

Natural Environment Recovery Action Plan

Overall Status	On track	
	Progressing	
	Delays	

Objective One

Develop and implement risk-based programs aimed at supporting natural system recovery (this includes targeted pest and invasive animal and weed programs)

Project Status Update as at: March 2021

#	Project	Activities	Timelines	Lead/ Partners	Funded Status	Tracking	Notes (CRC's engaged, upcoming 2012 priorities and challenges etc)
1.1	Bushfire Biodiversity Relief and Early Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government announced a \$17.5 million funding package to support Phase 1 of the Bushfire Biodiversity Relief and Early Recovery program. Some of the immediate response programs include emergency extractions of threatened wildlife, fire severity mapping, fencing, assessments, and re-opening priority visitor sites. This activity has been superseded into additional programs – see notes. 	Various to June 2022	DELWP	\$54.5M		<p>In progress</p> <p>The program includes \$54.5 million of State and Commonwealth Government funding. The funds are supporting recovery actions for wildlife and biodiversity impacted by the bushfires.</p>

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1.2	Theme 1 Im- mediate re- cognition of critical fauna, flora and habitat and targeted actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Species information collected to inform prioritization of recovery actions 	December 2020	DELWP Zoos Vic			<p>Complete</p> <p>The following immediate actions have been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-nosed and Long-footed potoroo surveys Cave-breeding bat surveys Spot-tailed Quoll Surveys Large reptiles, and Glossy black cockatoo: recording opportunistic sightings Tree Hollows Data collection Assessments on 8 threatened frog species Final assessments for ground parrots, and several frog and reptile species Post fire assessments on broad-toothed rats <p>In progress</p> <p>The projects still in progress include the Eastern Ground Parrot and the Large Brown Tree Frog Surveys and structures, deployment and placement of nest boxes across Far East Gippsland; and monitoring of released Koala's around Gelantipy and Mallacoota.</p>
1.3	Theme 2 Wildlife welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency feeding and treatment of fire impacted wildlife immediately after fire 	December 2020		\$1M		<p>In progress</p> <p>Wildlife Welfare Roundtables were held between July and November 2020. Outputs include:</p> <p>New Wildlife Welfare Bushfire Response 2020 Action Plan. The plan commits to actions aimed at improving our collective response to wildlife welfare during future fire events. Further info can be found at https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/wildlife-emergencies/wildlife-fire-emergencies</p> <p>Revised and updated Victorian Response Plan for Wildlife impacted by Fire is available at https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/wildlife-emergencies/wildlife-fire-emergencies</p>

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1.4	Theme 3 Emergency extraction to prevent ex- tinction and limit species decline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern bristlebirds, threatened galaxias fish, spiny crayfish and freshwater mussels removed and managed. 	January 2021	DELWP Zoos Vic	\$2.4M		<p>Complete Sixteen species of fauna, including nine fish, two mussels, four crayfish and one bird species, were successfully extracted either in advance of the fire front or from fire-impacted waterways to prevent extinction. They were translocated or housed in captivity and later released back into the wild.</p> <p>In progress Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria are undertaking collection of flora across fire affected areas. Significant collections of living material have been gathered for propagation work, along with several new collections of seed to bolster the Victorian Conservation Seedbank.</p>
1.5	Theme 4 Intensified and sustained management of threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight-month program of weed and pest animal control. Includes reinstatement of Southern Ark operations, ground shooting feral and prioritised weed control. 	January 2021	DELWP Parks Vic EG CMA Arthur Ry- lah Institute	\$7M		<p>Complete The following projects to control pest plants and animals have been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Fencing Deer control in rainforest sites of significance Upper Snowy Fox Control <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed control in rainforest sites of significance Gippsland Southern Ark (Phase 1) Ongoing aerial and ground shooting, baiting and trapping and Aboriginal Cultural heritage Assessments. <p>A total of 691 flora and fauna (excluding invertebrates) species are expected to increase in probability of local persistence (change in suitable habitat) under sustained long-term herbivore control across the management area.</p>
1.6	Theme 5 Maximise long-term resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healing Country – enabling Traditional Owner land management. Increase resilience through new sanctuaries, and prioritised species genetic management 	January 2021	GLaWAC Traditional Owners Parks Vic	\$3.75M		<p>In progress Reading and healing Country activities are being undertaken by Traditional Owner groups in fire affected areas. Agencies and communities are working with traditional Owners to plan and implement projects, reading and healing country and cultural burning.</p>

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1.7	Theme 6 Knowledge, data and preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge acquisition, systems and data management & intervention guidance. 	June 2022	DELWP	\$1.75M		<p>In progress</p> <p>Maximising biodiversity resilience has seen a significant increase in investment to June 2022. DELWP has commenced development of strategic approaches to building biodiversity resilience across the landscape. This includes population and genetic management, identifying ecological refuges, creating safe havens etc. Some examples of projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of revegetation services in Victoria to support restoration and build resilience. Seed banking, investigation of germination protocols, propagation, growing etc for key flora species Modelling of scenarios for Future Fire Risk under climate change will contribute to subsequent modelling of long-term Ecological Refuges. Improved connectivity between mapping information systems (E-map and Biodiversity systems)
1.8	Commonwealth Government - 'Bushfire recovery package for wildlife and their habitat' (Phase 1 & 2)	<p>Phase 1 - Parks Victoria undertaking pest plant and animal control in EPBC listed threatened communities, including Alpine Peatlands and Littoral Rainforest (\$200,000).</p> <p>Phase 2 – A series of projects funded including,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Victoria undertaking pest plant and animal control in Alpine Peatlands and Littoral Rainforest, and updating rainforest prioritisation plan (\$200,000) DELWP protecting New Holland Mouse (\$40,000) DELWP baiting to protect the Spot Tail Quoll (\$70,000) Birds Life increasing habitat for Glossy Black Cockatoo (\$50,000) EGCMA undertaking woody weed control in Alpine Peatlands (\$154,000) EGCMA Project Management (\$36,000) 	June 2021	EGCMA Parks Victoria DELWP	\$750,000		<p>Complete</p> <p>Alpine peatland and littoral rainforest assessments have been completed for fire impact and recommendations being made for next steps to protect from threats.</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Fox baiting to help protect Spot-tailed Quoll and New Holland Mouse are on track with onground activities in progress. A highlight of works has included Birdlife installing 50 cockatubes for Glossy Black Cockatoos. Woody weed control has been undertaken in the Upper Mitchell and Snowy catchments.</p>

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1.9	Ash reseed- ing program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To sow and regenerate, areas of suitable receptive seedbed in fire-affected ash forests. 		DELWP	\$2M		Complete 11,538 ha of Ash Forest resown exceeding the target of 7000, with ongoing seed collection.
1.10	Pest Plant and Animal Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multi-partner approach managing new and invasive weeds and pest animals that emerge from the fire event. The Authority has secured approx. \$1million from Victorian Government to control woody weeds along waterways for Year 1. Additional funds will need to be secured for future pest plant and animal programs. 		EGCMA	Partially Funded		In progress The EGCMA has commenced woody weed control in the Upper Mitchell and Snowy catchments. The focus has been on working with partners to coordinate works.
1.11	Fluker Post Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise a shared network of trail cameras, photo monitoring points (Fluker posts) training and monitoring support to Landcare groups impacted by Bushfire. 		Landcare	Funded		In progress Landcare have received funding for monitoring. If the project concept is well received by community, Landcare will seek further funding opportuni- ties.
1.12	Revegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a post bushfire revege- tation guide to assist landhold- ers in recovery Provide native Indigenous species and fencing to increase the amount of healthy native vegetation in the landscape to support the recovery of native fauna and flora 		Landcare	Partially funded?		Complete An East Gippsland specific post bushfire revegetation guide is now available on-line and 1,000 copies printed. In progress Landcare is working with landholders and groups to provide plants and fencing.
1.13	Research spe- cies selection and planting design for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with experienced land- holders and researchers to iden- tify plant species and shelter belt and wildlife corridor design best suited to fire prone areas 		Landcare	Non funded		In progress Landcare continue to seek information from landholders and researchers to consider opportunities for plant species and designs for fire prone areas.
1.14	Develop habitat tree pruning guidelines for arborists to assist in habi- tat retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide produced and distribut- ed to agencies responsible for engaging contractors for tree pruning or removal 		Landcare	Partially funded		In progress Landcare continues to hold discussions with partner agencies.

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1.15	Coordinate the installation of Bird nest boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central coordination point for information and resources about nest boxes appropriate for East Gippsland bird and mammal species. 		Landcare/ Birdlife Australia	Partially funded		In progress Nest boxes are getting deployed and placed in appropriate trees across the region.
1.16	Roadsides (revegetation, water and erosion control)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding impact on Council Managed Land includes foreshore reserve throughout Mallacoota, replating and weed/ animal program. Revisiting/remapping EGSC roadside conservation status Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Management Monitor and mitigate erosion control measures in fire impacted areas. 		EGSC	Partially funded		In progress Funding submission to the Australian Government. The proposal is focusing on high value protection around the Mallacoota areas foreshore and roadsides.
1.19	Removal of hazardous trees on public or Crown land that is damaged by bushfires and poses an immediate safety risk along roads, tracks and public sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of any damage to private assets caused by the falling of hazardous trees during the fire event. Support private landholders in managing burnt and dangerous trees on the boundary and within their property. 		DELWP/ EMV	Funded		Complete 7,100km of roadside hazard tree assessment completed (600km remaining to be completed).
1.20	Autumn/ Winter Firewood Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable sites for the community to access firewood in the Autumn firewood collection period, including access to removed hazardous tree residues. This is to include the investigation of sites where tree sections can be safely stock-piled for community access. 		DELWP			Complete All firewood collection sites reopened; and additional timbers have been made available at public collection sites.

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1.21	Hazardous trees bound- ary and internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support landholders in replace- ment of internal fencing via technical advice, facilitation of volunteer agencies and charita- ble organisations. Implement the Government's policy to pay half the costs of materials to repair, replace or upgrade bushfire-damaged fenc- ing that borders National Parks, State Parks, State Forest. 		DELWP			Complete 855km of interface hazard tree assessment is complete. Monitoring and reas- sessment of areas is to occur over the next two years for tree decline.
1.22	Boundary and internal Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of fencing marks boundaries, securing stock and access arrangements. Rehabilitation of land used as fire control lines by fire agencies in the suppression of bushfires Support landholders in replace- ment of internal fencing via technical advice, facilitation of volunteer agencies and chari- table 		DELWP	Funded		Complete 328 fencing applications assessed, and payments made, this represents over 300km of fencing reconstructed and / or repaired.

Objective Two

Work with community groups to assist the restoration of the natural value at a local and regional level

Project Status Update as at: June 2021

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#	Project	Activities	Timelines	Lead/ Partners	Funded Status	Tracking	Notes (CRC's engaged, upcoming 2012 priorities and challenges etc)
2.1	Drought and Fire Recovery Employment Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the existing Drought Employment program to include community people impacted by the bushfires to provide an immediate and sustained boost to community and regional economy 80 people employed for 6 months Immediate environment works on public land. 	January 2021	EGCMA	Funded		<p>Complete</p> <p>The Drought Employment Program exceeded all targets and outcomes. Some highlights of the program included employment of 57 farmers or people impacted by the bushfires, from across Gippsland.</p>
2.2	Delivery and support Landcare projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and co-ordinate community education programs that enhance environmental outcomes for the community. Raise awareness of and promote community involvement in Landcare projects and activities that support recovery. Landcare member survey seeking needs identification and capacity distributed and responses collated 		Landcare			<p>In progress</p> <p>East Gippsland Landcare groups and networks received \$503,000 to undertake bushfire recovery biodiversity projects on public and private land.</p>

#	Project	Activities	Timelines	Lead/ Partners	Funded Sta- tus	Track- ing	Notes (CRC's engaged, upcoming 2012 priorities and challenges etc)
2.3	Agricultural recovery –restoring biophysical assets on farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and detail Impact assessments on individual farms across fire area (927 properties assessed, over 600 primary producers contacted) Provide information and support to landholders through a range of activities 	Ongoing				<p>In progress</p> <p>AgVic staff are linked in the Community Recovery Hub, providing resources on a regular basis. AgVic publish a regular newsletter reaching out to over 500 fire affected farmers across the region. Newsletter contain information on AgVIC, services and grants, farmers are responding well.</p> <p>Issues with farmers not being eligible for grants remains, causing allot of angst across the region. Similar issues with previous drought funded grants. However, alternative fencing grants are now available, large grants do require extensive detail.</p> <p>Several webinars have been held over the last couples of weeks, focusing on livestock and pasture management coming into winter. Further sessions are planned to run into the future.</p>
2.4	Telling the recovery story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a web platform to share information and data concerning natural environment recovery with the community Develop interpretative material and educational resources to share natural recovery processes and the importance of intervention actions To share community and agencies stories and associated research 		DELWP Federation University	Not funded		<p>Complete</p> <p>Websites including Bushfire recovery Connection and Biodiversity Recovery websites established with ongoing updates and maintenance. There are currently over 500 visits per month. It would be good to receive more stories and input for communities and individuals.</p>

#	Project	Activities	Timelines	Lead/ Partners	Funded Sta- tus	Track- ing	Notes (CRC's engaged, upcoming 2012 priorities and challenges etc)
2.5	Nature-based Community Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will support the recovery of people and the environment by connecting human and nature recovery. Deliver communication and activities with consideration to psychological principles of calm, safety, hope, connectedness, sense of control/agency, and sense of things 'getting back together' Recognise and support the role of Traditional Owners in caring for Country implement 'Community at the Centre' and community-led, place based recovery Catalyse the behavior changes opportunity of a disrupted moment, to nudge a new relationship between people, place and nature Increase the number of people acting for nature, and the effectiveness of those efforts 		DELWP Zoo Victoria			<p>In progress</p> <p>A Nature-led Recovery Grant Program is being developed. Recovery Grants will be for local community organisations and individuals to support bush-fire affected communities in undertaking nature-led recovery projects.</p>

Objective Three

Build resilience into the natural environment for longer term adaptation to a changing climate and supporting safer communities

Project Status Update as at: March 2021

Overall Status	On track	
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#	Project	Activities	Timelines	Lead/ Partners	Funded Status	Tracking	Notes (CRC's engaged, upcoming 2012 priorities and challenges etc)
3.1	Waterway Recovery Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore waterway works impacted by bushfire (CMA assets) Riparian Landholder fencing under agreement re-constructed Major debris build ups in waterways impacting community assets are removed. Long term resilience built into the waterways and assets Major waterway programs continue fire affected waterways, with high recreational and economic importance in East Gippsland. 	Ongoing	EGCMA	Funded		In progress The EGCMA has nearly completed the reconstruction of riparian fencing with landholders. Approximately 90% of the fencing is complete.
3.2	Water Monitoring in the Gippsland Lakes - Recreation Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake recreation water monitoring in the Gippsland Lakes to complement work being done by other agencies. 18/19 Bushfire and Recreation Water Quality report 	Ongoing	EPA			Complete Water quality monitoring and accompanying report completed.
3.3	Retain suitable drinking water standards for fire affected communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Gippsland towns with water supply systems continue to receive suitable quality drinking water Provide community health advice to recreational users of the waterways impacted areas. 	Completed	EG Water	N/A		Complete All water supplies and business as usual has returned to normal.

#	Project	Activities	Timelines	Lead/ Partners	Funded Sta- tus	Track- ing	Notes (CRC's engaged, upcoming 2012 priorities and challenges etc)
3.4	Fire risk reassessment and improving future fuel management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review fire behaviour and fire risk mitigation actions, to modify and improve future programs. Reassessment of fire risk assessment across the fire footprint and modification of fuel management and other fire programs moving forward to improve landscape resilient to large wildfires. Support of community driven bushfire risk programs emanating from both the Community Recovery Committees and the Safer Together CBBM initiative 					<p>Complete</p> <p>Since the fire, extensive work has been undertaken to review fire risk and understand the behaviour and spread of the 19/20 bushfire. The Bushfire Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre has initiated a project to map and model the progression and development of the fire.</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer of DELWP, is seeking a plan for the reintroduction of planned burning into the fire affected areas to facilitate the management and potential risk of future large and severe bushfires and the impacts to life and property from future fuel levels that will reaccumulate. The plan will also consider impacts to significant environmental values and recovery of species and ecological communities. DELWP is undertaking analysis using modelling of fuel accumulation to identify areas suitable for planned burning in the next three years.</p> <p>Fire agencies are also working with communities to support their planning around more localised understanding of risk and township protection actions.</p> <p>The government response to IGEM commits DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and other land and fire managers, to lead the development of a whole of sector strategy to guide land and fire management in the context of a changing climate, growing population and changing demographics. In addition to public land, the whole of sector strategy will consider how to effectively support road managers and local governments to mitigate bushfire risks on roadsides and in high bushfire risk local government areas.</p> <p>A strategic firebreak initiative has commenced to reduce risk along key access roads and township interface areas.</p>
3.5	Management of ongoing natural resource use of public land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess impact on activities and mitigation measures - apiary sites, grazing, hunting etc review licences, including opportunities to make alternative sites available and to restrict use in highly impacted areas. Any impacts to licenced areas are managed appropriately Sustainable management processes exist for all licenced use of public land in the fire footprint 					<p>In progress</p> <p>The ongoing management of natural resource use across public land is the focus of the Regional Forest Agreement review which has been triggered post the 19/20 bushfires and will occur in 21/22. In addition, the DELWP will develop a new Forest Management Plan for Gippsland to be delivered by June 2022. Consideration of major fire impacts and the ongoing recovery will be built into this plan which will incorporate objectives around the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Environment Cultural Identity and History Experience and Recreation Resources, Livelihood and Economy and Human Life and Safety

Objective Four

Nature based visitor experiences and sites are re-established that reflect traditional owner and community values and aspirations and support recreation, tourism and economic opportunities

Project Status Update as at: March 2021

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4.1	Implementing working for Victorian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide employment opportunities for local people displaced from their normal employment by COVID19 to participate in recovery 		DELWP Parks Vic EGCMA Landcare EG Shire			In progress East Gippsland has endured major impacts from dual hardship – the fires and COVID-19. In order to improve the economic and employment opportunities for locals, the Victorian Government initiated a state-wide Working for Victoria scheme. However, the scheme's impact has been particularly unique in our region. 20 individuals, from all walks of life, who were suddenly without work due to COVID-19, applied for the program and were placed at DELWP to assist recovery efforts on public land, community groups and committees of management. The scheme provided valuable jobs in a difficult time, allowing community members to help their neighbours recover from immense challenge. The program has been a terrific success with all participants upskilling in new areas and some positions having been extended or initiated at Parks Victoria for the coming year. Those who have finished up have moved onto other jobs in the area.
4.2	Reopening visitor destinations on public land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community access restored to key locations in line with 'milestone' dates 		Parks Vic GLaWAC DELWP			In progress Milestones were met for access restored to key locations for the Christmas and Easter periods. Agencies will continue to work together to complete access.
4.3	Healing Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Traditional Owners to deliver projects and activities to heal Country. Government support for projects healing Country. Traditional Owners actively and meaningfully involved 		GLaWAC TO groups across the fire footprint			In progress Agencies and community are supporting Traditional Owners and GLaWAC to develop and deliver projects that are aimed at healing country. Some examples include cultural heritage assessments and surveys, capturing data and information about country and providing opportunities for increasing skills and knowledge.

4.4	Cultural heritage recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed cultural heritage surveys of assets within the fire footprint and implementation of any recommendations 		DELWP Parks Victoria GLaWAC Heritage Victoria			In progress Agencies are working together to undertake cultural heritage surveys within the fire footprint. Heritage Victoria are scheduled to visit recovery areas in the coming weeks.
4.5	Restoration and Management of visitor sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration and improvement of visitor offer at sites of regional economic significance – Cape Conran, Buchan Caves, Mallacoota Inlet Reopening of recreation sites, tracks and trails on public land during the holiday period and beyond Undertake works required i.e. arborist assessment and works, track access work, rebuild infrastructure etc Grow world-class nature-based visitor economy opportunities in parks Progress Gunaikurnai Joint Management Plan opportunities - Buchan Caves Reserve Strategic Recovery Directions Planning 		Parks Vic GLaWAC DELWP			In progress Re-opening of visitor facilities continues to be a priority for agencies. Many visitor areas are re-opening with improved visitor opportunities.