

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

July 2021 | Edition 17



Pictured: Gemma Whitehead and Sara Jenkins at Corryong Neighbourhood Centre will manage the Community Calendar.

Communications was identified as one of the top priorities after the 2019/20 bushfires and now a new app being purpose-built at RMIT will become a game-changer for the Upper Murray community.

The idea for an Interactive Community Calendar was put forward by Corryong CRC late last year. BRV and Council staff searched for a suitable product online but found nothing that met the requirements of our community, so it was decided to approach RMIT in Melbourne to consider building one.

With much enthusiasm, RMIT has accepted the challenge and Masters' students in Software Engineering have begun working on this project, at no cost.

Thanks to a \$5000 Towong Shire Community Recovery Grant, Corryong Neighbourhood Centre (CNC) are leading the development and will also own, manage, moderate and educate the community around its use.

The calendar will be a series of individual calendars for community groups, local organisations, bushfire recovery, schools, sporting and other clubs, social groups, health and community services, churches, businesses, local government etc to use for their own purpose. They can then feed into a publicly accessible master calendar, available on any device.

The intent is to deliver a calendar that is very simple to use, and for those not confident in using technology or without access to a device, the CNC will provide support and/or training.

CNC coordinator, Sara Jenkins said the community calendar would be a game changing tool, not just in natural disaster recovery, but as the community continues to move forward.

"Imagine being a parent drowning in newsletters from primary school, high school, the footy club, dance school and volunteer commitments," Sara said.

"How much could they benefit from having all this information centralised and easily accessible?"

Sara said the calendar would allow for high level coordination, forward planning and collaboration across the whole of the Upper Murray Region.

"The ongoing recovery of our small community is driven by volunteers who often wear many hats and juggle several volunteer roles. A community calendar will allow committees to schedule meetings and events around each other, not in competition with each other.

"Individuals can access the calendar and search categories, areas of interest, dates etc."

"Loneliness and social isolation are emerging themes around the world, not just in our community, and this has the ability to connect people with like minds, to help bridge that isolation, and allow our community to function in a more coordinated way."

"RMIT understands that, and we are very excited to work with them over the coming months."



Country University Hub for Corryong

A satellite hub of a new Country University Centre (CUC) Ovens Murray will be based in Corryong after the Federal Government signed on the dotted line this month.

The CUC will be based in Wangaratta, with satellite hubs in Corryong and Mansfield.

Mayor David Wortmann said including Corryong in the CUC was a major boost to the Upper Murray.

"This will be fantastic for local students who would prefer to stay in their own community to study, and it also gives us the ability to attract students to the area," Mayor Wortmann said.

"Course offerings at the Corryong Hub are still being considered, but agriculture, rural health and engineering are among those under discussion."

The CUC will help students to access higher education without having to leave their community, providing student support and campus-style facilities for students who study online.

Indi MP Helen Haines said it had been a long journey to land on a model which was truly community-owned and meaningful for local students.

"I congratulate the hard work of the Ovens Murray Regional University Centre Community Working Group and the other project partners, including Charles Sturt University," Dr Haines said.

"The Ovens Murray CUC will allow locals to access the best parts of a tertiary education in a way that fits around their busy lives."

The Australian Government will provide more than \$2.5 million to establish a main campus in Wangaratta and satellite centres in Mansfield and Corryong, funded through the Government's \$74.2 million Regional University Centres program.

Minister for Education and Youth Alan Tudge said the CUC Ovens Murray centre would be crucial to enable local students to pursue tertiary education and training opportunities without having to relocate or move from home.

"This will help to address skills shortages in these communities and help strengthen regional economies in Victoria," he said.

Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education Andrew Gee said the Regional University Centres met a demonstrated gap in support for country communities.

"Australians who live in our major cities are twice as likely to be university educated as regional students," Minister Gee said.

UC Ovens Murray will be one of 26 centres established under the Regional University Centres Program, located in all states and the Northern Territory.

More information about Regional University Centres can be found at: dese.gov.au/regional-university-centres.



Focus on Towong CRC

It's said that leaders emerge in times of crisis, and that's been the case in Towong Community Recovery Committee. Chair Nathan Hewatt, 30 and deputy chair, Cath Joyce, 28, are the youngest of Towong Shire's CRC leaders and the reason they stood up was simple.

"We plan on hanging around and starting families here, so everything we do is to benefit us being young and in a young community," Nathan said.

Nathan has worked in fire management at DELWP for 11 years and actively fought the bushfires at Walwa, Corryong, Towong, Pine Mountain and back burned at Nariel.

Confronted with the reality in Towong, he used his knowledge in small community meetings to try to give people an idea of what to expect.

"My friends were fighting fires without any experience. You can only hope they are going to make the right decisions after a 15-minute crash course. How no-one got hurt was just amazing," he said.

The 10-member Towong CRC has four members under 35, another three under 50, and the oldest member is "under 80".

"We've got people on the committee who've lived in Towong their entire life, so they are able to give us a lot of history," Cath said.

"One of our members, Marion, showed us a photo of the pub at Towong when we didn't know there had been one."

Though quick to point out that most of the work has been done by Cath Joyce and fellow committee member Cath McInnes, Nathan says the feeling that he is respected by the older community members has been very encouraging.

Cath says capacity building in young leaders has been one of the silver linings in the recovery process.

"A lot of us younger ones haven't been on many committees, so understanding how committees run, what the expectations are and the formalities... we're learning this for the first time.

"A lot of other CRCs have members that are on 12 committees, but we've had to learn all this, terms of reference, agendas, minutes. It's been cool being a part of that.

"Towong Shire's Local Area Recovery Officers have been awesome and Tony Thompson from BRV. We've had consistent help from them and those people who have been there the whole time."

Moving forward, Nathan says the challenge for Towong is fire resilience and preparedness in the event of another emergency.

"They have been the hardest things to get across the line," he said. "The ridge only has one access road and even though the alternate route is on Crown land, no-one is willing to take it on.

"Also reducing the speed limit through Towong from 80 to 60kms, and fixed standpipes... people want to see these things, we thought that would be easy."

Cath Joyce was also a full-time firefighter for eight years and heavily pregnant with her first child when the fires hit. One and a half years later, she says late at night when everyone has a belly full of beer, the conversations always come back to the fire.

"There are still people in active recovery, houses not rebuilt, but for our community there's been such a silver lining. We've gotten to know each other on a different level," she said.

"If anything like this ever happened again, we know we have a good group. People are willing to learn, willing to do the hard yards ... and listen to the 29-year-old."

Pictured: Towong CRC Chair Nathan Hewatt and Deputy Chair, Cath Joyce



Victorian Governor visits the Upper Murray

The Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, was in the Upper Murray earlier this month as part of her regional tour of North East Victoria. She said it was a chance to visit the “remarkable communities who have continued to recover from the fires— despite the set backs of COVID-19”.

After meeting with the councillors of the Towong Shire in Tallangatta, the Governor visited the Bush Nursing Centre at Walwa. As a hospital, the Centre provided services to the community for over 80 years, and the recent redevelopment has allowed the Centre to continue to provide essential health services to the community.

She began her visit to Corryong ‘under the radar’, joining with locals for a game of Trivia at Corryong Hotel, gracious in defeat. After meeting with local police the Governor then visited the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub for a briefing with local agencies and Community Recovery Committees involved in recovery efforts. The Governor’s final stop was to Cudgewa to discuss the rejuvenation of the Avenue of Honour and waterways following impact of fires.

Access tracks to Eskdale Spur closed

Access to Eskdale Spur, in the Upper Murray, is closed between Trappers Gap Track and Kohnes Road, due to strategic fuel breaks works being carried out.

Works include removing hazardous trees and reducing bushfire fuels to make it easier, faster and safer for firefighters to suppress bushfires and reduce fuel loads in key areas.

While works are underway, the Eskdale Spur will be inaccessible via Bay Creek Track, Bowmans No 1 Track and No 2 Track, Little Snowy Creek Track, Powerline Track or Redbank Track.

If conditions allow and it is safe to do so, the roads will reopen in November.

DELWP would like to thank the community and road users for their understanding.

If you’re planning on going to your favourite park or camping spot, plan ahead by visiting:

ffm.vic.gov.au/permits-and-regulations/closures-of-parks-and-forests and parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/safety-in-nature/seasonal-road-closures



Grant Writing Workshops

A lot of work can go into a grant application so to help ensure the best chance of success, a three-part grant writing workshop series was held in Corryong last month.

The workshops were run by Bushfire Recovery Victoria and facilitated by Pat Grosse from the Community Entrepreneur. Pat stepped community members through Getting Ready for a Grant, Writing a Compelling Grant Application and Managing Your Funded Project.

Below are some of the most important points discussed when preparing for a grant application.

- Always check eligibility criteria - before starting a grant application, are you eligible to apply?
- Always contact the grant officer for clarification on any queries you may have.
- A good grant application takes time to put together. Don't leave it to the last minute.
- You need to clearly answer 'Why do you need a grant? How will your project make a difference? How many people will it impact? Where is your evidence? What will be your legacy?'
- Understand the type of activities that a grant provider will and won't look to fund.
- A grant is always about the Grant Funder's aims and objectives. There is always a policy directive behind a grant offering. How can your project help them achieve their organisations desired outcomes? With this in mind, know and plan your project so that you can.
- Unpack eligibility criteria and guidelines and read FAQs before beginning a grant application. These will tell you if the grant is best suited to your project and what you're looking to achieve.
- Consider governance - who is accountable for keeping records, submitting progress reports and do you have access to the skill set needed to see your project through to completion? You many need to consider a project manager.
- If you're successful, what does this look like?
- Don't ever assume that who is reading your application knows who you are and what is going on.
- "Chasing the yellow taxi" - you don't attempt to get in every taxi that goes past. You know there will be another. The same can be applied to grants. Many grants have multiple rounds or there may be a better grant option for your project.

Quotes and Tenders Workshops

Earlier this month, Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) and Council organised an evening for local tradespeople and contractors to help them better understand procurement processes and the elements of a successful tender application.

With speakers from Council, Snowy Hydro and Corryong Health the night was designed to help locals to become more competitive in the tendering process for work in government and industry projects.

More information on Council's quoting and tendering process can be found at towong.vic.gov.au/tenders-eoi/.

For further information from Snowy Hydro and Corryong Health contact:

Darren Vandervalk

Darren.vandervalk@snowyhydro.com.au

James Lee

James.lee@corryonghealth.org.au

Entrepreneurs Program, Strengthening Business Bushfire Recovery

Delivered by the Australian Industry Group and facilitated by Chris Westwood the Entrepreneurs Program supports businesses across the Towong Shire to recover from the fires and COVID-19.

Support can include; the development of a roadmap, business or marketing plan, reviewing business practices to create efficiencies or assistance with writing grants for future projects and expansion.

For further details and application guidelines visit: Contact Chris on 0427 660 180 or email chris.westwood@aigroup.com.au or visit: business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/strengthening-business

FOCUS ON GRANTS

2021 Bushfire Restoration Grant program

The Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife welcomes applications 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. The goal: plant one million trees by December 2024. Community based groups and organisations, individuals with large scale planting experience, organisations with an ABN, National Parks and Wildlife Services or other Government agencies working with state park agencies are eligible to apply. Projects must be implementing bushfire restoration works in one of the Local Government Areas (LGA's) identified by State or Commonwealth Governments as bushfire affected zones.

Applications close on 31 December, 2021. For more information and to apply visit: fnpw.org.au/grants/

Regional Arts Fund – Quick Response Grants

Delivered by Regional Arts Victoria these grants are set up to be responsive to projects that fall outside the scope of other funding opportunities. They are available to regional artists, arts organisations and communities to take up professional or skills development or small project opportunities.

Applications are ongoing, for information and to apply go to rav.net.au/funding-opportunities/regional-arts-fund/

Jobs Victoria Fund -Wage Subsidies

Delivered by Jobs Victoria the Fund supports employers to grow and recover while helping Victorians looking for work into steady jobs. Eligible employers, ready to take on new staff can receive access to wage subsidies of up to \$20,000 over 12-months to meet the costs of taking on new, eligible employees.

Applications are now open, for further information and to apply go to: jobs.vic.gov.au/about-jobs-victoria/our-programs/jobs-victoria-fund

Bushfire Recovery Planning and Building Assistance Rebate Scheme

Supported by the Victorian Government this scheme supports landowners rebuild homes destroyed or significantly damaged in the 2019-20 fires in East Gippsland and Towong Shires.

The scheme is designed to assist people rebuild and replace their previous home with a dwelling that complies with the appropriate Bushfire Attack Level. In the form of a rebate, applicants can reclaim expenses accrued through professional planning and building permit applications.

Eligible applicants are entitled to reimbursement of up to \$5,000 per property for background work, commissioned in support of their planning or building permit application.

To find out more, contact Bushfire Recovery Victoria at the Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub on 1800 518 222.



Scoot on Down

It was time to learn new skills and tricks for Towong children who were lucky to attend scooter workshops in Corryong and Tallangatta with Al's Skate Co. The workshops were open to children aged from six years and by all accounts, it was a hoot.



Corryong Tennis Open Day

Corryong Tennis Club has secured \$3500 from Council's Community Recovery Grant program to run a day of social activities to introduce tennis to the community. The event will be held in Spring with a focus on young mums, with child minding provided for young children and those aged from six years encouraged to participate. Details will be released closer to the date.



Cartoon Workshops

School holidays were a chance to learn something new and fun and thanks to SPLAToons, the Shire's children were able to learn the basics of cartoon drawing. Billie Galbraith (pictured) produced this beauty after some guidance from cartoonist, Oz. Thank you to Victorian Youth Week for funding these events in Corryong and Tallangatta.



Thowgla Fire Brigade

Thowgla Valley is moving closer to becoming a more fire resilient community after purchasing two lockable storage container units for community fire equipment. Thowgla Valley Fire Brigade received a \$5,000 Towong Shire Community Recovery Grant to ensure quick access and longevity for the equipment donated last year by the Albury Wodonga Motorcycle Enthusiasts Club.

COMMUNITY DIARY

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.

BEGINNERS BONSAI
AUGUST 3, FROM 6.30PM
Anglican Church Hall

INDOOR BADMINTON
EVERY TUESDAY 10AM & 6PM
Corryong Memorial Hall.

IT MENTORING FOR ALL AGES
EVERY THURSDAY FROM 2PM
Corryong Neighbourhood Centre

MEN'S SHED

CHAT, CUPPA AND SOCIALISE
EVERY WEDNESDAY 9AM
Corryong Men's Shed, Strzelecki Way

JOEYS, CUBS & SCOUTS
EVERY THURSDAY FROM 5PM
Corryong Memorial Hall

SOCIAL CROQUET
EVERY FRIDAY AT 10AM
Corryong Bowls Club

KNIT N NATTER
TUESDAY 10 AUGUST
1.30 – 3.30PM
Anglican Church Hall
Gold coin donation

LINE DANCING
EVERY TUESDAY 10AM
(except school holidays)
Corryong RSL \$5



Tallangatta Hall Comes Alive

Tallangatta Valley Public Hall is coming alive on July 31 with its first musical event since 2019. Thanks to a \$5000 Towong Shire Community Recovery Grant, the evening, including supper, is free for Towong Shire residents and features the fiddle, blue grass and mad cap comedy of award-winning Yackandandah musician, Pete Denahy and bassist Aaron McLean. Doors open at 6.30pm for 7pm show.

Book online at trybooking.com/BSQKI

PETE DENAHY
at Tallangatta Valley Hall



FREE FOR TOWONG
SHIRE RESIDENTS!

Drinks at bar prices

Raffle

TICKETS ONLINE ONLY

trybooking.com/BSQKI

Supported by Towong Shire's Community
Recovery Grant Program

SAT JULY 31st 2021

6:30pm doors for 7pm show

More info 0429170213 0428290472

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

Australian Red Cross | redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19

Beyond Blue | coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

Phoenix Australia Centre for post-traumatic mental health | 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: 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, 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 | 0427 869 019

Shea Bloom – Nariel Valley, Towong | 0457 726 595

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Free Helpline: 1800 560 760

Email: connect@brv.vic.gov.au

Website: 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.

Subscribe Today

To subscribe to the digital newsletter, email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. For past editions of this newsletter go to 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.