

Omeo District Recovery Update

DECEMBER 2020

Omeo District Place Update

The nine members that form the Omeo Region Community Recovery Association (ORCRA) are coming together in Omeo for two planning workshops before they take a break over the Christmas period. The first workshop will have an emphasis on the role of ORCRA working as a community led recovery committee, and the second workshop will focus on developing a recovery plan framework. We will share updates as they become available.

Funding opportunities

Council has submitted a funding application to the Local Economic Recovery (LER) grants program for a new community building at Tambo Crossing. The cost of the new building is approximately \$400,000 and if the grant application is successful the aim is to have the new building completed before the 2021/2022 bushfire season. A funding application has also been lodged for Livingstone Park.

Council has also assisted with a funding application to the Regional Connectivity Program for significant communication improvements in the Omeo District. If the grant application is successful the improvements will include upgrades to the existing mobile network in Tambo Crossing, Ensay and Omeo areas, and resilience improvements to the main optic fibre network in the Tambo Valley.

A master planning project is about to commence for the Swifts Creek Recreation Reserve. The aim of the

master planning project is to identify the infrastructure needs of the reserve in the hope that bushfire recovery grant funding can be secured to undertake major upgrades within the recreation reserve. The aim is to have the master plan completed by March 2021.

The Victorian Bushfire Appeal (VBA) commenced in January to help raise funds to support relief and recovery. Distribution of the funds had originally been allocated for Community Recovery Committees (CRCs), but has now been expanded to include the wider community.

VBA funds are charitable in nature and can only be used to support charitable activities. All applications for funding must be endorsed by a CRC as a recovery priority; this endorsement can be sought yourself prior to submitting your application. Your local CRC can be reached by contacting Council's Bushfire Recovery Centre on 5153 9500 and select 1, or by emailing BushfireRecoveryContactCentre@egipps.vic.gov.au.

Alternatively, endorsement can be sought after submitting your application with the assistance of the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Secretariat.

For information, FAQs about the grants program or how to apply, visit the VBA website <https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal>

Works update

Before Christmas the Commonwealth Government will install a new satellite communication system at the Omeo Recreation Reserve for use during

emergency events. The installation is one of eight pilot sites throughout East Gippsland that will be operation before Christmas, and it is anticipated that more installations will occur in early 2021.

A new water bore has been drilled at the Ensay Recreation Reserve. Once completed in the New Year, water will be available for stock and domestic use for landowners and residents in the Ensay area.

Fire preparedness

Community bushfire preparedness sessions have been conducted throughout the Omeo District during November and early December. Sessions have been held at Benambra, Omeo, Swifts Creek, Ensay, Bundara, Cobungra and Tambo Crossing.

Council's emergency management team has begun reviewing the Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPS) within the Omeo District. Reviews are currently underway in Benambra and Swifts Creek.

Rebuild Support Service

Council is offering a Bushfire Rebuild Support Service is to provide specialised advice to help streamline both any planning application requirements and your overall rebuild. Please contact Council on 5153 9500 and dial '1' for bushfire or visit our website.

Omeo, Cobungra and Reedy Flat have had a combined 7 Rebuild Support Service referrals, with 1 planning permit approved, 2 applications lodged, 1 pending approval and 2 in preparation.

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Meet your Place Manager

Council has designated nine Place Managers to support districts with a direct contact for their community recovery needs.

Place Managers act as facilitators, building community connections and capacity and sharing information and knowledge in order to strengthen community resilience, improving two-way communication and supporting outcomes (between community and Council), and providing a platform where community can articulate needs and Council can support.



Anthony Nelson is the place manager for the Omeo District, working across Tambo Crossing, Ensay, Swifts Creek, Omeo, Cobungra, Anglers Rest, Benambra and all the smaller localities in between.

Anthony is working jointly with the recently formed Omeo Region Community Recovery Association (ORCRA) and Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) to support planning and identification of priority projects and actions for the Omeo District.

Anthony has previously worked extensively on sporting and community infrastructure projects in the past and will continue working with hall and recreation reserve committee across the shire to improve community facilities for emergency relief and recovery purposes.

IGEM visit

The Inspector General for Emergency Management (IGEM) recently visited the Benambra area and held two community engagement sessions with residents. Sessions were very well attended and IGEM are planning to return to East Gippsland in early 2021.

More useful information

As individuals and communities mark (or have marked) the anniversary of the events of the 2019-20 bushfire season, which ran from November to February, we know this may be a difficult time for some people.

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie recently said our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues and visitors were all impacted by these events.

"The effects are deep and long lasting. Many people continue to do it tough. We need to look out for those who need extra time and extra care and we need to be kind to one another," Cr Urie said.

To read the Mayor's bushfire anniversary message, visit <https://bit.ly/2L2cSXH>

Useful links:

Beyond Blue – the first year after bushfire: <https://bit.ly/3qhxZp7>

Trauma and Grief Network – understanding anniversary reactions: <https://bit.ly/36we65O>

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