:connect@brv.vic.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.brv.vic.gov.au](http://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](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au).

## Subscribe Today

To subscribe to the digital newsletter, email [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au). For past editions of this newsletter go to [www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery](http://www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery).

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