

# Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

August 2021 | Edition 18



## TOWONG SCHOOL STUDENTS RECONNECT AND REFLECT THROUGH CREATIVE RECOVERY

After a challenging year in 2020 with the bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, students from both Corryong College and Tallangatta Secondary College recently came together to reconnect and reflect through creative recovery.

Both schools are now home to vibrant, brightly coloured large-scale murals, created by the students with the assistance of a professional street artist.

The project was brought to life thanks to a \$30,000 contribution from St Vincent de Paul Society, and coordinated by Council's Youth Services Officer.

Council engaged Juddy Roller, an award-winning street art network, to help find an artist to create the murals. Juddy Roller recommended Melbourne-based artist Damien Arena, who specialises in street art and large-scale murals.

Both schools put forward a brief of what they would like to see included in the mural design, which Damien used to create a concept.

Damian then spent three days at each school workshopping the concept with the students and painting the mural together.

The murals celebrate Towong Shire's rich history, and flora and fauna, and highlight the emergency services organisations that supported our community throughout the bushfires.

The project gave students the opportunity to create something meaningful for themselves, their school and their community, and will be able to be enjoyed for generations.



## Final Municipal Recovery Plan 2019-2020 — Upper Murray Bushfires now available

Towong Shire Council would like to say a huge thank you to the community members who provided feedback on *Council's Municipal Recovery Plan 2019-2020 - Upper Murray Bushfires*.

The plan is designed to create a coordinated and well-managed recovery with community at its core.

The plan was reviewed in detail in partnership with the Upper Murray Community Recovery Committee, including a review of local recovery plans, a community survey, and a series of meetings and workshops.

The final plan is now available to view:

- **Online:** Visit [towong.vic.gov.au/municipal-recovery-plan](http://towong.vic.gov.au/municipal-recovery-plan)
- **In person:** Drop into the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub, or the Corryong or Tallangatta Council Offices and Libraries

The development of the plan was guided by Part 4 of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*, the *Natural Principles for Disaster Recovery*, the *Eastern Victorian Fires 2019-20 State Recovery Plan* and the *Bushfire Recovery Victoria Recovery Framework*.

Alignment of these frameworks ensures a consistent approach to recovery, and the clear targeting of funding opportunities and support offered by all levels of Government.

Towong Shire Council will continue to work in partnership with both Commonwealth and State Governments and agencies, such as Bushfire Recovery Victoria, as well as other community and private sector organisations to deliver clear community outcomes.



## Thank you for having your say on how we can grow Towong's economy

Thank everyone who attended the recent Economic Development Strategy workshops, or took the time to complete the survey.

There was robust discussion and some great ideas put forward by the community, including ways to capitalise on the natural assets of Towong, and how to attract and retain young families in the area.

Economic and tourism consultants, *Urban Enterprise*, are now developing an *Economic Development Strategy* and *Destination Management Plan* for Towong Shire.

The *Economic Development Strategy* will provide strategic direction for future business development, investment attraction and sustainable growth in the Shire.

The *Destination Management Plan* will focus on growing the tourism industry by increasing visitor numbers to the Shire, extending the length of stay and increasing visitor spend.



## Spotlight on Nariel Valley CRC

Nariel Valley is home to Australia's longest running folk festival, with up to 10,000 visitors over the New Year period, and its creek was once regarded as the premier trout fishing stream in Australia.

The Valley was devastated by the 2019/20 bushfires and now Community Recovery Committee chair, Richard Bennetts fears the creek may not fully recover in his lifetime.

Richard and his wife Joy escaped the worst of the 2019/20 bushfires.

Their property was burnt out but without the loss of any buildings, animals or machinery, they say they are grateful to be alive.

"We got off pretty lightly compared to a lot of our friends and neighbours," Richard said.

"We battled during the night... it was a very unpleasant experience but we are alive.

"Afterwards, we were doing 13-hour days, then the flood came, the creeks filled with ash, and that was more devastating than the fires for some people."

When inaugural CRC Chair Christina Aston resigned, Richard stepped up.

By the end of this year, he hopes to have all priorities ticked off, well underway, or crossed off the list as no longer necessary.

Initially, the top priority was to secure a meeting place for residents in Nariel Valley, including the Colac Colac area.

"Nariel Valley is not as connected as other parts of Upper Murray," Richard said.

"At the top end there are a lot of new people on lifestyle blocks and weekenders and there's a bit of a barrier between those who have been there a long time and those who haven't."

To try and connect people a bit more, Joy started a Nariel ladies lunch group where everyone was invited, and a Nariel Valley Facebook page was set up.

Communications and connectivity is the valley's priority and with support and funding from Gateway Health's Bushfire Recovery Programme, Rotary and the Salvation Army work started in July testing for signals to boost connections

25 people will receive a booster to improve the signals, residents were given UHF radios and the valley has been included in the Upper Murray micro grid.

With a focus on the health of Nariel Creek, North East Catchment Management Authority has been undertaking bank restoration and stabilisation works. Neal Bennetts has been leading that work along with Council's Local Area Recovery Officer, Shea Bloom.

Out of the ashes, another unique project is emerging to develop a Wildflower Reserve with a small carpark and self-guided walk to allow people to experience the Kangaroo tails, hood orchids, lady five fingers, leopard orchids, egg and bacon bush and spider orchids that inhabit the area.

18 months on, the CRC meets every two months as "people are a bit sick of the words 'bushfire' and 'recovery', and just want to live in the present and get on with things".

"Most of us are outcome driven people. Time is precious, and everyone is a bit 'meetinged out'," Richard said.

"Some of the big farmers are too busy to go to meetings and get involved in things, they do what they can but they are just working really hard to make a living."

"There are no huge plans and you can't blame people for that. Those things that are sensible and achievable, we will get happening."

"Everyone just wants things to go back to normal."



## Improved telecommunications for Towong Shire

Two new mobile towers are set to be built in Burrowye and Koetong as part of the Australian Government's *Mobile Black Spot Program*.

Mayor David Wortmann expressed his elation at the news. "Connectivity is vitally important across our municipality, making this is a great result for our communities."

"Thank you to Dr Helen Haines, Independent Federal Member for Indi, for her ongoing efforts in supporting the work of our Council and our communities to secure improved telecommunications in Towong Shire," he said.

Towong Shire Council will continue to advocate for our communities to help deliver reliable mobile and internet coverage across the Shire



## The Australian Government's 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review invites your input

Every three years the Australian Government appoints the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee to conduct a review.

The review is an opportunity for people living and working in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia to share their views and experiences using telecommunications services in their area.

You can have your say on the *2021 Regional Telecommunications Review* via an online survey, or at an online consultation session for the North East Victorian community. Submissions close 30 September 2021.

Find out more at [rtirc.gov.au/consultation](https://rtirc.gov.au/consultation).



## BUSHFIRE RECOVERY GRANTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ORGANISATIONS

Grants of up to \$500,000 are available to help councils, charities and community organisations support recovery, redevelopment and resilience after the 2019–20 Victorian bushfires and build capacity and preparedness for the future.

Examples of projects supported under the initiative include:

- economic development initiatives
- local business skill and capacity building
- employment of a community recovery officer to boost service delivery on the ground
- deliver recovery services for groups with different needs, like elderly or multicultural communities

Activities that build resilience for future disasters will also be supported. Find out more about this grant, visit [go.vic.gov.au/CkDakX](https://go.vic.gov.au/CkDakX)

# Towong Shire Council Plan 2021-2025

## Draft Council Plan 2021-2025 now on exhibition

The draft Council Plan 2021-2025 embodies the aspirations our communities have for Towong Shire and was endorsed by Council at its meeting on 25 August.

The plan is based on comprehensive community engagement including five hands-on workshops across the Shire as well as online and paper-based surveys.

Community members are now encouraged to review the draft plan and provide feedback.

## How to provide feedback

**View the plan at [towong.vic.gov.au](http://towong.vic.gov.au)**

Or request a copy from Council on 1300 365 222 or [info@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@towong.vic.gov.au)

**Send your submission addressed to the Chief Executive Officer via:**

Email: [info@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@towong.vic.gov.au)

Post: PO Box 55, Tallangatta Victoria 3700

Submissions close 5pm on Friday 8 October 2021



# FOCUS ON GRANTS

## **Towong Shire Council's Community Recovery Grants Program – Round 4** **Up to \$5000**

Applications close 5pm Friday 24 September 2021.

Grants are available in the fourth and final round to fund eligible projects and activities to support community recovery and renewal. The program is open to not-for-profit organisations and community groups across Towong Shire. Application forms and guidelines can be found:

**Online:** Visit [towong.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery](http://towong.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery)

**In person:** Drop into the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub, or the Corryong or Tallangatta Council Offices and Libraries.

If you have been successful in a previous grant round, please ensure that you have completed your acquittal before applying for a grant in Round 4.

## **Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife Bushfire Restoration Grants**

**Up to \$5000 - No specified closing date**

Grants are available to support tree planting and revegetation projects as part of bushfire restoration projects in and around regions impacted by the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires.

## **Regional Arts Victoria Regional Arts Fund, Quick Response Grants**

**\$2000 - \$4000 - No specified closing date**

Grants are available to assist regional artists, arts organisations and communities to take up professional or skills development or small project opportunities.

## **Eastern Victorian Bushfire Rebuilding Rebate Programs**

**Up to \$5000 - Closing June 2023**

This scheme is available to support landowners rebuild their homes that were destroyed or significantly damaged in the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian Fires in the Shires of East Gippsland and Towong. In the form of a rebate, the scheme supports the reclaiming of expenses accrued through profession planning and building permit applications.

## **St Vincent de Paul Society Bushfire Community Grants** **Up to \$20,000-No specified closing date**

Grants are available to organisations in bushfire-affected areas, providing funding for recovery projects that benefit multiple people. You must be a registered community group or organisation in order to apply for a grant.

## **Nature-led Recovery Grants** **Funding of up to \$5,000**

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.

View the guidelines, see if you're eligible and apply for the nature-led grants via the Environment and Biodiversity page at [www.br.vic.gov.au](http://www.br.vic.gov.au).

## **Short-Term Modular Housing**

Short-Term Modular Housing is available for those who lost their primary place of residence in the 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires. The program is flexible and aims to get people back on their own land.

The modular housing comes in standard designs to suit most temporary accommodation needs. The design can be customised to meet specific needs such as mobility access requirements.

If you or someone you know has a site that is hard to access, or the delivery or placement of Short-Term Modular Housing is challenging, Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) will work with you and the suppliers to come up with a solution.

Please spread the word, if you or someone you know in your community may benefit from this program, please call 1800 560 760 to speak to a Bushfire Recovery Support Worker.

## **For more grants visit:**

**Victorian Government**  
<https://www.vic.gov.au/financial-support>

**Bushfire Support Finder**  
<https://au-deloitte.neotalogic.com/a/bushfire-support-finder>

**Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal**  
[https://www.frrr.org.au/grant\\_calendar.php](https://www.frrr.org.au/grant_calendar.php)

**Grant Connect**  
<https://www.grants.gov.au/>

**Indi Funding Finder**  
<https://helenhaines.grantguru.com.au/>

# COMMUNITY DIARY

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

## UPPER MURRAY CHALLENGE

2 and 3 October 2021

Khancoban and Corryong

[uppermurraychallenge.com.au](http://uppermurraychallenge.com.au)

Contact: Serge Kurov on

[serge@adventurejunkie.com.au](mailto:serge@adventurejunkie.com.au) or

0455 570 487

## THE 2021 CORRYONG SHOW

2 October 2021

Corryong Recreation Reserve,

Strzelecki Way, Corryong

Contact: Serena Klippel on

[sklippel@bigpond.net.au](mailto:sklippel@bigpond.net.au)

## MEN'S SHED CHAT, CUPPA AND SOCIALISE

Every Wednesday at 9am

Corryong Men's Shed, Strzelecki Way

## JOEYS, CUBS & SCOUTS

Every Thursday from 5pm

Corryong Memorial Hall

## KNIT N NATTER

Tuesday 10 August, 1.30 – 3.30pm

Anglican Church Hall

Gold coin donation

## LINE DANCING

Every Monday except school holidays at 10am

Corryong RSL \$5



## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKSHOPS

You're invited to a workshop help shape the Community Emergency Management Plans for your community.

Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMP) are a practical way to help communities better connect and work together before, during and after emergencies.

Led by an independent facilitator, these workshops are an opportunity to develop solutions to ensure our community is safer and more resilient toward the impacts of extreme weather events and emergencies.

Registrations are required for catering purpose and to ensure we can make these workshops COVID safe.

For further detail and to register contact the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222 or [recovery@towong.vic.gov.au](mailto:recovery@towong.vic.gov.au).

These workshops are supported by Towong Shire Council and Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Inc. with funding for the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments Community Recovery Package.

## TIMES AND LOCATIONS

### Cudgewa

Cudgewa Recreation Reserve

Session 1: Monday 27 September

6pm for 6.30pm

### Berringama/Lucyvale

Lucyvale Hall

Session 1: Tuesday 28 September

6pm for 6.30pm

### Towong

Towong Soldiers Memorial Hall

Session 1: Wednesday 29 September

6pm for 6.30pm

### Nariel Valley

Upper Murray Events Centre

Date and time to be advised pending COVID restrictions.

### Biggara

Biggara Hall

Date and time to be advised pending COVID restrictions.

### Tintaldra

Tintaldra Hall

Date and time to be advised pending COVID restrictions.

### Thowgla

Thowgla Hall

Date and time to be advised pending COVID restrictions.

# 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** | [dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19](https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19)

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

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

**Phoenix Australia Centre for post-traumatic mental health** | [phoenixaustralia.org/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://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:** [towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery](https://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:

**Tanya Aramini – Thowgla, Biggara** | 0457 726 595

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

**Tony Irwin – Colac, Cudgewa, Berringama**

**Lucyvale, Nariel Valley** | 1800 518 222

**Shea Bloom – Nariel Valley, Towong** | 0428 950 739

## Bushfire Recovery Victoria

**Free Helpline:** 1800 560 760

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

**Website:** [brv.vic.gov.au](https://brv.vic.gov.au)

## Agriculture Victoria (Recovery)

**Phone:** 0428 975 728

## 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 [towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery](https://towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery).

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

## 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.