

# Mallacoota District Recovery Update

JUNE 2022



## Genoa Pedestrian Bridge opening

The Genoa Pedestrian Bridge is open again!

The new 117-metre footbridge is a key piece of infrastructure for the town. About 150 people joined East Gippsland Shire Council Mayor Cr Mark Reeves for the opening on Saturday 28 May.

"The bridge is an important part of life in Genoa. After the loss of the bridge in the 2019-20 fires, we all

knew a rebuild was needed. It was a community priority, we made it a priority, and it is wonderful to now have the bridge open," Cr Reeves said.

To read more see the media release on our website: <https://bit.ly/3x8Ja7R>

## Council in the Community

Residents in Mallacoota and surrounding areas met with Mayor Cr Mark Reeves and Councillors at a Meet and Greet on Monday 16 May

at the Mallacoota Clubrooms. Senior council staff led discussions on projects and issues of interest to the community over a casual cuppa.

Far East Gippsland residents were able to attend the 17 May Council Meeting, which was held in the Genoa Public Hall. Attendees were informed on several topics, including the draft Budget, the Mallacoota skatepark redevelopment and a variety of community grants. Following the meeting, the attendees were invited to ask questions either in person or in writing.

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## Update from Meg

There have been many visitors to the Mallacoota District over the past few weeks, keeping myself and the community busy. Here are a few of my highlights:

It was rewarding watching months of planning come to fruition at the Mallacoota 'Meet and Greet' and I am confident that the Councillors couldn't have squeezed one more thing into their itinerary if they tried. There were many conversations about the challenges facing the district and the exciting opportunities, including discussion of ways Council and community-led initiatives could work more innovatively together in the future.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Michelle Dowsett, the Executive Officer of the East Gippsland Community Foundation, when she was in the District awarding 'big cheques' to the successful community groups in this round of East Gippsland Foundation Community Grants. Congratulations to the Mallacoota & Genoa Broadcasting Association (3MGB Wilderness Radio), Genoa Hall Committee, Mallacoota and District Recovery Association (MADRA), and Mallacoota Sea Eagles Dragon Boat Club on their grants. The next round of Community Grants will focus on young people, with Michelle and I taking the opportunity to talk through the many opportunities for young people in our district.

Members of the Bega Valley Shire Council Recovery Team met with MADRA Secretary, Carol Hopkins, and I whilst they were in the district. It was great to learn more about their recovery journey and the challenges they face whilst also sharing our own experiences. I am looking forward to finding ways to support and work with our neighbours across the border.



*L to R: Outside the Genoa Public Hall CEO Anthony Basford, Place Manager Mallacoota District Meg Allan, Councillors Arthur Allen and Kirsten Van Diggie, Mayor Cr Mark Reeves, Councillors Tom Crook, Jane Greacan and Mendy Urie.*



*L to R: Talking with a community member at the Genoa Community Lunch are Place Manager Mallacoota District Meg Allan, Councillor Jane Greacan and Mayor Cr Mark Reeves.*

## Rebuilding

We continue to support people whose homes were destroyed or damaged by the 2019-22 fires. If you need help navigating relevant approvals, then please contact the Rebuild Support Service [brss@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:brss@egipps.vic.gov.au)

Our recent figures indicate that in this district (Genoa, Gipsy Point, Mallacoota, Maramingo Creek, Wallagaraugh, Wangarabell, and Wroxham) there

have been 92 referrals to the Rebuild Support Service; 61 planning permits have been approved and 7 are not rebuilding.

Mallacoota community members who have longer term housing requirements are encouraged to register on the Victorian Social Housing registry if eligible. More information and how to register can be found at [www.housing.vic.gov.au](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au)

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Now over two years since the fires, rebuilding remains slow. People rebuilding are facing a range of challenges. We recently commissioned a report to better understand the capacity of our building sector and the barriers to rebuilding. This draft report provides the evidence to inform advocacy and options for further action and has highlighted a range of barriers already known to many in the area. Some of these issues are:

- insurance that does not cover the increased building costs or the current bushfire building standards, limited numbers of builders/tradespeople,
- increase in building costs over the last 12 months, and
- reduced availability of building materials due to supply chain issues.

This situation presents complex issues which require more effort and attention from all levels of government and other partners. We are advocating strongly on these issues with both the state and federal governments and we are convening partners to seek solutions to address these barriers.

## Mallacoota Skate Park update

At the 17 May Council meeting in Genoa the contract for the Mallacoota Skate Park redevelopment was awarded to Grind Projects to complete the Construction of the skate park. We are now a big step closer to providing young people with an excellent community skate park. Works will be carried out from mid-October and are expected to be completed by December 2022. Construction updates will continue to be provided through the Mallacoota and District Place Update and via the project's Your Say page: [yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/mallacoota-skate-park](https://yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/mallacoota-skate-park)

## A word from Kaylene Wickham, Agribusiness Development Officer

The Agribusiness Development Officer role allows me to work alongside our farmers who were drought affected and then fire affected. It has been meaningful for me to be aware of issues that are currently affecting our rural communities to effectively advocate for funding or services where needed. A great example of this is the Business Adaption Program. Farmers wanted to consider diversifying and generating a second income stream from their land to build resilience in times of drought. We were able to deliver a year-long business adaption program and mentor 45 farmers thanks to funding provided by Regional Development Victoria. With only one month to go, participants are already reporting real outcomes. Council undertook a Farmer Survey in 2021. It was a highlight as we received current, real time, raw data that we have been able to create a list of seven action themes. The new 'Grown Caught Made' farm gate trail program links

farmers to sales, new markets, locals, and visitors touring our lovely region. Check out [visiteastgippsland.com.au](https://visiteastgippsland.com.au) to see a farm gate business that you can visit, or find out how you can be added.

The number of people that I work with varies greatly from week to week – from 10 to 100, including farmers and agencies that support the industry. One week in February I connected with hundreds of people, as there were so many agriculture events on in East Gippsland - so many good conversations had, so much learned ...and I had so many tasks to action when I arrived back at the office!

It is certainly evident that many people are still struggling to 'reground' after all the events that have occurred over the past couple of years. It is like many have faced repeated setbacks and are just able to lift their heads and take a breath. From our recent Community Outreach Events, some reported it was the first time they had been back to the hall since the fires and whilst it was emotional, knowing



Mallacoota Farmer Community Outreach Day – Kaylene Wickham (right) with National Recovery and Resilience Agency's Joe Rettino, Peter Tuohy and Lana Young.



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there were services that could assist and so many people were available to meet them, was reassuring and the deep conversations helpful.

It is important to me to make sure farming businesses are able to connect to programs, initiatives and where needed, funding and opportunities, so they can pursue the plans for their particular business. As part of this I collate an Agrinews that can be circulated to farmers - if you would like to receive this please contact me at Council.

For further information contact Kaylene at [KayleneWi@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:KayleneWi@egipps.vic.gov.au) or on 03 5153 9450.

## Private powerline replacement opportunity

Victorians living in the state's east are encouraged to protect their homes and communities from the risk of bushfires by undergrounding their private overhead powerlines.

The Victorian Government is making regional and rural Victorian communities safer from future bushfires by fully funding works to bury powerlines through the Powerline Bushfire Safety Program.

If you are a resident who has a private overhead electric line (POEL) on your property, you are invited to apply to have it placed underground as part of the \$5 million POEL Scheme. More information can be found at: [www.energy.vic.gov.au/electricity/powerline-replacement-fund](http://www.energy.vic.gov.au/electricity/powerline-replacement-fund) or you can contact the POEL Project Team on email [safe.powerlines@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:safe.powerlines@delwp.vic.gov.au) or call (03) 9918 7315. To find out if your powerlines are private or owned by the electricity distributor, AusNet Services, call 1300 360 765.



## Win a mini-holiday

Have your say and be part of reshaping the future of visitor services in East Gippsland

The tourism industry has had a significant shake-up and now is a good time to review how future visitor servicing could look like in East Gippsland. As part of this, we would like to invite you to participate in a short survey, which will help us to evolve our service offerings.

As a thank you for completing the survey, you can go into the draw to win two nights at the Lagoon side Glamping Tent at the new Metung Hot Springs complete with welcome drinks and canapes, daily breakfast and wellness activities valued at \$1,220. Prize is for two guests.

Please complete the survey by 11.59 pm on 19 July 2022.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EGVSCCommunityStudy>

**\$5M boost to  
continue undergrounding  
bare-wire powerlines**

**Applications  
for the  
scheme are  
open until  
Thursday 30  
June 2022.**

