

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

Edition 14 — April 2021



Emergency Services to be honoured in mural

Emergency services workers who fought to save the Upper Murray in the 2019/20 bushfires will be commemorated in a full-size mural at the Corryong Soldiers Memorial Hall.

The mural, painted from real life, is to show appreciation to all emergency services for keeping residents safe and preserving life and industry.

Local representatives from the CFA, Ambulance Victoria, SES, Victoria Police, and Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning (DELWP) will be selected by each organisation to be the face of those who put their lives on the line.

The artwork will be done by renowned street art painter, Sean Burton from Melbourne and made possible with a \$5000 Towong Shire Community Recovery Grant awarded to Corryong RSL Sub-Branch.

Secretary Greg Nankervis said there would be many positive outcomes from the project.

“The Memorial Garden is a place of healing and reflection, a place to rejoice in survival,” he said.

“After so much loss, of homes, farms, infrastructure, and personal and community wellbeing, this will provide residents and visitors with a welcoming, non-threatening meeting place to share stories and memories.”

Round 3 of the Community Recovery Grants closes on Friday, 14 May. For more information go to www.towong.vic.gov.au or call the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222.

Pictured: Ilma Clarke, Secretary of Corryong Memorial Hall committee and Greg Nankervis, Secretary of Corryong RSL Sub-Branch in front of the new mural site.



Berringa Peninsula Community Network

The Peninsula communities of Granya, Bethanga, Talgarno and Bellbridge escaped the ferocity of the 2019/20 bushfires but nonetheless, the impact on the community is being felt.

When expressions of interest to form a Community Recovery Committee were sent out in September last year, 19 people responded.

Since then, several meetings have been held and a large committee formed, chaired by Jim de Hennin, and with a focus on fire preparedness.

Committee member, Julie Miller said the small communities traditionally had not worked together and the fires were a new opportunity to build unity into the Peninsula area.

"We're looking beyond recovery to the future," Julie said.

"That's why we opted to form a Community Network rather than a Community Recovery Committee.

"We are also looking ahead to the future impact of subdivisions."

The committee members represent the four Peninsula communities and between them have a wide range of skills and experience.

With the support of Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria, they established their Terms of Reference and collectively agreed to become Berringa Peninsula Community Network (BPCN).

"We decided that Community Recovery Committee did not reflect the role we could play," Julie said.

"Berringa Peninsula Community Network better represents our role to strengthen community resilience and wellbeing, and create a shared identity."

It is the notion of a connected Berringa Peninsula that drives the vision of the Network.

Committee members aim to support and encourage the advancement of the Peninsula as well as ensure that, in the event of another disaster, the community will be more prepared and resilient.

Bushfire preparedness is at the forefront with heavy fuel loads still in Jarvis Creek, Mt Granya and Mt Lawson. Many of the community halls in the region, including Granya, Bethanga and Talgarno are putting together grant submissions to improve their facilities.

In December, BPCN met with representatives from Bethanga Hall, Bethanga Recreation Reserve, Hume Boat Club, Granya Hall, Talgarno Hall and the Bethanga, Granya and Talgarno CFAs.

Following this meeting, with funding from BRV, Ben King, an engineer with consultants AKPS, was engaged to assess the condition of the halls. His reports will provide support for funding.

The Network will provide a base for communication, advocacy and be a facilitation agent for the needs and aspirations of the Peninsula communities and provide leadership on local issues.

To contact the Network search Berringa Peninsula Community Network on Facebook, send an email to berringapcn@gmail.com or phone Julie on 02 6020 1107.

Pictured: Members of Berringa Peninsula Community Network at a meeting in Granya.

Mt Mittamatite and Upper Murray parks open

Mt Mittamatite and all Upper Murray parks are now open to the public, with the exception of Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park, including Bluff Falls which is located inside the park.

Parks Victoria says that given the significant damage to assets, including loss of the wooden access steps to the falls and part of the viewing platform, coupled with safety hazards associated with fire affected trees and unstable slopes, it may be some time before the Bluff Falls area is reopened.

Initial technical inspections have been undertaken and Parks Victoria is investigating the best options to replace the access and facilities at the falls with a better, safer and more contemporary design that will also provide better all abilities access.

Parks Victoria staff are currently working to re-open the Pine Mountain and Ross Lookout areas of the park as the first priority.

Pictured: Bluff Falls at Cudgewa North

Credit: Visit Victoria



Community Debriefs

Throughout February and March, Council in partnership with Bushfire Recovery Victoria, held nine Community Debrief sessions with more than 165 community members and key emergency management agencies attending.

Debrief Facilitator Cath Botta said, 'these sessions were an important opportunity for community members to share and reflect on their experiences and for Emergency Response Agencies to listen to the many stories and personal accounts of the fire event.'

The valuable contributions of those who attended has helped to identify key learnings and areas for improvement in future events.

Some of the key themes discussed during the Debrief Sessions include the development of future community resilience plans, improvements to the suitability, communication and education around Evacuation Centres and Emergency Relief Centres as well as how Emergency Response can better utilise local knowledge.

Council is collating the feedback captured at the sessions and will provide an update in due course.

If you have further questions, please contact your LARO on 1800 518 222 or recovery@towong.vic.gov.au or Tracey Farrant, BRV Community Engagement Officer on 0408 928 198 or Tracey.Farrant@brv.vic.gov.au.

IGEM Fire Season Inquiry

After a false start to face-to-face meetings due to February's five-day COVID lockdown, the Inspector General for Emergency Management, Tony Pearce was able to get out and about over four weeks, visiting fire-affected communities in the North East and East Gippsland.

In total, 36 meetings extended from Walwa to Falls Creek and Mallacoota and communities in between, involving individuals, Community Recovery Committees and staff from organisations working in recovery.

Nine meetings were held in the Upper Murray for community members to share their experiences of the 2019–20 Victorian fires.

Mr Pearce said he was very grateful to everyone who participated, openly and honestly, in these meetings.

"For many people, recounting their story and experiences from the fires was still very raw and emotional. We were humbled by your willingness to talk about what had and hadn't worked in recovery, even though it was a difficult conversation," he said.

Frequently shared themes or topics include:

- The level of involvement communities are having in their own recovery and capacity to make and influence important recovery decisions.
- The complexity and fairness of funding eligibility requirements, application processes and decisions for both community and individual funding.
- The value of the case support program and the assistance it provides to individuals navigating their recovery.
- The resilience and strength of community as they came together to support each other in recovery.
- The importance of being better prepared for future emergencies and having appropriate support from relevant agencies and organisations to make this happen.
- The timeliness and complexity of planning and re-building and the impact this has on recovery.
- The workload and expectation placed on Community Recovery Committees whose voluntary members are supporting their communities and trying to recover.
- How recovery progress affects the health and wellbeing of individuals and community.
- The Inspector-General will provide the second Inquiry Report into the effectiveness of progress with relief and recovery arrangements to government by 31 July 2021.



Tintalra dance classes a big success

Social connection was identified as one of Tintalra CRC's priority areas and last month, thanks to a grant from Murray Primary Health Network (PHN) the first in a series of community activities got underway.

15 children attended a series of three dance classes held on Saturday mornings in Tintalra Hall. Local dance teacher, Rebecca Hamilton (*pictured above*) from Upper Murray Dance took the classes in contemporary dance.

It was difficult to tell whether the children or their watching parents enjoyed it more, but without doubt it was a very successful event.

Burnt wire collection

Burnt fencing wire collection commenced in early March and is ongoing. Collection has been slower this time around due to reduced machines and lost time to wet weather but will continue until completed.

If you haven't registered, please contact the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222.

Bricks for fire victims

For any bushfire victims who had built their home with Austral Bricks, Brickworks Building Products will replace all the bricks, free of charge, including delivery.

For homes constructed from other building materials, Brickworks will assist the re-build with 50% off all materials in the Brickworks Building Products portfolio. This includes bricks, pavers, roof tiles, masonry blocks and retaining walls.

You can contact Brickworks on 13 27 42, or go to <https://www.brickworks.com.au/bushfire-relief>.

Thowgla now better prepared

The Thowgla community celebrated several big wins recently with a \$10,000 grant from Murray Primary Health Network (PHN) to run art workshops for children, and a \$50,000 grant from Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) to purchase 40 UHF radio sets and nine portable firefighting units, a big step forward in the CRCs priority of bushfire preparedness.

The community also took possession of three new portable quick fill pump units and standpipe, celebrating at a demonstration and training day where they welcomed members of the Albury Wodonga Motorcycle Enthusiasts Club who donated the equipment.

The 1200lt per minute pumps deliver water through the standpipe and will make filling water tanks much faster and safer.





Trail Towns coming to SBS

Some of the Upper Murray's most breathtaking cycling rides and scenery will be showcased in a new series being broadcast on SBS television.

Trail Towns is a road trip with two friends, cycling enthusiast Dieter Kahsnitz and world mountain bike champion Paul van der Ploeg.

Towong Shire Council is excited to be supporting a segment of this highly anticipated SBS series. Hosts Vandy and Deetz visit towns across Australia, highlighting the best things to do, see and eat.

They travelled around the Shire in late March to complete filming for the segment, visiting iconic cycling and tourist locations, as well as chatting to local business owners and residents.

Mayor David Wortmann said this was a great way to showcase the amazing cycling opportunities the Shire has to offer.

"Our segment on Trail Towns will show viewers the best road and gravel riding routes within the Shire, starting in Corryong and heading east to Tallangatta, then venturing down south to the Mitta Valley," Mayor Wortmann said.

"The boys highlight some of the best things to see and do along the way, including water sports on Hume Dam, visiting our beautiful National and State Parks, checking out the art installations along the Great River Road, taking a tour of The Man from Snowy River Museum, and stopping off at some of our local cafes and pubs.

"It was a great opportunity for some of our local business owners and residents to jump in front of the camera for the segment too."

Keep an eye out for the episode which will air on SBS on Saturday 5 June 2021.

Pictured: Paul Van Der Ploeg, AKA Vandy, with Dieter Kahsnitz, AKA Deetz. Image courtesy of Anouska Freedman.

Corryong Walking Trail gets underway

As part of The Corryong Town Trail — Stage 1 project footpath construction has begun on Strzelecki Way in Corryong. Road access will not be impacted during construction.

The Corryong Town Trail project was identified as a community priority during the development of the Upper Murray 2030 Vision Plan, a community-led plan launched in 2016. The plan identified a series of town trails within the Upper Murray to promote health and wellbeing, create additional tourism opportunities and link local assets.

The Corryong Town Trail — Stage 1 is funded by a \$250,000 grant from the Commonwealth Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, a \$250,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Sustainable Infrastructure Fund and a \$267,420 contribution from Council.

Towong Shire Council Mayor David Wortmann says Stage 1 of the project is a huge step towards seeing the town trails come to life.

"The construction of the Corryong Town Trail will greatly improve walking and cycling opportunities for the residents of Corryong," he said.

"A huge thank you to all those involved in identifying this project and continuing to advocate for these types of opportunities for your community."

To find out more about the project, visit towong.vic.gov.au/major-projects.

Donated clothing and linen

The Relief Centre for donated goods, next to the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub is closing on June 30. There is still a large supply of donated clothing and linen available at no cost. Call into the Recovery Hub between 9am–4pm and we will let you in.

FOCUS ON GRANTS

For information on these and other available grants, contact the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

Strengthening Rural Communities — Small and Vital

Round 3 — Up to \$10,000 Closes 25 May 2021

These grants from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal aim to give small rural, regional and remote communities an opportunity to access funding to support broad community needs. Grants are available for a broad range of grassroots, community-led initiatives that directly and clearly benefit local communities.

Projects funded must align with one or more of the following:

- Bringing people and community organisations together to foster stronger, more resilient communities
- Fostering and celebrating a sense of identity, diversity and cultural connection
- Improving community health and social wellbeing
- Enabling people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to lead and contribute to the prosperity and renewal of their community
- Building a sustainable volunteer base and/or resourcing and supporting the wellbeing of volunteers
- Increasing access and inclusion for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups
- Enhancing places where communities gather
- Connection to place and initiatives that champion a community's social, cultural or economic aspirations
- Increasing capacity and capability of local community organisations to support preparedness and recovery from natural disasters
- Enabling locally-led responses within communities to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- The Small & Vital stream focuses on projects initiated and delivered by local community groups and not-for-profits
- Organisations that do not have DGR status.

To find out more and apply go to <https://frrr.org.au/funding/place/strengthening-rural-communities/>

NAB Foundation Community Grants

Round 2 — Up to \$10,000 Closes 30 July 2021

Helps safeguard your community with funding to prepare for natural disasters, support long-term recovery and build resilience against future disasters.

- Help people and places prepare for natural disasters Assist in short and long-term recovery efforts related to natural disasters
- Build community resilience against future disasters
- Strengthen the environment to be more resilient to natural disasters
- Help communities reduce their climate risk.

Examples include education, training, emergency systems, preparedness plans, mental health support, infrastructure, equipment, business resilience, household resilience, urban greening, reducing climate risk.

Grants are open to community groups, non-government, government, education, health and business.

Go to <https://www.nab.com.au/aboutus/social-impact/community/nabfoundation-and-grants/applicationguide>

Aboriginal Community Mitigation and Crisis Management Grants

Aboriginal Community Mitigation and Crisis Management grants are now open. \$3.8 million is available for strengthening the resilience of Aboriginal communities in bushfire-affected areas.

Administered by Bushfire Recovery Victoria, the program has two streams, with \$1.8 million available for initiatives addressing crisis management, mitigation and planning, and \$2 million available to improve Aboriginal infrastructure to better prepare for future emergency events.

Applications will close at 11.59pm on Sunday 16 May 2021. For more information or to submit an application, visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-support-aboriginal-communities>

Nature-led recovery grants

Nature-led Recovery Grants, a joint initiative between Bushfire Recovery Victoria, Zoos Victoria and DELWP, are now open.

Funding of up to \$5,000 is available for projects to help bushfire-affected communities deliver on-ground action for wildlife and habitats, or nature-based, educational or arts programs that connect the local environmental recovery with its human recovery.

For information, program guidelines and where to apply, visit brv.vic.gov.au.

COMMUNITY DIARY

If you would like to have your event included in future newsletters, please email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au.



MANLY MUSIC Every Wednesday

(except during school holidays)

Corryong Baptist Church, Hanson Street - 10.30am to 12.00pm. Parents and young children, aged from birth to pre-school, for a half hour session of song, actions, rhymes and rhythm, followed by morning tea. \$3.

TRIVIA NIGHT Every Thursday Night

Venue: Corryong Hotel Motel, Corryong

Time: 6.30pm

DEBUTANTE BALL Saturday May 1

Corryong and District Memorial Hall

UPPER MURRAY FARMERS MARKET

Saturday May 1

Attree Centre, Corryong 9am – 12 noon

WELCOME BABY CEREMONY & CORRYONG HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR Sunday May 2

Attree Centre, Corryong 11am–1pm with free pony rides, face painting, balloon creations, car restraint checks.

To add your event to the Community Diary, email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au or call the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222.

Agencies operating out of the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub

National Bushfire Recovery Agency 1800 560 760

General enquiries line 02 6228 6300

www.bushfirerecovery.gov.au

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

connect@brv.vic.gov.au

1800 560 760

Ag Victoria

Kylie Macreadie

Kylie.macreadie@agriculture.vic.gov

0428 975 728

AgBiz Assist

Keryn Sheather — Client Support Officer

info@agbizassist.org.au

Rural Financial Counselling Service — Victoria North East

1300 834 775

Anglicare — Financial Counselling

Sue-Ellen — 1800 244 323

Small Business Victoria — Business Recovery Advisor

Michael Anderson — 0404 126 602

AiGroup — Strengthening Business Program

Chris Westwood — 0401 266 960

Australian Childhood Foundation — ChildSPACE

Kellie Noordam — 0428 862 941

Australian Red Cross

Jessica Davidson — 0439 634 601

Salvation Army

Aqua Hastings — 0429 578 240

sal.disasters@salvationarmy.org.au

Hume Riverina Community legal service

Harley Dannatt

1800 918 377

hdannatt@umfc.com.au

AFL North East — Club Support Officer

Chandan Kulkarni

uppermurrayfnl@gmail.com

0490 144 639

Dementia Australia

Liz Grogan

Liz.grogan@dementia.org.au

0408 301 800

1800 100 500

Albury Wodonga Health — Mental Health Service

1300 104 211

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 | 0457 726 595

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

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

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 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.

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