

Mallacoota District Recovery Update

APRIL 2022



Mallacoota meet and greet

Residents in Mallacoota and surrounding districts are invited to meet informally with Mayor Cr Mark Reeves and Councillors at community meet and greets. Senior Council staff will also attend, so come along and discuss projects and issues of interest to your community.

Monday 16 May from 4.30 pm – 5.30 pm - Mallacoota Clubrooms, Greer Street.

Genoa Council Meeting

You are invited to our next Council Meeting, which will be held on Tuesday 17 May at 1.30 pm at the Genoa Public Hall, 4642 Princes Highway, Genoa. Doors open at 1.15 pm. Please register to attend: <https://www.trybooking.com/BYZRV>

The agenda is available from 1.00 pm on the Friday before the meeting from our website.

There are two ways you can take part in a Council meeting. You can ask questions (spoken or in writing) or present to Council. Your questions or presentation can be on an agenda item or any other topic.

You need to fill in a form before the meeting, which is available on our website.

Social housing register

Mallacoota community members who have longer term housing requirement needs are encouraged to register on the Victorian Social Housing registry if eligible. Additional information and how to register can be found at Housing.vic.gov.au. We continue to work collaboratively with BRV and MADRA to support community and make provisions for those who are still in need of accommodation.

Nature-based tourism

We recently delivered a nature-based tourism workshop in partnership with Mallacoota and District Business and Tourism Association, East Gippsland Marketing, Destination Gippsland and AusIndustry's Strengthening Business Service.

More than 30 community leaders and tourism businesses (existing and emerging) from the Mallacoota and Cann Valley districts attended the half-day workshop.

Participants exchanged knowledge and ideas, explored innovative solutions and initiatives that aim to improve the overall destination performance and optimise the opportunities to promote the region's natural assets and greater tourism offerings.

It was a great opportunity to learn, connect and network, and identify opportunities for ecotourism and nature-based tourism development which align with the values and story of East Gippsland. The interactive workshop was facilitated by Dr Dianne Dredge of the Tourism Co-Lab. This event was co-funded with East Gippsland Community Foundation.

Ecological recovery post bushfires

Recent estimates suggest that billions of vertebrates and invertebrates were affected by the Black Summer Bushfires, with some feared to be at risk of extinction due to the extraordinary scale, intensity and speed of the fire.

Field assessments of ecological recovery have been hampered by COVID-19 restrictions and mandated lockdowns, but with the recent easing of restrictions observations and documenting the recovery progress in our region is now happening.

Frogs of the far east



East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA) conducted sessions in Genoa, Mallacoota and Cann Valley during April, where people could see and learn all about frogs that call far East Gippsland home. With new knowledge learned from attending sessions, community members were encouraged to head out into their backyards and upload frog observations to "iNaturalist", contributing towards documenting valuable environmental knowledge within our landscape and track frog recovery, post bushfires. For more information contact egcma@egcma.com.au

Severe weather

Damage is still being assessed throughout East Gippsland following the severe weather and flooding over four days in April.

Strong easterly winds had caused significant tree fall across the landscape. Several river systems within the East Gippsland catchment reached major and moderate flood levels, including localised flooding in communities. Mallacoota was without communications and Marlo was without power for over 24 hours, the Monaro Highway was closed at Cann River and the Princes Highway was closed between Orbost and Genoa for over 48 hours. The shire recorded 31 road closures with more than 150 roads being impacted by the event. Some communities self-activated a community

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relief facility to help those affected. This allowed people to come together, have a cuppa and connect with each other for support. Staff in the relief centre were able to call the Incident Control Centre (ICC) to share local impacts and receive critical emergency information. Many communities found the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) satellite communication systems to be an effective tool to keep in touch with the world. Since September 2021, East Gippsland has responded to five significant weather events, four of which were declared under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Approximately 444 roads have been impacted, many multiple times. The cost estimates sit at more than \$3 million and we continue to work with Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) in managing this. Of the 444 roads impacted over the past six months, 105 of these roads were also impacted by the 2019/20 Bushfires. Our Works department and contractors reacted swiftly to ensure public safety and to complete restoration works. The cumulative effect of subsequent and repeated natural disasters has resulted in more severe damage to infrastructure, which is proving difficult to restore quickly.

Our Emergency Management team is working to assess the damage from these natural disasters and will seek appropriate funding to reconstruct public assets to a more disaster resilient standard. This will help to reduce future financial burden.

Resilience preparedness program

Your Place Manager and our Emergency Management team are working together to have a local Mallacoota community group start training to run a Community Led Relief Facility for the first 72 hours in an emergency.

Several members of our Emergency Management team are scheduled to participate in information sessions and discussions on Flood Class Levels for the Genoa River, to better reflect what a major or minor flood looks like and the consequences. The sessions will be led by the SES and EGCM.

Further meetings have been held with the Mallacoota Fuel Management Group (consisting of community members, CFA, DELWP, Parks Vic), with group discussions focusing on land management.

For more information on any of these resilience preparedness projects please contact your Place Manager, or project lead Tim Davidson on (03) 5153 9500.

Cultural Awareness Training

Several of our Place and Community Directorate team members had the privilege of attending the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) Cultural Awareness Training sessions during March and April in various locations.

VACCA delivered the sessions to East Gippsland agencies and communities through federal bushfire recovery funding and provided further understanding of how to respectfully work with Aboriginal communities and organisations.



(Pictured: Buchan Place Manager Rebecca Steenholdt participating in the Sarsfield training session on 29 March).

The sessions informed us of how the enduring trauma - directly caused by historical events - is still pertinent and complex in Aboriginal communities and how the lack of understanding Indigenous history and culture in the area - significant sites and connection to the land - was emphasised in the bushfire recovery space.

Gaining a better understanding of Aboriginal history and culture will support healing and working alongside Aboriginal communities impacted by bushfire and the COVID-19 pandemic with greater compassion and increased engagement and understanding, now and into the future.

Gippsland Business Connect Newsletter

The business community can stay up to date by registering their details with Gippsland Business Connect. For more information or to register, visit <https://gippsland.businessconnect.io/>

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