

Omeo District Recovery Update

JUNE 2021



LIMP project update

Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPs) are being reviewed for Benambra, Omeo, Swifts Creek, Ensay and Tambo Crossing. The review will check information is accurate and relevant.

LIMPs are developed with input from the community to ensure residents and visitors know where to go, what to take and what to expect if a major incident affects the area. The new-look LIMPs will be completed by the end of 2021.

Existing LIMPs can be found at <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/emergency-management-plans>.

ORCRA update

Omeo Region Community Recovery Committee (ORCRA) has commenced work on developing a Community Resilience Plan for the Omeo District. The committee has appointed an East Gippsland based consultant to help develop the plan and will soon commence engaging with communities across the region.

The committee started the planning process in May with a workshop and is meeting again this month to continue working on the Community Resilience Plan.

Water bores in Ensay and Swifts Creek

Southern Rural Water is in the process of completing water bore projects at the Ensay and Swifts Creek recreation reserves.

Ensay will receive a new bore,

storage tank, standpipe and pumping equipment.

The Swifts Creek project will utilise the existing bore and install a new larger capacity storage tank, new standpipe and pumping equipment.

These projects are part of a larger bore project that is currently being rolled out across East Gippsland. Once completed, water from the bores will be available to the public during drought periods for stock and domestic use.

Community building plans finalised

Building plans for the new community building at Tambo Crossing have been finalised.

The new building will include a meeting space, accessible bathroom and kitchen facilities, and provide the opportunity for place-based service delivery and will become a hub for community events and activities.

Next steps include gaining building approval so that works can commence around August this year.

'Activating Ensay' arrives

A new community group called 'Activating Ensay' has recently formed with the initial aim of increasing community resilience and better preparing for future emergency events.

The group is working across Ensay North, Doctors Flat, Ensay, Reedy Flat and Tambo Crossing. One of the first tasks the group has commenced is mapping the assets they have that play a role during natural disasters and emergency events. Once this is

completed the group will then focus on what improvements might be required.

Rec reserve scores funding

The Swifts Creek Recreation Reserve Committee of Management has received a \$1.92 million Local Economic Recovery grant that will enable them to develop a new clubroom building inclusive of netball and football changerooms, kitchen and social room, and extensive undercover areas.

The existing changerooms, tennis clubroom, and social room will be replaced with one multipurpose, accessible and fully compliant facility. Also included in the overall project scope is the development of a new netball court facility that includes two new courts, shelters for players and officials and competition level lighting. Work on the new facilities will commence later this year and will be completed in mid-2022.

We were pleased to be able to support the funding application and congratulate the committee.

Rebuilding after bushfires

Did you know that Planning and Building Permits are two separate processes residents need to go through before commencing construction work. To find out which applies to you and how you to get the right permit visit <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-rebuilding>.

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Digital connectivity

We have recently engaged a consultant to assist us with identifying gaps and priorities in digital connectivity for East Gippsland to inform advocacy and other activities.

The consultant's focus will be digital connectivity impacts and opportunities for:

- Business and tourism
- Safety and emergency management
- Rural and regional living and work

We hope that through this consultancy and the resulting report, we will have a more comprehensive understanding of the true lived experience of digital connectivity in East Gippsland, especially through the lens of both the 2019-20 bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic. This will better inform Council's future project planning and advocacy for the region.

For more information or to get involved, contact your local Place Manager. You can get to know your Place Manager and find contact details on our Community Recovery web page <https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/bushfire-community-recovery>.

New bush nursing project

On 9 June, Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas announced a new Bush Nursing Pilot Project, aimed at improving access to healthcare services to farmers in remote areas.

East Gippsland has been selected for the \$325,000 Department of Health pilot project, with bush nursing centres in Dargo, Ensay, Gelantipy District, Swifts Creek, Buchan, and Cann Valley being funded to deliver additional services such as primary health, clinical, emergency, community, referral and home-based health services.

Find out more about the program at agriculture.vic.gov.au.

State panel briefed on recovery

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie presented to the 2021 Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel on East Gippsland's bushfire recovery in early June, explaining the complexity of recovery and some of the opportunities for learning.

Cr Urie, appointed to the panel in April, said the meeting theme of 'Supporting vulnerable Victorians' and was an opportunity to highlight the work done in the bushfire event and in recovery, but also continually advocate for improvements in the way all tiers of government respond to emergencies.

"The enormity of the bushfire event, in scale, duration and natural and infrastructure loss, continues to amaze people not living the recovery journey, even after 18 months," Cr Urie said.

"I was able to explain where we are in recovery, how our communities are at different stages on recovery, and the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns in that process. The difference between physical and social recovery, the significant work of volunteers, and the complexity of large-scale bushfire recovery were explained.

"It was also a timely opportunity to highlight to the Minister the appreciation for support and funding from all levels of government, and the work of government agencies."

Cr Urie advised the panel there was a need to allow for five-year recovery planning for such events, and that program design needs to more explicitly consider community needs. Most importantly, support and funding need to be available when the community is ready for it, not on a predetermined recovery timeline. I

also shared the negative impacts of competitive funding approaches where impacted communities are competing – there is a better way where support is determined by impact and need.

"It is also important that support is easy to negotiate and not all online. There is also an opportunity for better coordination between all tiers of government, understanding the future impacts of a changing climate, and how to support the building of resilience."

Cr Urie said the presentation was well-received and regarded as an important conversation among her peers.

"What surprised many was the impact the bushfire event has had on Council staff personally. This impact was from the event itself, but also throughout recovery. For me, that really demonstrates how Council is part of our community. Not only in the services and projects we deliver, but that the people doing the work are all important members and contributors to the East Gippsland community.

"The amount of responsibility which local government needs to take on in response and recovery was also not lost on the panel members."

Cr Urie said it was an important opportunity to share some of East Gippsland's considerable knowledge and many lived experiences in a statewide forum.

Other mayors presented on topics such as 'Emergency Management for Rural and Regional Areas', 'Collaborating across municipal lines' and 'Affordable housing strategies' at the meeting.

The Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel (LGMAP) is established by the Minister for Local Government to provide advice to the Minister on legislative, regulatory, strategic and policy concerns which impact the local government sector.