

## Choules chooses Coota

### What a day for Mallacoota!

On Wednesday 10 March the Mallacoota community was proud to welcome the HMAS *Choules* on her first return visit to the town following the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires. The *Choules* played a positive and calming role for the Mallacoota community in its time of need, conducting the largest domestic maritime evacuation in Australia's history – more than 1,300 residents, holidaymakers and pets – in early January 2020.

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie, Cr Arthur Allen and a large turnout from the community were at Bastion Point to officially welcome the *Choules*, then-Commanding Officer of *Choules* Captain Scott Houlihan and the ship's company for the ceremonial homeporting.

The announcement was widely welcomed and made more special given many of the Navy personnel who forged a strong bond with the people of Mallacoota during the evacuation were present for the ceremony.

The connections between the *Choules*, her crew and the community are significant.

**Read more on page 2>>>**



Mayor Mendy Urie with Captain Scott Houlihan on the beach at Bastion Point, marking the ceremonial homeporting of the HMAS *Choules* to Mallacoota on Wednesday 10 March.

### Acknowledgement of country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders past and present.

# Ceremonial homeporting a proud day

"It is this connection that prompted Council, on behalf of the community and with the strong support of Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester to permanently recognise the critical role the *Choules* and the ship's company played in the town's history," Cr Urie said.

"We all know the events surrounding the fires and the immediate response was both a traumatic and uncertain time for our community, and visitors.

"The Australia Defence Force and the *Choules* provided certainty and a sense of calm at this time. In the many stories which locals and visitors have shared since that time, the efficiency, genuine care and respect that the crew demonstrated during the evacuations remain very strong feelings of that time.

"It is remarkable that in only a matter of a few days, the *Choules* had completed two evacuation voyages from Mallacoota by sea, when evacuation by road was not possible. It was the most significant domestic naval evacuation of civilians in our history. And as we know, the vulnerable, very sick or injured were also evacuated by aircraft.

"The provision of supplies was also an integral part of the humanitarian effort into Mallacoota, and across East Gippsland," Cr Urie said.

Captain Scott Houlihan, of the Royal Australian Navy, said it was one of the most rewarding moments, personally and professionally, of a 30-year career.

"*Choules* has a home," Captain Houlihan said.

"We are humbled and privileged you have chosen to share this incredible part of the world with us. It is a great honour and with the deepest respect we can now call this piece of paradise *Choules'* home."

Captain Houlihan said the *Choules* was the perfect ship and the ship's company were the perfect people to support Mallacoota.



Mayor Cr Mendy Urie, Captain Scott Houlihan and Cr Arthur Allen at Bastion Point for the announcement of the HMAS *Choules'* homeporting.

"After watching my team interact with the people of Mallacoota, it was clear to me something special was happening," he said, reflecting on January 2020.

An afternoon tea hosted by Council, supplied by Mallacoota businesses and held at the Mallacoota Clubrooms followed the ceremony.

Residents, community leaders, visitors and school children mingled with Navy personnel, inspected the MHR-90 helicopter (which also played a major part in the bushfire response) and heard from Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester.

"The opportunity to maintain a positive and lasting connection, stemming from the support and comradeship formed after the bushfires, is very much welcomed by the East Gippsland Shire Council, and most importantly by the Mallacoota community," Cr Urie said.

"Thank-you to everyone who turned out for what was a significant and important event in Mallacoota's history, and to the Royal Australian Navy and the HMAS *Choules* for choosing Mallacoota," Cr Urie said.

**Watch the ceremonial homeporting here>>>**



The Mallacoota Oval and clubrooms were a hive of activity, with the MHR-90 helicopter available for inspection.



Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester, Captain Scott Houlihan and Mayor Cr Mendy Urie at the Mallacoota Oval, where an afternoon tea was enjoyed, and the community could inspect the MHR-90 helicopter used to assist during the bushfires.

**30 March:** 'Successful Volunteer Management for Events' online workshop

**10 April:** Bairnsdale Skate Park opening

**10 April:** Pet registrations due

**13 April:** Council meeting





# MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE



Allan Pappin - President Bairnsdale RSL Sub-branch, the Hon Darren Chester - Federal Member for Gippsland, Cr Mayor Mendy Urie, Cr John White (former Mayor when the conservation work started) and Ray Rock - Bairnsdale RSL sub-branch.

## Cenotaph finished, project praised

**Major conservation works on the Bairnsdale Cenotaph are now complete with the cenotaph reopened on Friday 5 March.**

The reopening began with a prayer from Archdeacon Brenda Burney followed by a ribbon cutting by Mayor Cr Mendy Urie and the Hon Darren Chester, Federal Member for Gippsland and Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel with ribbon holding support provided by the Bairnsdale RSL Sub-branch members.

The event concluded with Allan Pappin, President Bairnsdale RSL Sub-branch reciting the Ode, a silent tribute and the Last Post sounded.

In 2015, we engaged heritage and conservation consultant, David Young, to provide a condition assessment of the cenotaph. The assessment showed that the First World War memorial was in poor condition largely due to the inferior quality of the sandstone used when it was erected in 1922 and unsympathetic repairs in the past which contributed further to the deterioration. Following the recommendation, we initiated the much-needed repair works.

The contract was awarded to Cathedral Stone, a specialist in conservation projects. The works commenced on the 24 July 2020 following the de-consecration ceremony performed by Rt. Revd. Dr Richard Treloar, Bishop of Gippsland.

[Read more>>>](#)

## Poet's Walk dream comes true

**Sculptor and poet John Butler's dream of a walking track marked by stone cairns with verses of his poem 'The River' is taking another step forward. Construction of the "Poet's Walk" walking path at Swifts Creek started earlier this month.**

The new walking path will create a safe, accessible connecting walking path along the Swifts Creek and Tambo River Reserve frontage.

The new concrete footpath construction along McMillan Street will link with the Poet's Walk loop, set for major improvements as part of the project, and the Tambo River Bridge. Interpretative signage along the walk, seating and flood markers, will also be installed.

Poet's Walk is a valued part of the local community and many individuals and groups have made this project come to life including the Poet's Walk Walking Group, Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), Swifts Creek Ensay Landcare Group, DELWP, Great Alpine Gallery, East Gippsland CMA, Swifts Creek Men's Shed, Swifts Creek Bush Nurse and Council.

We have funded the project with \$147,000 from the Capital Works 2020/21 Budget.



A stone cairn along the Poet's Walk at Swifts Creek.



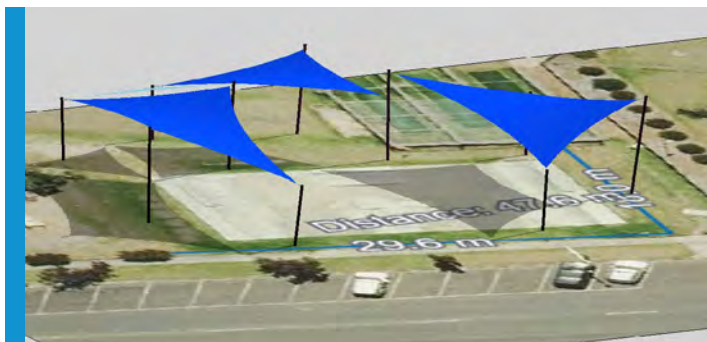
# MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

## Sun smart Orbost Skate Park fun

**Orbost Skate Park is set for an upgrade commencing in April with purpose-built shade sails and seating to make the area more user friendly and sun safe environment for families, scooter riders and skaters.**

Amber Wade from the Orbost Kids Club said the community loves using the facility.

"The shade sails will be a great addition and will make the space more inviting and sun smart. My kids love the skate park and it's an important healthy activity for young people in the town," Ms Wade said.



## Omeo MTB approval

**The Omeo Mountain Bike Trails project has progressed through its next stage, with a planning application approved unanimously by Council on Tuesday 16 March.**

The planning application comprised of use of land for the mountain bike trail, the removal of native vegetation and works associated with the construction of 121.58 kilometres of bike trail which include excavation, drainage, signage, dry rock walling and low level bridges over waterways or bog.

The subject site is made up of Crown Land and State Forest to the north-west of the township of Omeo.

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie said the approval of the planning permit is a very exciting step in the project.

"The approval of this planning permit means the work can now progress on this wonderful project which not only benefits the Omeo region, but also the entire East Gippsland community with the economic and tourism opportunities it will bring," Cr Urie said.

The Omeo Mountain Bike Destination Project is based on long standing community involvement with strong advocacy, and support from all tiers of government.

Stage one of trail construction will start in 2021.



## New walking link for Eastwood

**The Eastwood Road footpath extension project is now complete, adding a valuable pedestrian link for the community.**

The new footpath extends from Timbarra Drive along Eastwood Road allowing easy pedestrian access to the Eastwood Early Learning Centre and the Bairnsdale Sporting and Convention Centre. A bridge was installed over Goose Gully.

This project was jointly funded by Council, Transport Victoria and Regional Roads Victoria.



# LGPro Awards trifecta



East Gippsland Shire Council's Chief Executive Officer Anthony Basford (back, second right), and (front) Manager Sustainability and Waste Minimisation Wayne Bath, General Manager Assets and Environment Fiona Weigall, and General Manager Bushfire Recovery Stuart McConnell accepting the three awards from Bronson Justus (JLT), Liana Thompson (LGPro President) and Chris Eddy (LGPro Acting CEO).

**For only the second time in the 17-year history of the LGPro Awards for Excellence, a local government authority has won three awards in the one year.**

And guess what, in 2021 East Gippsland achieved that remarkable feat!

We earned top gongs for Service Delivery, Sustainability, and Community Assets Projects valued over \$2.5 million, and were finalist with two other projects – the Orbost Landfill Bushfire Project and Orbost Streetscape.

The five finalist nominations and three award wins surpassed all other 78 Victorian councils across the 10 categories.

LGPro Victoria President Liana Thompson said it was an incredible result for the team at East Gippsland. "It is an amazing achievement when you consider the year they've had with record bushfires and COVID. They are certainly setting the standard for other councils," Ms Thompson said.

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie said to be recognised in such a way for projects and initiatives that had

made a real difference to the lives of East Gippslanders was a fitting reward for effort for all involved.

"The five projects we received nominations for, and of course the three projects that received top honours, is a great snapshot of the initiatives council delivers for the community," Cr Urie said.

"It also demonstrates the quality of planning, design, construction and delivery of what is being achieved in East Gippsland is first-class." Cr Urie said.

## **2021 LGPro Awards projects**

**Bosworth Road Recreational Area** - winner: Significant environmental and community outcomes were achieved and more than \$6 million was saved through phytocapping the disused Bairnsdale landfill. The new park includes native tree species, walking and bike tracks, an off-leash dog park and observatory decks overlooking the nearby Ramsar-listed wetlands.

**Bright Futures East Gippsland** - winner: This project has been operating for multiple years leveraging federal, state and local funds to implement climate change

**Read more>>>**

## Council meeting decisions – 23 February

- Council received a petition from Marlo Ratepayers and Residents Association against the current development plan for 10 Marlo Road, Marlo. Council staff will now prepare a report for a future council meeting.
- A contract to construct a landfill cell at Bairnsdale Landfill was awarded to Riley Earthmoving for \$3,361,195.73. Cell 4 is needed sooner than planned as waste from the 2019-20 bushfires has reduced the expected lifespan of Cell 3B from 3 years to 1.5 years.
- An environmental monitoring contract with SMEC Australia was amended, as the original lump sum contract was not sufficient to meet the level of additional monitoring required by the Environment Protection Authority for council's current and former waste sites.
- Council endorsed an application for funding under Round 2 of the Community Sports Infrastructure Stimulus Program. The funding application is for the WORLD Sporting Precinct project.
- Council approved a \$3.3 million loan under the Victorian Government's Community Infrastructure Loans Scheme. The funds will be used for the Eagle Point Foreshore redevelopment.
- A new Councillor Code of Conduct was adopted. Council is required to develop and adopt a Code of Conduct within four months of the election.

**Read minutes here>>  
or watch on YouTube**







Anthony Basford (Council CEO), Leecia Angus, Nick Blandford, Cr Mendy Urie (Mayor), Andrew Bulmer, Matt Zagami, Stuart McConnell (Council General Manager Bushfire Recovery, holding the computer with online participants Paul Menke and Alison Gunn), Trevor Caithness, Graeme Dear, David Caldwell, Jen Smith and Cr John White at the first Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee meeting this month.

## Local farmers have their say

**Say on future appointed nine local agribusiness leaders to our Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee, who will shape Council's advocacy, programs and the region's agricultural strategies.**

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie said the appointments represent a diverse and skilled group of passionate agribusiness leaders who, over the next two years, will be instrumental in putting agribusiness initiatives, projects and advocacy front and centre.

Appointments to the committee were considered at Council's meeting held in early February, and include:

Alison Gunn – an Orbost-based veterinarian, consultant, and beef farmer with experience in research and has a master's degree in veterinary science.

David Caldwell – a 'next generation' beef, sheep and dairy farmer with a fodder business, who has a wide field experience on boards.

Jen Smith – business manager and owner of a beef, sheep, dairy, agribusiness and a fodder enterprise based in the Tambo Valley.

Leecia Angus – a consultant with a breath of experience in research and development in the dairy, wool, sheep, grain, technology and innovation.

Matthew Zagami – owner/operator of a Wairewa horticulture enterprise, with a bachelor's degree in applied science in agriculture. Matthew is involved in developing a packing facility with sales and distribution, and has experience in cropping, cattle, farming diversification and development.

Trevor Caithness – manager of a pastoral farming, seeding and fertiliser business and chair of the Gippsland Agriculture Group.

Nick Blandford – a wool and sheep farmer with experience in research, agricultural sales and climate mitigation. He is a representative on the State Government Young Farmers Advisory Council and has a bachelor's degree in agriculture science.

Paul Menke – abalone pearl producer who holds a master's degree in environmental science.

Ken Eckersley – experienced in chemistry, finances and tourism development with a degree in science. Ken owns and operates a local winery and has extensive experience in viticulture industry.

A further representative from the forest products sector and the High Country will be added to the committee.

**[Read more>>>](#)**

## Council meeting decisions – 16 March

- Council authorised the dissolution of the existing Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and authorised the CEO to facilitate the establishment of a new committee with the same name. This is to meet requirements of new emergency management laws.
- A new Community Engagement Policy was adopted which reflects the engagement principals outlined in the Local Government Act 2020.
- Council issued a notice of decision to grant a planning permit for use of Crown Land Reserve at Omeo for a mountain bike park. The planning permit also includes removal of vegetation.
- 11 applications to end section 173 agreements affecting some properties in Riviera Harbours, Paynesville and Kings Cove, Metung were approved. The owners are not able to meet some of the requirements of the agreements as the companies controlling the projects were wound up and deregistered.
- Council adopted its financial report for the period from 1 July to 31 December, 2020.
- Council resolved to begin a 28-day submission process regarding the terms of the lease of the Omeo Caravan Park. The process will begin in March. An expression of interest process to run the park will begin by June 2021.

**[Read minutes here>>>](#)**  
**[or watch on YouTube](#)**





*Omeo Council Plan session attendees sharing details about values, aspirations and what they want East Gippsland to be like in the future.*

## Residents help create Council Plan

**We are pleased with the number of people who took the time to attend one of our nine community engagement workshops around the shire in February and March.**

A total of 144 people attended to help us understand the current and future aspirations, needs, values and priorities of our community.

Feedback from these workshops and the earlier Community Perceptions Survey, will help us develop the Council Plan 2021-25 and will be used to review the Community Vision.

The sessions were held in Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Mallacoota, Bairnsdale, Omeo and online.

### **Next steps**

Information from these sessions will be shared with our Community Panel and Councillors. The Community Panel will develop recommendations for Councillors to consider when reviewing our Community Vision and developing the Council Plan 2021-25.

A summary of the discussions from the workshops will also be published.

## Community Panel gets to work

**Following an expression of interest process, we have started working with the 15 honorary community members of the Community Panel.**

The panel will review the Long-term Community Vision and be part of development of our Council Plan 2021-25.

At its first meeting, the panel heard about environmental sustainability and the demographics of East Gippsland.

The panel members are representative of community sectors and the demographic make-up of East Gippsland.

The members of the Community Panel are Bianca Bassett, Peter Giddings, Jane Ponting, Shane Elmore, Katie Hodge, Jane Rowe, Geoff Enever, Sharon Jervis, Jim Stevenson, Claudia Feher, Rachael Morrison, Belinda Stewart, MD Farhad, Tony Peck and Carina Turner.

The panel will meet four more times to continue their discussion on key issues impacting our shire. In April the panel will present its review of the Community Vision to Council, and in May it will make its recommendations to Council on strategic issues to include in the new Council Plan.



*Councillor Trevor Stow (right) speaks with a participant at the Lakes Entrance workshop.*

# Reporting local issues is a

# SNAP

**Snap  
Send  
Solve**





# Ex-cricketers come to town



**From 26 to 28 March, a group of ACA cricketers made up of ex-State and ex-Australian players will be touring East Gippsland in support of our many bushfire impacted communities.**

The feature event of the tour will be a T20 game in Orbost against a diverse team of players from Bairnsdale Cricket Association clubs. This will be followed by a Sporties Night with the players at the Orbost Club from 6.30 pm.

## **Cricket Clinics**

Friday 26 March: 4.00 – 5.30 pm  
Wy Yung CC

Wy Yung Recreation Reserve  
60 Bullumwaal Rd Wy Yung

Saturday 27 March: 9.00 am – 10.30 am

Location 1: Paynesville CC

AJ Freeman Reserve  
57 Main Rd Paynesville

Location 2: Lakes Entrance CC

Lakes Entrance Recreation Reserve  
1 Rowe Street Lakes Entrance

## **T20 Match vs Local XI**

Saturday 27 March: 2.00 pm  
Orbost Cricket & Rec Reserve

## **Sporties Night**

Saturday 27 March: 6.30 pm – 9.30 pm  
The Orbost Club

For tickets, scan the QR code or [book here](#).

This tour has been made possible through funding from the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), support from Council, Bairnsdale Cricket Association and the Orbost Cricket Club.



## A much needed pool upgrade

**It's out with the old and in with the new for the Bairnsdale Outdoor Pool changerooms.**

The pool is over 50 years old and the original changerooms still remain. Currently there is no roof over the change facility, old fixtures and plumbing and no disability access – this is about to change!

The new changerooms will be a significant improvement allowing for accessible change facilities to meet the requirements and needs of the community. The old changerooms will be demolished and new changerooms, plumbing, electrical and landscaping work will be undertaken by our works crew and local tradies.

Works are expected to be completed by July 2021. During the upgrade, there will be minimal impact on parking around the pool. We look forward to seeing you at the upgraded pool next season!

## Recycling timber bridge materials

**As a part of our bridge replacement program, contractors who tender for the work are encouraged to demonstrate ways in which timber from bridges being replaced can be recycled.**

In the majority of cases, all usable timber is retained by contractors for use when refurbishing pedestrian bridges, heritage listed bridges and undertaking timber bridge maintenance. Recycling this timber is both cost effective to council and contractors as well reducing the negative impacts of harvesting new timber.

We have replaced in excess of 140 timber bridges in the past six years, with the remaining 20 timber bridges to be replaced over the next four years. All new bridges are constructed of steel and concrete and are built to current bridge loading standards with a 100 year design life. The steel and concrete bridges require very little maintenance and are more fire and flood resilient.





**It was all smiles and laughs at the Archie Roach show at the Forge on Friday 12 March. Councillors Greacen, Crook, Mayor Urie, Reeves and Van Diggle were very pleased that shows are back up and running at the Forge Theatre following a lengthy hiatus. Restrictions still apply and we are only able to allow 75% capacity but all 271 seats were filled on the night!**

## Come show off your skills!

**Although it's been opened for awhile now, the Bairnsdale Skate Park will 'officially' open on Saturday 10 April.**

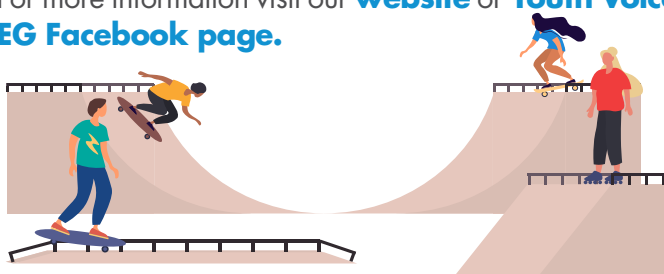
The day is jammed packed full of events and activities for everyone. The Australian Skate Park League series will be holding a competition giving local skaters, BMXers and scooter-riders the opportunity skills and compete for a regional place. There will also be music, games and other activities as well as food vans.

### **Event timetable:**

- Official opening – 10 am
- Scooter competition – 11 am
- BMX competition – 12.30 pm
- Skate competition – 1.30 pm

The event is being delivered in partnership with HeadSpace, Bairnsdale.

For more information visit our [website](#) or [Youth Voice EG Facebook page](#).



**SKATE  
10  
APRIL  
EVENT**



## Don't miss out on Agribusiness Program

**Looking to improve and add value to your business? There are still spaces available for farmers to participate in the Agribusiness Program.**

The program is available for up to 45 small farms and agribusinesses across East Gippsland. Already half full, there are still spots available for farmers from the wider Bairnsdale area, Tambo Valley and Orbost to Cann Valley.

The program is designed to assist agribusinesses to undertake diversification or value adding projects on their properties to increase income security and resilience.

Participants will be involved in group workshops, individual business and adaptation sessions, and monthly mentoring sessions to support the implementation of ideas.

What's included?

1. Support to identify potential business diversification and resilience options.
2. Supporting to develop plans for your ideas.
3. 12 month's practical support with access to management tools and advice.

The program workshops sessions will be delivered in each of these three regions:

- Tambo Valley Region (including anywhere from Benambra, Cobungra to Tambo Crossing)
- Orbost/Cann River Valley Region (including Buchan to the border)
- Bairnsdale Region (including areas from Lindenow to Bruthen, Lakes Entrance and Bengworden)

The project will start towards the end of March, with an online Hub and resources going live.

Funded by Regional Development Victoria and Council, and delivered by ION Group (Gippsland based), it is fully funded and there is no charge to participate – the only commitment is your time and enthusiasm to work on your business.

If you're interested in learning more, please contact Leigh Crocker on 0419 359 409, or email [lcrocker@iongroup.com.au](mailto:lcrocker@iongroup.com.au).

For enquiries about general drought assistance, please contact Council's Drought Assistance Officer Kaylene Wickham on 5153 9450.



Genoa community members mark the start of work on their new 111-metre pedestrian footbridge over the Genoa River on Friday 26 February with East Gippsland Shire Council Deputy Mayor Cr Mark Reeves, Council officers Sean Heinemann (Project Supervisor) and Fiona Weigall (General Manager Assets and Environment), and contractor Ross Jarvis, of Jarvis Norwood Constructions.

## Red letter day for Genoa

**The Genoa community marked a significant day in its history on Friday 26 February when we started work on the construction of a new pedestrian bridge across the Genoa River.**

The significance of a pedestrian bridge to the community has not been lost on Council, and after the iconic timber truss bridge was destroyed by the 2019-20 bushfires re-establishing the pedestrian link from the Genoa Wayside Stop into the township was made a priority.

Funded by Council, the new \$1.5 million bridge will be 111 metres long, made from steel reinforced concrete, and will be completed prior to Christmas this year. Council and community members have worked together to ensure a design that is appropriate for the location, including an overhead steel truss structure that will be painted white to mimic the former heritage bridge.

On site to mark the start of work on the new bridge, Deputy Mayor Cr Mark Reeves said reinstating the pedestrian link from the Genoa Wayside Stop across the Genoa River to the township is vital for the community and visitors alike.

"We know the burning of the historic bridge was an absolute tragedy for the community. We were all devastated when we saw that the bridge had burned in the 2019-20 fires. It's historical and architectural value to Victoria was significant as it was one of only five timber truss bridges recognised on the heritage register. The bridge also played an important role in safely connecting the township to the popular wayside stop," Cr Reeves said.

"Only a year on from the fires, we are rebuilding. It's such a strong symbol of reconnecting and re-joining this community and I'm so proud of the Genoa community, our contractors and everybody who has been involved. This project will join the community together and we'll have the new pedestrian bridge looking as authentic as the original soon."

Annette Peisley, of the Genoa Town Committee, said the burning down of the bridge was a significant loss for township and larger Genoa district.

"The bridge tied us all together," Ms Peisley said.

Ms Peisley said work starting on the new bridge was a "wonderful celebration of everyone pulling together and helping us recover from the bushfires".

"We are very appreciative of the Council. We just can't wait for it to be finished. We're going to watch it grow ... it's just fantastic."

Swan Reach company Jarvis Norwood Constructions won the tender to construct the new steel and concrete structure across the Genoa River.

"This is a great project to be involved in and will be an asset to the community. Council has been extremely proactive in getting this one rolling and one year on from the fires we're rebuilding," Ross Jarvis said.

Mr Jarvis said construction will also provide a boost to the local economy, with his team staying in the Mallacoota district during construction.

**Watch the community mark the start of works>>>**





# Orbost Show a sustainability success

**Meeting Costa Georgiadis, from Gardening Australia, winner of the Logie award for most popular TV presenter, was definitely the highlight for many at this year's Orbost Show.**

The 112th Orbost Show featured more than 50 stall holders, food, local music and art as well as gorgeous cuddly goats, beautiful show chickens, some lovely cattle and selected horse events. The community enjoyed free entry and plenty of free family fun and interactive activities. Thanks to the Orbost and District Community Recovery Committee for providing free entry and Far East Victoria Landcare for organising the Sustainability Expo and special guest Costa.

We had a busy stand with lots of waste, drought and council services enquires. The children enjoyed our craft activities and took home library show bags. Costa was a great hit with the children (and adults), he spent over an hour on the grass in front of our site engaging with them.

The Show's Landcare Sustainability Expo had something for everyone from tasting and buying local produce, to learning new skills to expand your pantry, to the latest information on getting the most from your garden or farm, to interesting displays, screen printing and making a native bee hotel.

Some of the workshops included the old art of hand shearing sheep, as well as hand spinning wool and



*Local producer Mark Johnstone with special guest Costa Georgiadis.*

knitting, bee keeping, fermenting drinks, permaculture and growing mushrooms. Traditional favourites like floral displays and cut flowers including gorgeous roses and dahlias, cooking and jam displays, vegetables, sewing, craft and art displays were on show. Other fun included a petting farm, face painting and free rides to keep the kids entertained. The community can't wait for the Orbost Show next year!



*Angus Howlett, Annette Farley and Jenny Heyne at Council's stand, offering information about sustainability, waste, library and other services.*



*Free native seedlings were available as part of the Sustainability Expo.*



*Costa Georgiadis had people of all ages captivated.*



# Playtime at Bendoc

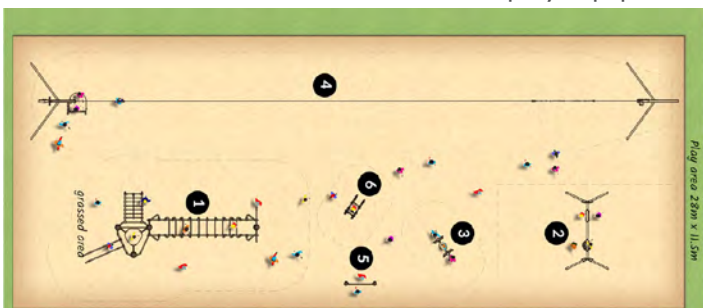
**A planned upgrade to the Bendoc Playground will provide a modern space for residents and visitors for passive and active recreation.**

Children of a variety of ages will love the new playground equipment which includes a multiplay unit which allows swinging, climbing and sliding, a pod swing, traditional swings, slide, and a helicopter rocker. But we're pretty certain the highlight will be a flying fox!

Work is expected to begin in early April and will take approximately one week to complete.

The aim of the project (besides fun!) is to complement the Bendoc's RV Park refurbishment.

The project is funded under a Australian Government's Drought Communities Programme Extension grant of \$65,000, with council providing and installing two picnic tables and the softfall material around the play equipment.



*The countdown is on with the upgrade to Bendoc's playground happening at the start of April.*

# Waste education to the community

**Waste education resources have been created for schools, early learning centres, community groups and individuals to borrow from the Bairnsdale Library.**

Four kits have been tailored to help teach and learn about waste-related topic: Recycling, Waste to Landfill, Food and Green Waste and Circular Economy. They each include an information kit and activity.

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie said young people are concerned for the environment and want to know more about how to reduce waste to landfill, what can be recycled and reusing resources in the circular economy to compost, remake, repair or recycle.

The kits provide support to educators and community to learn and teach about waste education. They also contain information about food and kitchen waste, composting, worm farms and your green bin.

Simply head to the library and borrow a kit! Information kits are also available on the Waste Education and Resources page of our website, which includes links to videos and other information.

# Did you know?

## Landfill Operations

**Have you ever wondered what your waste disposal fees are made up from?**

All waste collected from kerbside general waste bins goes straight to landfill, with over 20,000 kerbside waste collections across the shire, street litter bins and general waste from transfer stations, we accept around 12,000 tonnes of domestic waste per year. On top of this Council's landfill also accepts over 11,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste. The State Government's decision to increase landfill levies over the next two years will significantly increase the cost of operating landfills. Based on these volumes the Landfill Levy for 2021-22 will cost Council over \$1.4 million.

## Some waste facts:

- It costs approximately \$150 per cubic metre of airspace at Bairnsdale Regional Landfill to construct, operate, manage and monitor to meet today's standards
- Costs for rehabilitating a landfill cell is approximately \$100 per cubic metre
- We are responsible for the aftercare and monitoring of former landfills for a minimum of 30 years post closure.





## Call to prioritise community-led recovery

**We continue to work side-by-side with bushfire-impacted communities, supporting timely and appropriate community-led projects and initiatives.**

Our role in advocating for funding allocations under the Regional Local Economic Recovery Stimulus (LERS) Program has supported some of the many great projects put forward in East Gippsland.

"The recent announcement of significant investment in 10 local projects is great news for our communities and we thank both the Commonwealth and Victorian governments for recognising the importance of these projects," Mayor Cr Mendy Urie said.

However, the allocation to East Gippsland in comparison to the North East of Victoria has left us surprised and disappointed, prompting the Mayor to write to Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management David Littleproud and Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services Martin Foley seeking a commitment that East Gippsland projects are prioritised in future funding rounds.

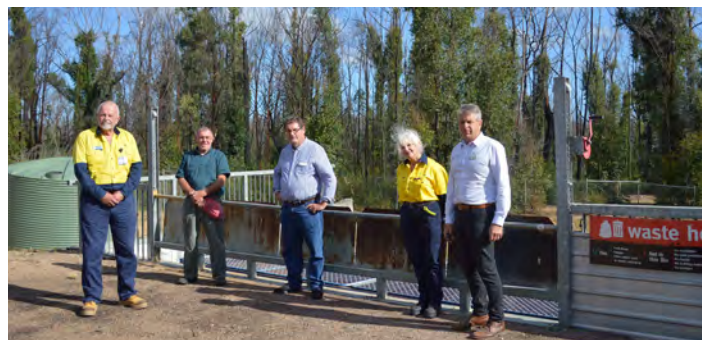
"We are in direct and regular contact with Community Recovery Committee (CRC) representatives across our shire. What we are hearing is that there is concern from fire-impacted communities that the fear of missing out on competitive funding is exacerbating impacts on communities," Cr Urie said.

"Some of our recovering communities are just not ready to apply for funding, but they should not be disadvantaged because of a competitive funding process.

"Council reinforces that funding should be based on need and when communities are ready. Our communities need confidence that funding will be available when they are ready, consistent with the focus on community-led recovery."

During the development of the funding guidelines Council staff raised concerns about the process, the work required to apply, and the funding allocation process with Bushfire Recovery Victoria, the Department of Jobs, Precinct and Regions and the National Bushfire Recovery Agency.

**Read more>>>**



Warren Shipp (Transfer Stations Supervisor), community member John Appleby, Cr Arthur Allen, Susan Thompson (Wairewa Transfer Station attendant and local resident), and Cr Mark Reeves (Deputy Mayor) inspect the new transfer station at Wairewa.

## Wairewa re-open

**The Wairewa Transfer Station is back in business, open Saturdays from 8am to 2pm.**

We re-opened the facility – damaged by the Black Summer Bushfires – on Saturday, February 27. Reinstating the transfer station was a key action requested at a community meeting in December last year where about 27 community members met with Councillors Mark Reeves and Arthur Allen and Council officers.

New signage, a waste attendant's office (complete with a storyboard of the fires, regrowth and clean-up of the site) and significant clean-up of vegetation to improve the user experience was completed prior to opening.

We had provided a free waste service to the Wairewa community since the fires through the provision of a large skip bin that was serviced regularly. With the transfer station reopening, this skip bin has now been removed.

A deposit point for burnt fencing wire remains available near the entry to the site on Carl Smith Road to support property owners cleaning-up destroyed fencing.



Susan Thompson (Wairewa Transfer Station Attendant) and community member John Appleby view the storyboard inside the office. The photos depict the damage at the site as a result of the fires, vegetation regrowth and the site clean-up in preparation for reopening.



# BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

## One bridge left to complete

**During the 2019-20 fires we lost 14 bridges, many other bridges managed by Parks Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Regional Roads Victoria were also damaged or lost.**

Council's first bridge at Waterholes Road, Clifton Creek, was replaced by mid February 2020, only 6 weeks after it was destroyed by fire, with the remaining 13 bridges being replaced in the following 14 months.

Incidentally, we had previously engaged Chris O'Brien & Company to design replacement bridges for all remaining timber bridges within our region, as most of these bridges were reaching the end of their design life and were no longer considered fit for purpose. This expedited the replacement process.

We wish to thank Tambo Constructions and Jarvis Norwood Constructions, successful tenderers for all fire impacted bridge replacements, for their work during both relief and recovery, ensuring vital access was maintained for emergency services and residents, and for their patience and resourcefulness when COVID-19 delays in supply had major impacts on progress.

The communities impacted by these bridge replacements have been very understanding and patient during such a difficult time. We also wish to thank the communities impacted by these bridge replacements for their patience and understanding during such a difficult time.



*The first bridge replaced after the bushfire at Waterholes.*



*Karlo Creek Bridge, Upper Wigan*



*The before and after of the Karlo Creek, Upper Wigan bridge.*

## Recovery Centre changes

**We continue to deliver bushfire recovery services to the community through our customer service centres, Rebuild Support Service and place managers.**

The Bushfire Recovery Centre, which opened during the bushfires and operated for more than 12 months, at Service Street, Bairnsdale, will close at 5.00 pm Thursday 1 April.

We continue to be available to help with your recovery queries and support via phone, email and in person. Bushfire Recovery Victoria hubs remain open to provide support and services in many impacted communities.

We would like to express many thanks to volunteers, agencies and all those who dedicated their time and efforts in support of East Gippsland's recovery through the Service Street Recovery Centre.





## Cann coming together

**The Cann Valley District Representative Group (CVDRG) is now coming together and formalising for 2021.**

A workshop was held at the Cann River Community Hall on Wednesday 10 March 2021 to discuss the following items:

- Agree on the current vision
- Understand the direction of the Cann Valley District Community Plan 2019
- Create a plan to move forward;
- Discuss issues identified from community conversations held within the District in 2020

Set priorities

Priorities identified through the 2020 community conversations and discussed and agreed by the CVDRG at the workshop were:

- Fire preparedness
- Access to information and co-ordination
- Telecommunications
- Access to water
- Resilient community facilities
- How to act/awareness and where to go during an incident

The CVDRG will meet on a regular basis to continue on their strategic process for the betterment of the Cann Valley District.

## War on weeds

**We have been notified that one of our two applications submitted to the Wildlife and Habitat Community Grants Program was successful.**

The Mallacoota War on Weeds program will receive \$149,140 towards a program aimed at ensuring that the recovery of the Mallacoota foreshore is not negatively impacted by invasive weeds. This project will also be 'topped up' with untied bushfire recovery funds channelled through Council's own Bushfire Recovery program.

## Telecommunications infrastructure update

**We understand digital connectivity and resilience is vital for residents, students, visitors and businesses in East Gippsland.**

The following outlines some of the upgrades we are aware of and the work we are doing to support improved telecommunications. Further work is required but a first step is awareness of the work that is already underway.

Restoring the NBN fibre connection to Mallacoota has been an important step forward, with the opportunity for improved digital access in Mallacoota. Through the East Gippsland Recovery Committee and its working group, we have worked with NBN and other agencies to support this connection.

Improving the coverage and resilience of our infrastructure for future events is a key focus of the Built Environment Working Group.

We have also been advocating for our communities for improved connectivity and more resilient telecommunications through projects like above and the Federal Government's Mobile Blackspot Program.

Six mobile phone towers will also be upgraded across East Gippsland as part of the Federal Government's Mobile Network Hardening Program.

These upgrades will ensure a minimum of 12 hours of back-up power to these towers in the event of a power outage including Bonang, Buchan South, Butchers Ridge, Sarsfield, Omeo Highway and Tongio.

Other key telecommunications projects include:

- Telstra will commence construction of a new tower at Cape Conran in mid-2021.
- Two small cell sites have also been approved for Telstra under the Mobile Blackspot Program at Furnell and Lindenow.
- Council has worked with the State and Commonwealth Governments Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) program trial satellite communications in several relief centre sites in Mallacoota, Cann River, Orbost, Buchan, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Omeo and Paynesville. This provides an internet and WiFi calling backup in the event that other telecommunications such as mobile phone, NBN fixed wireless and optical fibre networks are lost.
- Projects to improve the security of electricity supplies (e.g. battery in Mallacoota).

**[Read more>>>](#)**

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