

## SPECIAL BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS EDITION - SEE INSIDE



## New Mayor elected

**Cr Mark Reeves of Marlo has been elected Mayor of East Gippsland Shire Council at a Statutory Meeting held on Thursday, October 28.**

Cr Reeves was Deputy Mayor under Cr Mendy Urie last year.

First elected in 2012, Cr Reeves is in his third consecutive term on Council and was previously Mayor in 2013-14. He also served as Deputy Mayor in 2017-18.

Elected in 2020, Council is now in the second year of its four-year term.

Cr Arthur Allen of Lakes Entrance was elected Deputy Mayor.

Cr Reeves said it was a great time to be in regional Victoria and in particular East Gippsland.

"It is a time of optimism and we're an optimistic people, this council group can lead with enthusiasm and vision.

"When we think about home sales and builds, caravan sales, regional translocation, aqua parks in Lakes Entrance, mountain bike tracks and more, all of these point to a future that is positive and full of opportunity.

"We want to be region where our young people stay, to be educated to a world standard, to have a career and grow wealthy and start a family.

World class jobs, not second-class because we're regional, but better because we are regional.

"I hope I can bring that strong sense of optimism and strong positive representation for our community," Cr Reeves said.

"The Deputy Mayor position is a very important one. I look forward to supporting the Mayor through this role over the coming year for the good of our shire and its residents," Cr Allen said.

A live stream of the meeting is available on Council's YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com.au/EastGippyTV](http://www.youtube.com.au/EastGippyTV)

### Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidjawan 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.

# Our pledge for mutual respect

**Our Mutual Respect Charter was adopted at our 5 October Council Meeting.**

Watch the section of the Council Meeting where Councillors speak about the Mutual Respect Charter and the expectations of everyone on our **East Gippsland TV YouTube channel** or read the full charter on our **website**.

## The community has the right and responsibility to:



Be treated with courtesy and respect



Be given reasons that explain decisions affecting them



A fair and impartial assessment based on the facts and merits of the matter



A timely response



Express their opinions in ways that are respectful and lawful



A fair hearing



Communicate valid concerns and views without fear of reprisal



Access Council's complaints management policy



Be informed about the actions taken and outcome of their complaint



**Our Mutual Respect Charter is based on the principle of mutual respect and cooperation and supports our values of providing a safe and respectful workplace. It outlines the rights and responsibilities of the community, Councillors and staff in all Council-related interactions.**

## Councillors and staff have the right and responsibility to:



Be treated with courtesy and respect



A safe and healthy working environment



Expect honesty, cooperation and reasonable assistance from the community



Zero tolerance on verbal abuse, offensive behaviour, threats and violence



Provide reasons for decisions, and ensure that decisions are subject to appropriate review processes



Be clear on how the matter will be handled, including compliance to statutory and/or legislative processes



Modify, curtail or decline service in response to unacceptable behaviour which because of its nature or frequency raises health, safety, resource or equity issues

# Double dose vax target met!

**Well, we did it! We've reached our 80% double dose vaccination target here in East Gippsland and we are now enjoying the further easing of restrictions around the state as Victoria has also reached its 80% double vax target.**

But as we're seeing the highest number of active COVID-19 cases in the region since the pandemic began, we still need to be vigilant to ensure the safety of our community.

## Vaccinations and our facilities

From 6.00 pm Friday 29 October 2021, customers over the age of 16 must show their COVID-19 vaccination status as a condition of entry to most of our facilities.

Following direction from the Victorian Government, only those who are fully vaccinated from COVID-19, or medically exempt

and wearing a mask are permitted to enter specified Council facilities. Council has an obligation to ensure a safe workplace for staff and a safe environment for our community. Council staff are vaccinated against COVID-19 and we expect everyone who interacts with our staff and those who use our services to also be vaccinated.

A list of our facilities where proof of vaccination is and is not required upon entry is available on our **website**.

In all settings, you will need to continue to check-in if there is a QR code and wear a facemask as per Chief Health Officer directions. The wearing of masks is not required outdoors.

The quickest and easiest way to show proof of vaccination is by adding your COVID-19 digital certificate to the Service Victoria



app on your smart phone. To add your COVID-19 digital certificate to the Service Victoria app, you'll need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have the latest version of the Service Victoria app installed on your phone.

Customers without a smart phone are required to present a valid certificate from the Australian Immunisation Register or a printed copy of their COVID-19 vaccination certificate to prove their vaccination status. This information will be cross-checked against a valid form of photo ID such as a driver's licence.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## November

<b>7 November</b>	Surf Life Saving Lakes Entrance Market
<b>12-14 November</b>	Mallacoota Hobie Cat Fishing Tournament
<b>13 November</b>	Metung Farmers' Market
<b>14 November</b>	Paynesville Lions Community Market
<b>14 November</b>	Metung Fun Run
<b>20 November</b>	Lakes Entrance Farmers' and Seafood Market
<b>26-28 November</b>	X-Marathon Paynesville
<b>27 November</b>	Wildfighter RND 6, Lucknow Reserve
<b>27 November</b>	Park Run Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale
<b>27 November</b>	Paynesville Farmers' and Makers' Market
<b>27-28 November</b>	Vic Bream Classics Marlo

### Stay up to date with places to explore, taste, play and stay across the region.

As we re-open make sure you keep an eye out on upcoming events via our tourism website: [www.visiteastgippsland.com.au](http://www.visiteastgippsland.com.au)

Please note that some events may be cancelled, postponed or moved online due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time.



## Council meeting in brief

At the Council Meeting held 5 October, Council:

- Approved a contract for the upkeep of our 1557km of sealed roads, which need to be resurfaced every 10 to 15 years. The contract will also fund dust-suppression works.
- Accepted an audit and risk performance review.
- Endorsed the Annual Report (see our report on page 8), noting the support given to communities in a year of bushfire recovery and COVID-19, and highlighting advocacy that secured major grant funding for community development and building projects. The report is available on our website and Customer Service Centres, and a highlights video is available on our YouTube channel EastGippyTV.
- Backed a Mutual Respect Charter, which documents expectations of mutual respect in Council interactions.
- CEO legislated expenditure delegation set at \$1.1m with all other expenditure to remain at \$500k.
- Adopted a Public Transparency Policy which commits Council to making decision-making processes transparent and Council information publicly available where possible.
- Approved a submission on the draft Marine and Coastal Strategy, developed by DELWP, regarding use and protection of our coastline and estuarine areas.
- Awarded Community Projects Grants (Rnd 1) funding to 11 projects.

**Watch the meeting** 

**16 November:** Council Meeting – 6.00 pm

**18 November:** Bairnsdale Library Immunisation Session for children, 4.00 pm—6.00 pm

**25 November:** Citizenship ceremony, Bairnsdale







# 2022

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

## AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Know a person or event that makes an outstanding contribution to our community?

**Nominate them now!**

**Citizen of the Year**

**Young Citizen of the Year (under 27 years)**

**Community Event of the Year**

Nomination forms are available on council's website or visit one of our customer service centres for a copy.

**5153 9500 or 1300 555 886**

[eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/ausday](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/ausday)

**Nominations close:**

**Monday 29 November 2021**



## Join. Borrow. Play. Win!

**Registrations are now open for the Big Summer Read – starting Wednesday 1 December.**

To take part download the Beanstack app, go to the [Beanstack website](https://www.beanstack.org) or visit your local library.

### Council meeting in brief

At the Council Meeting held 26 October, Council:

- Accepted a petition from Paynesville residents regarding parking provision near Progress Jetty.
- Endorsed an Event Growth Action Plan.
- Adopted the meeting schedule for 2022.
- Approved a contract for delivery of first section of construction of slip road in Paynesville.
- Adopted an advocacy policy which will guide the advocacy strategy.
- Endorsed the First Quarter financial report.
- Thanked the Mayor for her term in what was her final meeting in the role and gave her leave to speak about her time as Mayor.

**Watch the meeting** 





The Tesla 2.0 Powerwall batteries and 20kW solar PV system are expected to save community groups and sporting teams up to \$4,000 in electricity costs each year.

## Lucknow's wall of power

**In a win for Lucknow's community sporting groups, three Tesla Powerwall energy-storage batteries have been connected to the solar power system in the newly redeveloped Lucknow Recreation Reserve clubrooms.**

The three 14kW Tesla 2.0 Powerwall batteries, connected to a 20kW solar PV system, are expected to save community groups and sporting teams based at the reserve between \$3,000 to \$4,000 in electricity costs each year. This means funds raised by volunteers previously spent on power bills, can now be spent on club activities.

The reserve is home to netball, table tennis, squash, dog obedience classes, football and cricket teams, with a gymnastics centre on the way.

The system, installed by East Gippsland Solar, will also cut 28 tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions each year.

Mayor Cr Mendy Urie welcomed the installation of the money-saving batteries.

"It's a pleasure to be able to help our hard-working volunteers, reduce power bills for our sporting clubs, and cut carbon pollution at the same time," Cr Urie said. A \$42,000 grant for the project was funded by the Victorian Government through Sustainability Victoria's Community Power Hubs program and the Gippsland Community Power Hub.



Lucknow Football Netball Club committee members Tania McNamara and Steven Bull; Gippsland Community Power Hub CEO Darren McCubbin; Technical Advisor Andrew Livingston, Gippsland Community Power Hub Chair Carolyn Crossley; East Gippsland Shire Council Mayor Cr Mendy Urie; East Gippsland Solar Manager Grant Templar.

## Youth Ambassador applications open

**If you're a young person looking for a leadership opportunity, get your application in to be an East Gippsland Shire Council Youth Ambassador.**

**The Youth Ambassador program began in 2015**

The free program is open to people aged 12 to 25 who are living, studying or working in East Gippsland.

Youth Ambassadors support events and advocate to help make East Gippsland better for young residents. Support with travel and online meeting options is available to allow people from across the shire to take part in the program.

The Youth Ambassador Program is a peer-led committee of Council designed to assist local government in understanding and meeting the needs of young people in East Gippsland. It's also a fun way to volunteer and have input into planning, design and activities that young people want to see in their community.

While there is no set closing date, applicants should apply as soon as possible so they can be considered for a leadership skills development opportunity being planned for December.

To apply, please visit the **Youth page on our website.**



## National Recycling Week 2021

**Planet Ark's National Recycling Week 2021 celebrates its 25th year this month from 8-14 November.**

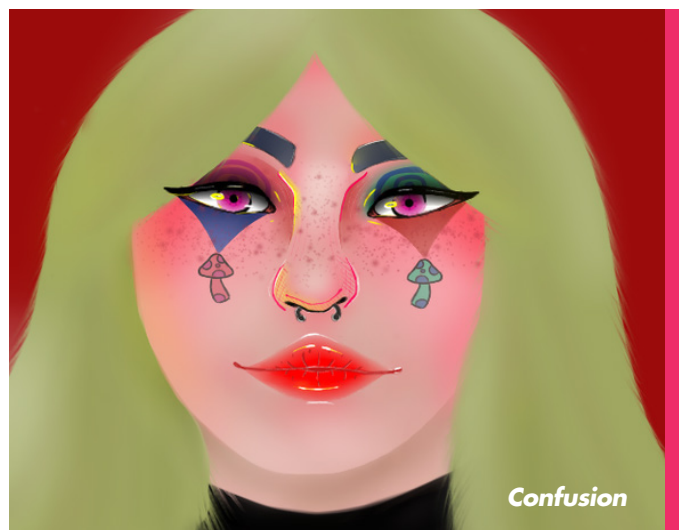
Keep an eye on our **Facebook page** for daily doses of all things recycling – from tips and tricks on how you can improve your recycling practices at home and at work to a virtual tour through the Bairnsdale Materials Recovery Facility.

You can also visit

**Planet Ark's website** to find out more about National Recycling Week and what's happening near you.







## And the winner is...

**Portraiture category (in celebration of the Archibald Prize coming to the Gippsland Art Gallery)**

**Winner:** Rheanna Williams, Bairnsdale – *Human*

### 12-15 Years category

**Winner:** Lily-Rose Hall-Krause, Swifts Creek – *Confusion*

**Second:** Lily Nickless, Nyerimilang – *La Rainette verteet doree*

**Third:** Amity Phelan, Buchan – *Sunrise*

### 16-19 Years category

**Winner:** Natasha Steed, Wy Yung – *Rantu's Fury*

**Second:** Chloe Boulton, Eastwood – *A View from Baines Rd (2021 Flood)*

**Third:** Chelsea Beechey, Bairnsdale, *Floods at Forge Creek*

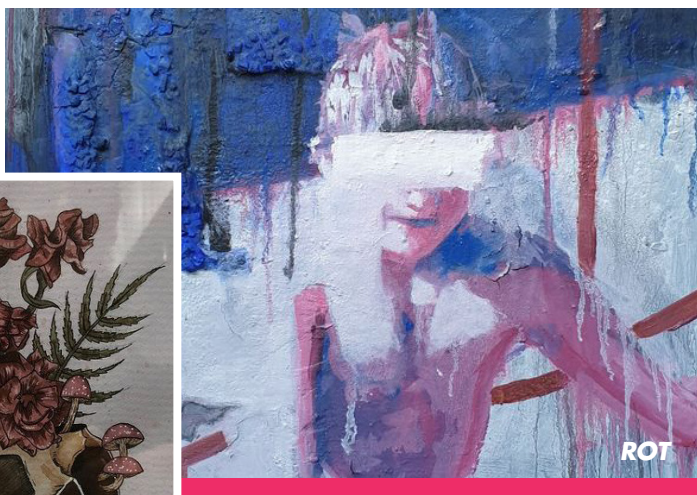
**Third:** Annalise O'Neill, Paynesville – *Gaia*

### 20-25 Years category

**Winner:** Chris Lanyon, Combienbar – *Earth Care, People Care, Fair Share*

**Winner:** Harley Kewish, Boisdale (works in East Gippsland) – *Leave your flowers*

**Third:** Romy Robertson, Paynesville – *ROT*







## Seniors workshops in Omeo, Buchan, Sarsfield

We have partnered with Anglicare to hold a number of workshops for seniors as part of this year's Victorian Seniors Festival.

The workshops are being held in Buchan, Omeo and Sarsfield from now until early December.

The topics that will be covered are:

- Utility Relief Grants / concessions and insurance
- Age Pension, including assessment and appeals
- Advocacy - rights of the older person and navigating aged care

Numbers are limited. For registrations and enquiries, please call Anglicare on 1800 286 260 or email [bushfireCPGipps@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:bushfireCPGipps@anglicarevic.org.au)

Victorian Seniors Festival runs until December with a wide range of online performances, workshops and more.

To find out more about the workshops or other Seniors Festival events, visit the Events section of our [Seniors page](#).

## Have you registered your pool and spa?

**Spring is here and now is the best time to spruce up your pool or spa. Don't forget to check your pool or spa fence and gate are in order.**

The state-wide pool and spa safety initiative launched by the Victorian Government in 2019 required all pools and spas to be registered with your Council before **1 November 2020**.

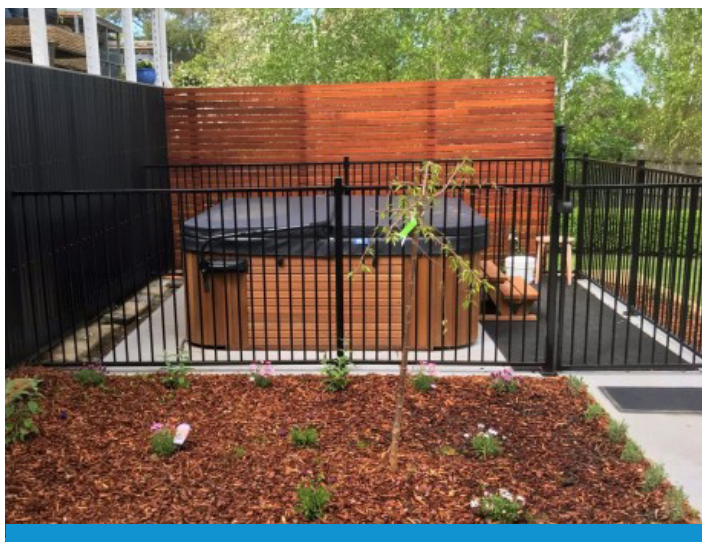
Yes, **2020!** Have you registered yours?

We know the last couple of years have been hectic and it's easy to overlook these things. If you haven't already registered your pool and/or spa, please do it as soon as possible as fines can be applied by the Victorian Government – and nobody wants that.

Time is running out, so please, register your pool or spa with us now!

You don't want to miss out on a moment of summer fun in your beautiful pool.

All the details are on our [website](#).



## Ag committee hears from EPA

**The Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee recently received a presentation from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) focussed on new environment protection legislation.**

Specifically, the presentation looked at how the agriculture sector can comply with new waste duties, after Council and committee members received feedback from farmers asking about the new Environment Protection Act and the potential impact these duties would have on the sector.

EPA Gippsland's Compliance and Enforcement Team Leader Zac Dornom, and Senior Engagement Advisor Stacey Clark presented, giving the committee a better understanding of the waste duties in the new environment protection legislation and how the agriculture sector can comply using readily available information.

In summary, the EPA answered questions on industrial

waste, manure, recordkeeping, and where to find more information and guidance on how to comply.

For information on this and other guidance material to support the agriculture sector, members were referred to the following documents which can be found on the EPA website:

- Publication 2006: How to comply with the livestock manure and effluent determination.
- The Agriculture Sector Guide: Agriculture – Guide to preventing harm to people and the environment.
- Publication 1741.1: Industry guidance – supporting you to comply with the general environmental duty.
- Publication 1695.1: Assessing and controlling risk: A guide for business.



# Our record of a year like no other

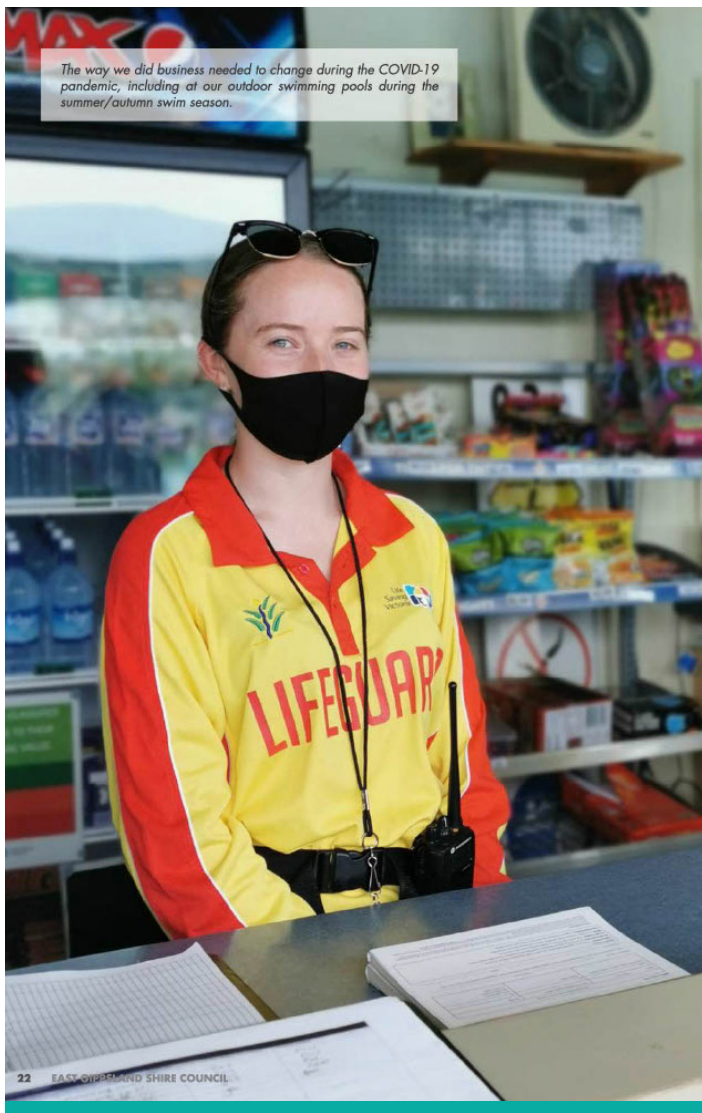
**Council has endorsed its *Annual Report 2020-21*, with Mayor Cr Mendy Urie saying the report is a fabulous record of an unprecedented year.**

A key highlight of the report is the advocacy we conducted for the community, with over \$31.4 million of grant funding received in 2020-21 financial year, and a further \$35.5m approved for future years under the Local Economy Recovery (\$25.5m) and Regional Recovery Partnership (\$10m) grants schemes.

Cr Urie noted that we received and responded to over 70,000 pieces of email correspondence, and 15,000 letters, in the 12-month reporting period.

"That's an indication of how busy Council has been – it was business as usual on top of all the challenges and disruptions in what was a remarkable year," Cr Urie said. The report also notes that over 470 community members were engaged during the review of our Community Vision and the development of the Council Plan.

The *Annual Report 2020-21* is available on our [website](#) and as a hard copy from our Customer Service Centres. A highlights video is also available on our website and on our YouTube channel, [EastGippsTV](#).

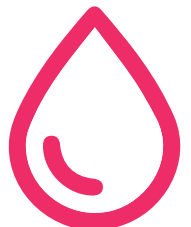


Council accessed its largest ever pool of capital grant funding, with over \$31.41m of grant funding received in 2020-21. This represents a 244% increase on the previous year.



Finalised remediation of 236km of bushfire-damaged roads and roadside and replaced 11 bridges destroyed by the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires valued at over \$17m.

**A partnership with Adventist Development and Relief Agency provided water to 400 rural families who rely on rainwater for their household water supply. The support included a subsidised 10,000-litre tank of water.**



Become a scientist for a day and help save the platypus from extinction!



ODONATA



ENVIRONMENT  
EDUCATION  
VICTORIA



PLANET WARRIOR  
Education

## Great Australian Platypus Search

**Want to help save the platypus from extinction? Become a citizen scientist for a day on The Great Australian Platypus Search.**

Not-for-profit biodiversity organisation Odonata and Environment Education Victoria invite you to join this exciting citizen science project - one of the largest in the world.

You'll be provided with an eDNA sampling kit, so you

can collect samples from a designated waterway site and send it to a lab for testing and there are free student resources available to support online lessons.

This simple and fun search for platypuses and their DNA will support the monitoring and mapping of the platypus and other river species across Victoria.

To find a sampling site near your home, community group or school, visit [thegreataustralianplatypussearch.org](https://thegreataustralianplatypussearch.org)

## Time to detox your home?

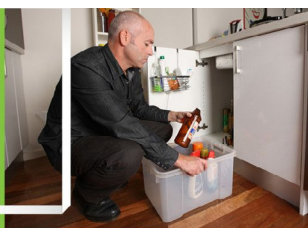
**Are you moving house? Do you have young children that love getting into things? Or do you just want to clear out the cupboards?**

Dispose of your unwanted household chemicals at Detox Your Home - a free event on Saturday 6 November from 9am-1pm at the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange. Bring your unwanted household chemicals, cosmetics, oils and more.

Registrations are essential at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com.au). Best of all, it's a drive-through service, so you won't even have to leave the car.

For more information head to the [Sustainability Victoria website](https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au).

**Detox  
your Home**



Sustainability  
Victoria

VICTORIA  
Government

## Creating connections

**Children and young people will be the centre of a three-year project looking to help younger residents grow up active, healthy and socially connected.**

We are partnering with VicHealth in the Local Government Partnership, which will support children and young people to be included in the decision-making for planning and designing healthier communities.

Through this project, we will support children and young people to identify priorities and barriers for healthy communities. Then younger residents will be encouraged to lead the planning, design and implementation of identified solutions.

Stage One will involve workshops with young people to better understand the barriers they face and determine their priorities and potential solutions.

Any young person who would like to be involved can contact us.

To learn more, visit the [Youth page on our website](#).

**One quarter  
of East  
Gippsland's  
population  
is aged 0-25  
years.**



# Community panel members contribute to enhancing East Gippsland



Planting final trees at Howitt Park, Bairnsdale, donated by the community panel on Tuesday were Jane Ponting, Mayor Mendy Urie, Cr Kirsten Van Diggele, Cr Mark Reeves, Peter Giddings, Sharon Jervis, Belinda Stewart, Carina Turner and Cr Tom Crook.

**East Gippsland residents who contributed to the development of our Community Vision 2040 earlier this year were celebrated for their contribution to the shire by way of a tree planting this month.**

We joined the community panel members to mark the occasion with the unveiling of a plaque at Bairnsdale's Howitt Park. Sharon Jervis shared her experience about the process of being involved in the community panel, which consisted of 15 people from across the shire who met regularly over a 10-week period to make their

recommendations to us.

Ms Jervis said being involved in the community panel was "life changing" for her.

"The whole experience was mind blowing and was totally out of my comfort zone, but I learnt a lot," Ms Jervis said.

"Thank you for taking this rough around the edge's deaf girl out of the too hard pile to give me a chance to have my say and feel valuable again. It has led me to have confidence and led me to be part of the Twin Rivers Lions Club where I really feel at home."

Cr Urie said Council appreciates the contribution of everyone who took part in the consultation process.

"For anyone who hadn't read these two documents, they will provide you with a good understanding of Council's direction and what we aim to achieve," Cr Urie said.

**The Community Vision 2040** and **Council Plan 2021-25** are also available to view at Customer Service Centres.

## YourSay East Gippsland

**Have your say online or in person at any shire office to help shape the priorities and future of East Gippsland.**

### Mallacoota

The Mallacoota Streetscape project survey runs 8 November – 22 November. Have your say on the makeover of Mallacoota's Maurice Avenue and help shape the design process. An in-person consultation day will be held if COVID restrictions allow.

### Buchan

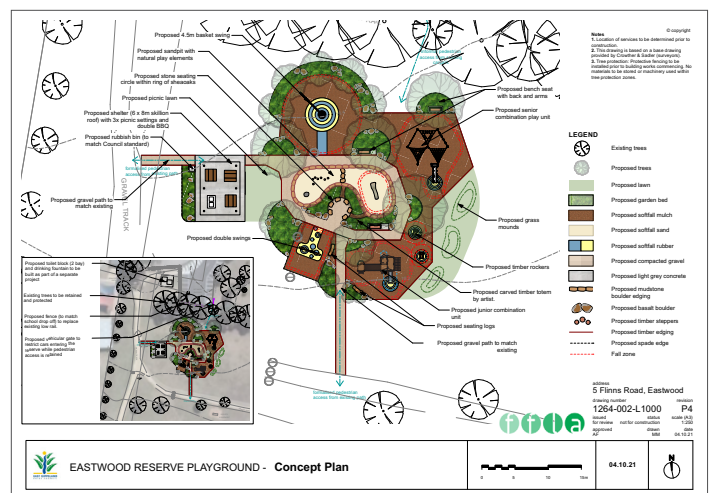
Have your say on the makeover of Buchan's Main Street and the construction of a linkage pathway to the popular caves reserve.

### Eastwood

We're seeking your feedback on Eastwood Playspace, a new family outdoor area that will offer fresh play opportunities for kids of all ages, as well as a pleasant and comfortable place for adults.

An online survey is now open, giving you the chance to participate in the design consultation and give your feedback on the initial concept plan.

For all these surveys and more, head to **[yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au](https://yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)**





## Council in the Community - Jody Haberfield



**Jody Haberfield has been a volunteer firefighter with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) for almost as long as he's been a Council Community Laws Officer.** In his 12 years with the CFA he's learned a thing or two about fighting fires. But with 14 years with the Shire as a ranger under his belt, he's become quite aware that the two main roles he undertakes aren't mutually exclusive.



"The knowledge that I have gained from being a Council ranger has benefited me in decision making where fires or incidents are concerned, by knowing the organisation and who to call when things need to be done," Jody explained.

"Council has been fully supportive of my role in CFA. I appreciate having full-time employment while being able to give back to the community in my time away from work."

And give back he does. Over the past 12 years, Jody accumulated a

wealth of knowledge with the Bruthen Fire Brigade and helped countless people throughout the region in their moments of need.

"I have lead strike teams in campaign fires, been a divisional commander in the local command facility, been called upon on numerous occasions to be incident controller at motor vehicle accidents, structure fires and teaching recruits firefighting skills," Jody revealed.

"I am currently the 2nd Lieutenant of the Bruthen Fire Brigade and also the 2nd Deputy Group Officer and Training Officer for the Tambo Group. I'm also currently undertaking my Wildfire Fire Investigators course."

It's reassuring to know there are such highly skilled volunteers out there in the community like Jody and his Bruthen crew, who give up so much of their time to help others in a crisis. But between paid work and volunteer work, it's a wonder there's time left in their days for anything else. But Jody believes it's important to make the time.

"I am passionate handgun target shooter and am a member of the International Practical Shooting Confederation," Jody said.

"This has enabled me to travel all over the country competing and I have met many different people from different walks of life and cultures and made lifelong friends."

Finally, Jody has some great advice for East Gippsland residents in the lead up to summer and what they can do to be prepared for bushfire season.



"Make sure your block is cleaned up and fire ready, have a sound bushfire plan and most importantly, leave early if you have to and not leave it to the last moment," he said.

"Also, the CFA holds regular online meetings at this time of year, providing vital advice for residents on how they can prepare their properties for the fire season. You can follow your local CFA on Facebook to get regular updates."

The next CFA online bushfire preparedness session will be held via Zoom on 9 November from 7.00 pm to 8.00 pm. For more information call 0419 874 484 or email [firesafetyoutreach@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:firesafetyoutreach@cfa.vic.gov.au).

# BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS SPECIAL

## What's your plan this summer?

**Emergencies can happen at any time. The better you're prepared, the easier the recovery.**

Our Emergency Management team is working alongside staff across Council and East Gippsland communities to ensure we're all fully prepped for the next major incident that affects the region.

As part of this groundwork, we've been undertaking some training to familiarise ourselves with a software platform used for emergency management events.

Used by most councils across the state for managing emergencies, Crisisworks gives access to geocoded photos and updates in real time. It can be accessed by multiple agencies and has been in use for many years.

Manager Emergency Management Natarsha Baker said they're currently running training sessions for staff across the whole organisation.

"Together with the Crisisworks team, we've been running a series of sessions designed to suit varying levels of experience and knowledge, broken into the categories for beginners, intermittent and champions users," Natarsha said.

"During emergency events in the region, whether they're minor,



moderate or significant, we really do rely on staff to help support the community, so we've been encouraging everyone at Council to sign up for the training."

While emergency services and our emergency management team do all they can to help communities during and after an emergency, the person most responsible for your and your family's wellbeing is you.

We have developed a range of disaster preparedness forms that will help you prepare for your household or farm for any emergency.

Natarsha said her team can assist with these, in particular the Local Incident Management Plans (LIMP)

which are developed by communities with Council to ensure residents and visitors know where to go, what to take and what to expect.

"We can assist communities throughout the shire to develop their LIMPs, which are then circulated within their communities, displayed on our website and reviewed regularly to make sure they're up to date," she explained.

"These are really important for your community during an emergency. If you need help getting your LIMP together, please contact us as soon as possible."

Call 03 5153 9500 or email [feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au)

## Have your say on sustainability

**Want to have your say on the next 10 years of sustainability in Victoria?**

Sustainability Victoria is seeking feedback on its strategy for 2021-2030, which guides local governments.

Your say is important to Council, so head to <https://engage.vic.gov.au/sv2030> to share your ideas.

To keep up to date with East Gippsland sustainability matters, sign up to *Environment Connect*, Council's quarterly newsletter on all environment, sustainability and waste - at <https://bit.ly/EGSCEcoNews>





## Time to take fire prevention action!

**We have a variety of emergency management responsibilities including fire prevention activities and building the resilience of our communities to respond to emergencies.**

To help community members prepare for the upcoming fire season, we have put together this short Questions and Answers.

**What are some simple things that all residents should do in the lead up to fire season?**

1. Assess your property for jobs you need to do before fire season.
2. Get a copy of your community's Local Incident Management Plan or LIMP (refer to fourth question for more detail).
3. Make (or review) your bushfire plan and check any firefighting equipment.
4. Download the VicEmergency App on your mobile phone.
5. Make a first aid kit and an emergency kit.

**What does a landowner/manager need to do to make sure their property is not a fire hazard?**

All property owners have a responsibility to maintain their property to help protect their own home and other properties. Some of requirements include:

- ✓ Grass should be no more than 100mm high.
- ✓ Remove surface fuel by raking twigs, bark and leaves and removing branch heaps.
- ✓ Clean leaves, etc from roofs, gutters and downpipes.
- ✓ Make sure your driveway is clear of vegetation (4m x 4m) to allow large vehicles access.
- ✓ Cut back branches/foilage overhanging within two-metres of your roofline.
- ✓ Ensure firewood piles are covered and stored away from the house. Properties need to be kept at this standard for the entire Fire Danger Period, not just at the start of the season.

**Do people who live in town areas need a bushfire plan?**

Yes, everyone should have a bushfire plan. This plan can also be useful for other incidents such as flood, house fire or major storm.

**How can people find out where to evacuate to in case of emergency?**

We've partnered with residents to develop LIMPs for many of our towns, but particularly small, remote communities. LIMPs are a quick-reference document with emergency contact details, emergency assembly areas, and other useful information. They are designed to be used by residents and anyone visiting that locality.

You'll find the LIMPs on the Emergency Management Plans section of our website and at Customer Service Centres.

**What about pets?**

It is important to consider pets and livestock when writing your bushfire plan.

If you are leaving early with your pets, remember to prepare your pets as well; have bedding, food and water ready to go and make sure you can transport them.

Microchip your animals and include your details such as your phone number on collars.

Put together a relocation kit for your pets, with leads, water bowl, medication, etc.

For more details see the CFA website, [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

**What type of things should people put in their emergency kit?**

You should practice packing your car to make sure everything fits (including any pets).

An emergency kit should have:

- Overnight bag with change of clothes and toiletries
- Medicines and first aid kit
- Important information, such as passport, will, photos, jewellery
- Mobile phone and charger
- Adequate amount of water
- Wool blankets
- Contact information for your doctor, council and power company
- Face masks
- Hand sanitizer and antibacterial wipes

**Looking at a bigger task, what are some home improvements people can make to better-protect their home from fire?**

Consider installing a sprinkler system to wet down your home.

Seal gaps around windows and doors to reduce the chance of embers entering wall spaces and cavities.

Make sure window and door sills are non-combustible by maintaining them so there is no flaking paint.

Installing wire mesh screens (not aluminium) with 1.5-millimetre holes over both the window and frame can prevent embers touching the glass or timber.

**Does Council do fire management work on its land?**

Yes.

We slash our roadsides and reserves for fire prevention purposes. For more information, visit our service centre or our website.



## Sustainable homes for life

**This month, we celebrated Sustainable House Day.**

As we face a changing climate, increased pressure on our energy grids and a heightened risk of bushfires, never has a such a day been more important.

National Sustainable House Day is an event coordinated every year by non-profit organisation Renew. As well as providing the opportunity to explore the best sustainable homes around the country, the event includes a program of webinars featuring an array of homeowners, designers and sustainability specialists.

Renew CEO Paul Bowers said the program highlights for homeowners the advantages of building to suit the environment of the coming decades, ensuring a home that's comfortable and safe for years to come.

"Every family wants a house that is comfortable, healthy and low-cost to run and working in harmony with the environment is the best way to do that," Paul said.

"Simple changes to the design and construction can have a large impact – things like materials choice, draughtproofing, efficient appliances can all make a difference. We produced the Green Rebuild Toolkit to show how sustainable building and bushfire resilience work together."

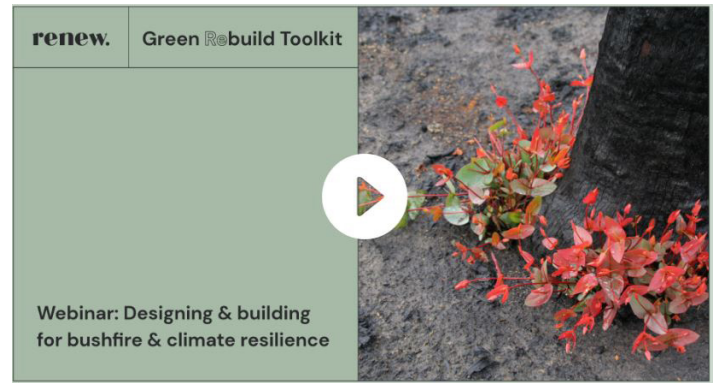
The Green Rebuild Toolkit series of six 90-minute webinars cover everything from designing and building for bushfire and climate resistance to water storage and fire-resistant landscaping.

Paul said it's so important to research and prepare when undertaking a build or retrofit in a fire-prone zone.

"I think the most important thing to remember is that you're not alone because there's a large community out there who have either been on this journey already, or who are on it with you," he said.

"Local community groups and national organisations offer resources and support. Recognise when experts can really help you. If you bring in an experienced outsider early, they can usually offer helpful advice."

You can access and watch the Green Rebuild Toolkit on **YouTube** or head to their **website** for more information.

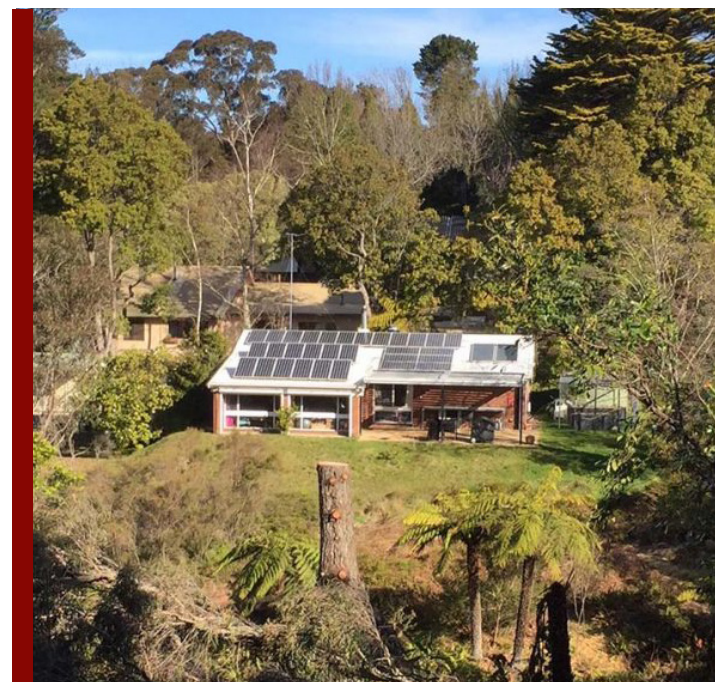


### Top tips for your sustainable home journey

1. Research and prepare
2. Consider your house and outdoor spaces as one project
3. Call on the experts
4. Install quality windows - especially in exposed sites
5. Learn how to build and retrofit for bushfire resilience from homeowners with lived experience.



## Sustainable House Day



# Understanding Roadside Vegetation Management



East Gippsland Shire Council plays a key role in ensuring roadsides are well maintained, safe for all users, and that the flora and fauna that makes our shire so special is protected.

## WHAT WE DO

We maintain almost 3,000 kilometres of local roads, or about 6,000km of roadside. We are mindful of differing views around roadside vegetation management, but our work is guided by various pieces of legislation and policy.

East Gippsland Shire is geographically large and diverse in its terrain and ecosystems, and there are multiple agencies involved in the funding, management of roads, roadsides and protection of flora and fauna.

We do not manage vegetation along some of the region's roads, including highways. To see what roads are managed by us, view the **Public Road Register** on our website or at one of our Customer Service Centres.

## WHY WE MANAGE ROADSIDE VEGETATION

### We maintain roadsides so they can:

- Facilitate safe use of our roads at all times.
- Contain examples of remnant vegetation pertaining to that area.
- Act as wildlife corridors that animals can safely travel along.
- Preserve species of high ecological value.
- Preserve sites of high cultural value.
- Provide safe access and egress in times of fire and flood.
- Act as firebreaks or control lines during times of fire.

### Our work on roadside vegetation ensures:

- Driver sightlines are maintained.
- Dangerous trees are identified and managed.
- Weeds are controlled.
- Bushfire fuel loads (bark, leaf litter, grass, small branches) are managed.
- Wildlife corridors are protected.
- Drainage and surface water is managed.

## HOW WE DO IT

### Roadside regrowth - clearing and slashing

Fuel reduction, part of our bushfire risk-management strategy, comprises planned fuel-reduction burning (conducted by the Country Fire Authority), slashing, mulching and the use of herbicides.

### What we do:

- Slash to one metre past guideposts on designated Council-managed roads for fire fuel reduction, rather than slashing from gutter to boundary fence.
- Conduct a slashing program from around October to January.
- Cut grass to a height of 100mm.
- Consider conducting full-width cuts from guidepost to fenceline, where warranted or in agreement with a local CFA brigade.

In addition to reducing fuel load, roadside slashing of grass on road reserves can:

- Improve driver visibility.
- Ensure vehicles can safely use the full span of a road.
- Assist in managing drainage issues.

Extra clearance is often carried out near intersections, crests, bends, road signs and areas where pedestrians, wildlife or livestock might encroach on the road.

Trees that pose a hazard due to site, condition or a change in road conditions may also be pruned or removed.

Regional Roads Victoria, Council and DELWP have been assessing and removing fire-affected trees across the shire. If you have concerns about hazardous trees on a Council-controlled roadside, contact us on (03) 5153 9500. If the tree is on public land, contact DELWP's Customer Contact Centre on 136 186).

CFA brigades regularly contact Council and provide advice on road reserves that are carrying high levels of fuel. Council works with the CFA's Risk Landscape Officers to establish the level of risk the road is carrying by determining the location, the level of fuel and the best manner in which to manage the fuel load. Burning the roadside is often not the best option as few "burn days" eventuate through the year. Sometimes, slashing and mulching are the preferred method as these activities carry a lower level of risk than using fire.

### Removing native vegetation

Our road maintenance and bushfire hazard works aim to remove the minimum amount of native vegetation necessary.

There are significant obligations on us and other parties to ensure protection of listed ecological communities under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. We work with DELWP and CFA to implement an agreed approach that both manages fire risk and protects environmental values.

We are generally only able to undertake limited fuel management and clean-up of debris along roadsides. Where this is beyond our resources, we will advocate for funding to undertake the necessary works. It is not practical to remove all reminders of the impact of the fires and fire-killed vegetation can still play an important habitat role.

### **What you can do:**

On Council-owned land, ratepayers must gain Council land manager approval before carrying out works such as fence repairs or roadside works, such as driveway access.

You can find an approval application form [here](#). If a permit is granted, a native vegetation offset must also be obtained.

Permits are required for vegetation removal in areas where species are protected. Permission to clear native vegetation is sought through DELWP.

Removing, destroying or lopping native vegetation requires separate approval.

Please contact us for guidance on seeking approvals.

### **Weed control**

We control weeds on our roadsides to prevent damage to protect both native vegetation and assist good management of private land. In particular, we identify and treat weed species that pose the biggest threats.

These species can be a risk by spreading into agricultural and natural areas and impact yields, human and animal health, biodiversity and habitats, recreation and amenity.

New and emerging weeds can be reported to Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or via the Exotic Pest Plant Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Native vegetation plays an important role in suppression of weed establishment on roadsides by limiting the areas where invasive weeds can grow.

Regenerating vegetation on roadsides naturally rehabilitates disturbed areas and plays an important role in habitat recovery for native flora and fauna.

Legislation safeguards vegetation on roadsides to support habitat conservation and protection of threatened species and communities.

Contact us for a copy of the Roadside Weeds and Pests Control Plan and the Sustainable Gardening booklet, which contain information on common weeds.

### **Hazardous trees**

Our arborists and contractors assess trees on Council roadsides. Trees can be pruned or removed if a hazard due to a safety risk, put property at risk, or if they limit road use.

#### **What we do:**

- Assess trees on age, species and health and condition.
- Determine a tree is a hazard if its roots are causing significant damage to property or have the potential to, or they pose a trip hazard (remedial action is considered before removal).
- Alert people to potentially hazardous trees by marking them or creating exclusion zones.
- Create an incident report and further assess the tree.
- Include powerline hazard identification, reporting and management in our assessment.
- Prune or use other methods for remediation.

Given the size of the shire, it is simply impossible for us to actively monitor all trees and vegetation issues.

Report trees considered a hazard by calling (03) 5153 9500 or via the **Snap Send Solve** app.

### **Firewood collection**

Firewood collecting is generally prohibited on Council-managed roadsides. In exceptions, Council will advertise where firewood can be collected on sections of roadside. Managed by Forest Fire Management Victoria, firewood can only be collected twice per year from state forests at specified times and locations.

For a map showing your nearest collection point, visit [ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood/firewood-collection-in-your-region](http://ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood/firewood-collection-in-your-region).

### **Cultural heritage significance**

Roadsides can contain artefacts of cultural heritage significance that require considered management.

Significant Aboriginal sites are protected a cultural heritage management plan may be necessary before any works commence. Non-Aboriginal historical sites, which can include significant trees, monuments or relics, are protected under the Victorian Heritage Act 1995.

### **Roadside litter and Illegal dumping**

Roadside litter poses a threat to driver safety, vegetation and health. The Snap, Send, Solve app allows the public to quickly and easily report roadside dumping.

Details of litter and illegal dumping sites on Council managed roads can also be emailed to us via [feedback@egipps.vic.gov](mailto:feedback@egipps.vic.gov).

For reports or contact details that inform our management of roadsides please contact Council or visit our **website**



## Bushfire recovery is progressing

**With the second anniversary of the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires upon us, it provides an opportunity for us to reflect how recovery is progressing.**

*We chat with Stuart McConnell, Council's General Manager Bushfire Recovery, about the role Council has, and continues to play working with communities and partners on their recovery.*

**What has been done to support bushfire recovery to date?**

As a community we have come a long way.

From a Council perspective:

- An enormous effort in working with communities to come together in Community Recovery Committees and supporting community projects and applications for funding.
- We have eight place managers supporting communities in their recovery.
- Worked with the other agencies to plan, coordinate and ensure recovery services are available for affected communities.
- Our rebuilding support service is working with 196 landholders.
- About \$20 million in replacement of assets destroyed by the fires including 13 vehicular bridges were completed in April.
- Remediated 236 kilometres of bushfire-damaged road and roadside.
- Advocated for and received over \$25.5 million in Local Economy Recovery grant funding.
- Advocacy on issues such as improved telecommunications and access to grant funding. Already, eight community facilities across east Gippsland have a Commonwealth funded satellite connection that can be

used when the mobile network fails during a disaster.

We have developed strong partnerships working in recovery to support our communities—particularly Bushfire Recovery Victoria and the National Recovery and Resilience Agency. We acknowledge them for their support.

**Can you tell us how the community-led or community-centred approach has worked?**

We know it's important; it's returning a level of control to communities given disaster is experienced as a loss of control.

It's hard work and has taken a lot of energy, from the many community volunteers involved. There have been some great outcomes and there is a need to better support the work.

Hats off to our communities and the energy and leadership they have shown.

**What are community groups telling you about the recovery process?**

It's hard work – our communities have worked hard, and our staff have worked incredibly hard too. There are areas in which we need to improve how government works together to make it easier. The recently-released Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 2 – Progress and effectiveness of Victoria's immediate relief and recovery arrangements report by the Inspector General of Emergency Management highlights this.

There's also the need to 'support local' and the established groups and ways of doing things where possible rather than inventing new. It will take time. We will continue to support communities into the longer term, particularly given the compounding impacts of COVID-19

and bushfire on top of drought.

There are also pressing issues specific to individual communities, e.g. rebuilding and housing availability. Some are telling us they think some things need to happen more quickly. Being better prepared for next time helps the recovery process.

**What are the current priorities for Council?**

We have a lot of working happening across the shire to support community recovery committees and on programs and infrastructure that support our social and economic recovery (not just bushfire). We are investing to further support community resilience for future disasters and advocating strongly for issues that are important to our communities.

Projects such as Buchan Streetscape and Linkages, Bruthen Streetscape, Marlo Triangle Park, Mallacoota Streetscape and seawalls, Mallacoota Hall, Forest Park upgrade at Orbost – these (and many others) are all projects where we are actively engaged with the community to ensure fit-for-purpose infrastructure that is appropriate for each community.

There's also the support we provide for communities to deliver their own projects, such as the Swifts Creek Recreation Reserve upgrade or the new Mallacoota Skate Park.

These projects will provide an economic boost during construction and significant economic and social connections once complete.

We are supporting communities that have not been able to access funding to progress their priorities, and from a rebuild support perspective we are reaching out to ensure no one falls through the cracks.

Officers have also prepared a submission to an independent review

# BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

of the Telecommunications Act 1999, building on a report Council commissioned that addressed digital Connectivity gaps and priorities.

We know digital connectivity is a critical barrier (or enabler) to economic development, attractiveness of regional living, supporting the visitor economy, a barrier to accessing health, education and other government services, and critical to public safety in emergency events.

## In terms of recovery work, what will be finished before Christmas?

Recent research by Melbourne University on the 2009 Black Saturday Fires was recommending a five-year framework for recovery. East Gippsland is nearing two years, so we know there is still more to be done.

Two of the major infrastructure projects directly related to bushfire recovery that we expect to be finished this summer are the reinstatement of the Genoa Pedestrian Bridge and the resurfacing of a section of the Buchan-Orbost Road impacted by fire.

## Rebuilding has been challenging for some people. Is there a wait for planning permits?

Yes, people are rebuilding and it's great to see. But many people require longer time to consider what they want for their future, if and when they want to rebuild. It is recognised that this is a hard time for many.

We understand about 30 per cent of bushfire-impacted property owners that are yet to engage with Council are either not ready or still working through their rebuild options. That is not inconsistent with other events. It's good to take time and experience indicates that it can be positive for people's recovery – making decisions when they are ready. Some others have sold or are not intending to rebuild.



*The Genoa Pedestrian Bridge rebuild is progressing and is expected to be complete this summer.*

Our team supporting people to navigate approvals will be in place until at least the end of 2022, so we continue to be available to assist those that would like our help.

Typically, the wait for a bushfire rebuild permit has been between 30 and 50 days depending on complexity and referrals.

Our rebuild support team is working with 196 landholders on various planning applications (sheds and dwellings). 136 planning permits have been issued for dwellings, sheds and similar work. This includes stepping through design and siting for bushfire requirements.

There is an ongoing issue is even when approval is given, securing builders and tradespeople can be difficult. There are well publicised shortages of builders and materials as a result of COVID-19 and stimulus programs and a range of other factors, and bushfire impacted landholders are caught in the middle. Overall, Council has seen about a 50 per cent increase in planning

permit applications.

## What are some of the recovery opportunities?

The partnerships between community and all levels of government, and in some cases the private sector, are resulting in:

- Communities coming together and supporting each other, and leaders stepping forward.
- Greater engagement on preparedness.
- Community facility improvements that support resilience and connectedness
- New telecommunications infrastructure that improves coverage and resilience.

## Any challenges?

Recovery is hard for most people affected. It's long and challenging work given the impacts in our communities, but there are also fantastic things happening – people coming together and community members really leading and looking out for each other.

We shouldn't underestimate how COVID-19 has impacted recovery. People want to come together which is an important element of recovery, but that is the very thing that has been most difficult. It will most likely mean a longer recovery journey, but it has also revealed the incredible resilience of our communities.

The stop-start nature of COVID-19 has also made it hard for businesses to get a clear run to make up lost ground.

Bushfires and COVID have exacerbated the challenges we already had in our community and that is not lost on us. Council was here for the immediate bushfire response and relief, and we will continue to be here throughout recovery.

that is not lost on us. Council was here for the immediate bushfire response and relief, and we will continue to be here throughout recovery.



# BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

## 'Cann Be' a big success

**After multiple postponements, Cann Be Ready Day, an all-services expo with a focus on emergency preparedness went ahead on Saturday 9 October in Cann River with a great turnout.**

Around 100 community members joined many emergency service agencies and departments, Cr Mark Reeves and Council staff to discuss preparedness for all types of emergencies.

Information was shared about household emergency planning, firewood collection, flood, fuel management and planned burns. Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPs) were discussed with residents with relevant documents shared via USB and hardcopy.

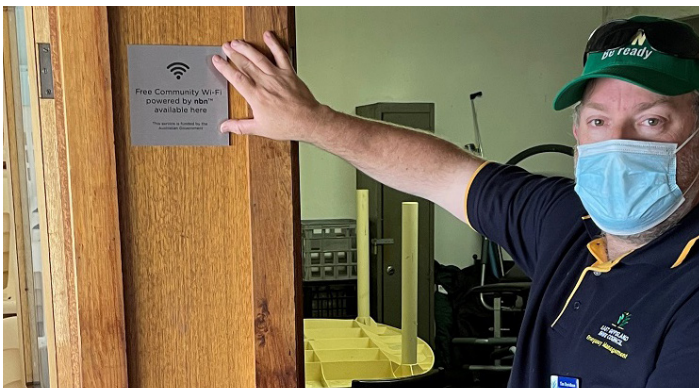
Favourable weather, raffles, prizes, and the Cann River

Country Fire Authority Community Choir all added to what has been described as an uplifting and fun day for all in attendance.

The day provided the opportunity to come together and connect. After COVID-19 restrictions it was the first chance for many in the community to catch up face-to-face.

The Cann Be Ready Day is just one of several community emergency planning days scheduled around the municipality, with Bruthen and Sarsfield planned for November and December, and others in the pipeline. Stay tuned for updates.

Council would like to thank the Cann Valley community for their participation and to all agencies and Council staff who planned and worked tirelessly for the day to come together.



Council's Emergency Management Officer Tim Davidson checks out the free community Wi-Fi, a community resilience project following the fires.



The Cann Be Ready Day included stalls and demonstrations from emergency agencies.

## Interest in Black Summer Grants

**Together with several East Gippsland community organisations, we have applied for over \$50 million of projects in the Black Summer Grants program.**

The \$280 million program, part of the National Bushfire Recovery Fund, was released in July to help communities address priorities for recovery and resilience after the 2019-20 bushfires.

We are aware of \$50 million of projects in East Gippsland, but there may be more.

Our staff provided valuable support to their communities by helping them

develop grant applications. In some cases, we were the applicant and in other cases we helped communities apply.

General Manager Bushfire Recovery Stuart McConnell said we've also provided letters of support for many worthwhile projects.

"The types of community projects were really varied and ranged from infrastructure upgrades or improvements to social recovery programs and resilience," Mr McConnell said.

"While applying for grants can be challenging and time consuming, if successful they will deliver some

terrific outcomes for our communities.

Unfortunately, only a portion of the applications are likely to be successful but the significant hard work in developing ideas shouldn't be lost.

"Council has advocated strongly for a fair allocation of the available funding and Council will continue to assist communities in looking for future funding opportunities," Mr McConnell concluded.

**Successful projects are expected to be announced in December.**

# Our Councillors



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Note: When emailing a Councillor, type "Att Cr (their last name)" in the subject line.

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