Welcome

This monthly newsletter brings together the latest updates and information to support Towong Shire residents and businesses through bushfire recovery.

A joint initiative by Towong Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria. Thank you to supporting agencies that have contributed content including DELWP, Agriculture Victoria, Environment Protection Authority Victoria, CFA, Regional Roads Victoria and Parks Victoria.

We are continually reviewing and improving the recovery information we provide and how we provide it. If you have feedback, or have a story you would like to share, call 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

Bushfire Rates Relief Package

Towong Shire Council has received $3.2M from Bushfire Recovery Victoria through the Victorian Government’s Council Assistance Fund. The funding will support our communities in the wake of the Upper Murray bushfires.

The relief is intended to help alleviate some of the financial hardship experienced by residents and businesses who have been impacted by the bushfires.

In determining the allocation of rate relief, Council has carefully considered the varying levels of impact resulting from the fires; from direct and severely impacted properties and lives, through to indirect social and economic impacts.

The Bushfire Rates Relief Package is comprised of three components:

1. Relief for Residents
2. Relief for Businesses
3. Support for Rebuilding and Development

Mayor Cr David Wortmann said “While some of our residents and businesses in the Upper Murray continue to rebuild their lives, the last thing they need to worry about is paying their Council rates and fees. We hope the Relief Package alleviates that immediate concern” he said.

“Council also recognises that it is not just those in the direct impact zone who need a hand. This package will provide varying levels of assistance to all ratepayers”.

In May residents will receive their rate instalment notices, together with an information flyer. Eligible rate relief credits will be automatically applied and shown on the notice. Council has also extended the due date of instalments 3 and 4 to June 30 2020.

If residents believe the extent of damage their property has sustained has been recorded incorrectly, please contact Council’s Property and Rates Team.

Residents who are continuing to face financial hardship are also encouraged to speak to Council’s Property and Rates Team to discuss alternative arrangements, including interest free deferment of rates and instalment plans.

Full details on the Bushfire Rates Relief Package and tiers of support are available at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfireraterelief or by calling 02 6071 5100.

Get Involved in Community Led Recovery

Residents and businesses across Towong Shire are being encouraged to register to join a Community Led Recovery Group.

The groups will work to identify community needs, coordinate and deliver local recovery actions and will advocate on behalf of the region to all levels of government. There are a number of groups; Action Groups; Community Recovery and Resilience Committees; and Working Groups, depending on your location and area of interest.

The groups provide an avenue for community members to have a voice throughout the recovery phase by sharing
views and aspirations. While an interim recovery committee has supported immediate recovery needs in the Upper Murray, ongoing Community Recovery and Resilience Committees will be established to support the whole shire.

If you would like to play an active role in getting our communities back on their feet, complete the form at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery or call 1800 518 222.

While registrations officially closed on May 15th, registrations will still be accepted following this time.

Coronavirus and Bushfire Recovery
While Coronavirus may have impacted the way we do things, the situation does not change the ongoing work and priority of Bushfire Recovery.

Council’s Recovery Team together with Bushfire Recovery Victoria and supporting agencies, continue to work to support the community throughout recovery.

Council’s Recovery Team adjusting to a new way of connecting online.

As always, Recovery staff and services are here to help. You can reach them by telephone, email, or arrange a visit to have a coffee and chat (while physical distancing).

Towong Shire Bushfire Recovery Team
Phone: 1800 518 222 (Mon—Fri, 9am—4pm)
Email: recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

Bushfire Recovery Victoria
Phone: 1800 560 760
Email: connect@brv.vic.gov.au

Appointment of Director of Relief and Recovery
For the past four months Acting Director Relief and Recovery, Amanda Pagan, has supported and driven bushfire relief recovery in Towong Shire.

Amanda was the first Council responder to the Upper Murray, having joined Council prior to Christmas in her role as Director Community and Planning. Together with Council’s passionate and dedicated Recovery Team, Amanda has become a trusted and reliable go-to in a time of need for our bushfire-affected communities.

We would like to recognise and thank Amanda for all her contributions, dedication and commitment to relief and recovery during this time.

Amanda will transition back to her substantive role as Director Community and Planning.

Please join us in welcoming Nola Tudball to the role of Director Relief and Recovery. Nola has worked as a practitioner, manager and leader in community and health service organisations and as a consultant in the public not-for-profit and private sectors. This included working with Yarra Ranges Shire Council following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, to review their recovery response.

Nola looks forward to getting to know the community to understand their recovery needs, so that they can work together to deliver on their aspirations for the future.

Nola and Amanda will continue working together over the coming weeks as Nola makes a tree change to the Upper Murray. Please help Nola feel welcome and join us in thanking Amanda for her contributions.

Contact Your Local Area Recovery Officer
Dedicated Recovery Officers are here to give local residents and businesses a hand throughout recovery. If you are yet to speak to someone about your Recovery needs, we encourage you to reach out.
To subscribe to the digital newsletter email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au
For past editions visit www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery

Contact your local Recovery Officer directly:
- Cudgewa, Berringama, Lucyvale: Jessica Jarvis 0408 102 095
- Walwa, Cross-Border, Mt Alfred, Burrowye, Guys Forest, Jingellic: Eden Cook 0429 060 239
- Towong, Towgla, Corryong: Pete Dikschei 0428 950 739
- Tallangatta Valley, Mitta Valley, The Peninsula, Biggara: Tracey Farrant 0419 636 596
- Nariel: Jenny McCoy 0407 293 907
- Tintaldra, Tooma: Kaye Nankervis 0436 445 187

**Thank You for Keeping Our Community Safe**

Thank you to all residents and businesses for taking precautions to help keep our communities safe from Coronavirus.

However, we are not through this yet. Please continue to monitor the latest advice from the Victorian Government. If you have the mildest of symptoms, please get tested. Call the dedicated Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 and commence self-isolation.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) remains the reliable source of up-to-date information on coronavirus. Phone 1800 675 398, follow them on social media [www.facebook.com/VicGovDHHS](http://www.facebook.com/VicGovDHHS) or check their website for updates [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/)


**Wellbeing and Support**

It’s a difficult time for our community, both juggling the aftermath of bushfire and now the challenges of COVID. It is normal to feel scared, overwhelmed, anxious and confused. Anyone directly or indirectly affected by the fires can have these feelings.

If these feelings are affecting you, it is important that you seek help. It has been shown that early treatment of these symptoms can effectively help to reduce the risk of future mental health issues. Speak to someone by calling:

- Bushfire Counselling: 1300 514 811
- Corryong Health: 02 6076 3200
- Lifeline Bushfire Helpline: 13 43 57
- MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

**Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program**

The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program is available to Towong residents free-of-charge. You can access the Case Support Program by calling 1800 560 760.

**Online Mental Health Resources**

- Beyond Blue - [coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](http://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)

**Resources for Supporting Children through COVID**


**A Mother’s Day Surprise**

Our Recovery Officers surprised some Mums last week when they delivered some donated gifts. Like these trees from Wodonga TAFE, helping to rebuild gardens destroyed by the bushfires.

It was a small gesture that they hoped would brighten
someone’s day. The deliveries also provided a chance to check in on residents during these isolated times.

Financial Assistance
The recent bushfires combined with COVID-19 has had a significant negative impact on local businesses and our communities.

Financial Counselling & Support Is Available
Financial counsellors are available from AgBiz Assist to provide advice on financial matters, grants, help with applications and support accessing concessional loans. This includes help applying for the $75,000 primary producers grant and the $10,000 small business and primary producers grant.

Call 1300 834 775 to arrange a free, independent and confidential over-the-phone appointment.

Free financial counselling also continues to be provided through:
- AgBiz Assist: 1300 834 775 info@agbizassist.org.au
- Anglicare: 1800 244 323
- Small Business Victoria: 1800 413 828

Financial support continues to be made available for households, farms and businesses impacted by the recent fires. To find details of financial assistance and support available to you, visit Bushfire Recovery Victoria www.brv.vic.gov.au or call 1800 560 760.

Grants

$10,000 Grants for Small Business and Primary Producers

Over 800 Victorian businesses have now received the $10,000 bushfire support grant available to Small Business and Primary Producers who have experienced loss of income from the bushfires.

Provided by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments, the grant program is still open for applications through Rural Finance. Applicants will not be precluded from applying for this grant if they have already received assistance under the Emergency Bushfire Response: Small Business Grants or the Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries Grants programs.

It’s easy to apply and you aren’t required to upload any financial documents if you don’t have them right now.

Rural Finance has counsellors available to help you to find out which grants you’re eligible for.

Contact Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or email governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au


$75,000 Grant - Directly Impacted Primary Producers

Payments up to $75,000 are available to eligible primary producers, including apiarists, directly impacted by the bushfires. These grants can help rebuild primary production enterprises, including replacing destroyed on-farm infrastructure (such as fencing).

To see the eligibility criteria and to apply, visit www.ruralfinance.com.au. Applications must be submitted by July 31.

$50,000 Grant - Directly Impacted Businesses and Non-Profit Organisations

Payments of up to $50,000 are available to eligible Victorian small businesses and non-profit organisations (NPOs) affected by the bushfires.
These grants are intended to help pay for costs of clean-up and reinstatement of eligible small businesses that have suffered direct damage as a result of bushfires.


**$15,000 Grant - Primary Producer Emergency Transport Costs**

Transport subsidies of up to $15,000 are available to eligible primary producers directly impacted by the bushfires.

Eligible primary producers (including apiarists) can claim the subsidy for eligible transport costs that directly address immediate animal welfare and safety needs, including:

- Transporting of emergency fodder
- Transporting of stock to agistment (including returning stock), sale or slaughter
- Transporting of stock drinking water


**New $20,000 Red Cross Rebuilding Grant**

The new Red Cross Rebuild Grant announced March 31 provides $20,000 to help homeowners experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of bushfires. It assists with the early stages of rebuilding a primary place of residence. The $20,000 grant is over and above the original $20,000 grant that was available to people who lost their primary place of residence (including those renting). Visit [www.redcross.org.au/bushfire-grants-questions](http://www.redcross.org.au/bushfire-grants-questions)

**Further Grants Information**

Factsheets on grants and other assistance can be found at the BRV website: [www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria)

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**Meat & Livestock Australia - Back to Business**

Red Meat Producers in fire-affected regions can access up to three free one-on-one Back to Business sessions with a local farm management consultant to help put their business back on track.

For information or a copy of the registration form contact Agriculture Victoria staff: Lyndon Kubeil on 0418 532 085, lyndon.kubeil@agriculture.vic.gov.au or Jo Cameron 0419 832 704, jo.cameron@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

**RSPCA Animal Welfare**

The RSPCA is here to help with support for your animals in this bushfire recovery period. They can assist with subsidising necessary veterinary care for your animals, providing water for animals, food and fodder for your pets, horses and livestock on hobby farms, as well as other needs that you may have for your animals at this time.

Contact the RSPCA Victoria bushfire support line on 03 9224 2222 or via the contact form at [www.rspcavic.org/BushfireSupport](http://www.rspcavic.org/BushfireSupport)

**Camping and Recreation in National Parks**

At the direction of the Chief Health Officer of Victoria, Parks Victoria have closed all designated campgrounds and accommodation throughout all parks and reserves across Victoria due to Coronavirus, until further notice.

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Bellaboo Wildlife Shelter in Corryong providing care for a baby wombat.

There are a number of campgrounds that were heavily impacted by the bushfires and Parks Victoria recovery teams are continuing to undertake works when safe to do so and in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. This includes track clearing, demolition works, hazardous tree removals and prioritising building works.

The safety of Parks staff and visitors is our highest priority. We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure works can be conducted safely for both staff and appointed contractors.

**Bushfire Clean-Up Progress**

Clean-up is continuing with social distancing in place. The free state-wide clean-up managed by Grocon is on track for completion by the end of August (weather dependent). Seven contractors are now operating in the area and 25% of registered properties have commenced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Towong Shire</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total properties registered for clean-up</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total inspections completed</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total clean-ups commenced</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total clean-ups completed</td>
<td>35</td>
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</table>

All bushfire waste is classified as asbestos contaminated. Only Class A subcontractors and supervisors are certified and licensed to handle this waste.

Every day before works commence, sites undergo air monitoring for asbestos particles. Grocon is engaging the closest available air monitoring services for this requirement.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) understands there is still some community concern about potential for public exposure to asbestos fibres from the bushfire waste clean-up program.

Licenced contractors engaged in clean-up activities are subject to a compliance code for removing asbestos, which includes strict measures to reduce risks, including wrapping all waste in trucks and making sure dust is suppressed with water.

All asbestos waste disposal will be overseen by the EPA and WorkSafe. There is no risk of exposure to asbestos from waterways. Likewise there is no risk from ingesting asbestos via rainwater tanks.

Asbestos exposure becomes a health concern when high concentrations of asbestos fibres are inhaled over a long period. Illness is very unlikely to result from a single exposure or from a short period of exposure to low levels.

For more information contact the EPA by calling 1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842 – 24 hours), or emailing contact@epa.vic.gov.au

**Waste Disposal**

**Prescribed Waste – Houses and Structures**

Grocon has credentialed staff who can deal with all forms of waste removal, including asbestos.

We recognise that some property owners would prefer to use private contractors. While we recommend you use Grocon, if you do use private contractors, they must have the right licenses to clean up waste. To be safe we recommend treating your waste as though it has asbestos to ensure the highest level of safety precautions are adhered to by private contractors.

Please be aware that only Grocon contractors can use non-EPA permitted vehicles to transport waste to disposal locations approved by Bushfire Recovery Towong Shire.
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For past editions visit www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery

Towong Shire Community Recovery Newsletter
May 2020

Community Recovery

Victoria.

- All waste must be triple wrapped
- 24 hours notice must be given to nominated sites

Wangaratta Landfill (03) 5722 0888 and Albury Landfill (02) 6043 5860

Metal

Burnt metal waste can be taken to Corryong and Tallangatta Landfill and Transfer Stations.

- Clotheslines, white goods, trampoline frames, play equipment, water tanks, scrap metals are all accepted.
- Boats - fibreglass boats not accepted.
- Trailers with melted fibreglass are not accepted as scrap metal but will be accepted into landfill at the normal charge.

Green Waste

Council Landfill and Transfer Stations remain open, with social distancing in place.

- Corryong Transfer Station – Sugarloaf Road. Open Thursday 3-5pm, Sunday 12-4pm
- Tallangatta Transfer Station – Hardy’s Road. Open Thursday 3-5pm, Sunday 12-4pm

Farm Fencing Wire Waste

Council has secured two sites for the collection of fencing wire damaged in the bushfires. Drop offs can be made for free at either site during the allocated times.

Please note fencing wire will only be accepted if it is free from any non-metal materials. Wherever possible the wire will be recycled.

- Corryong Transfer Station – Sugarloaf Road. Open Thursday 3-5pm and Sunday 12-4pm.
- Walwa – Campbell Lane. End of Campbell Lane, off the Murray River Road, access 7am – 6pm Mon - Fri, 9am – 4pm on weekends. Strictly for fencing only.

A tender process is underway to understand the feasibility of providing fencing wire collection from properties. Further updates will follow.

Building and Planning

Rebuilding Homes and Businesses

When people lose their home during a bushfire, providing access to temporary housing is a vital step towards recovery.

Clause 52.07 of the planning scheme allows people to set up a temporary dwelling on their land without a planning permit. The clause also applies to damaged or destroyed businesses. It allows business owners to set up temporary premises without a planning permit.

There are still some things you will need to do before you can set up a temporary dwelling. For more information, visit: www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/bushfire-protection/rebuilding-and-recovery or call the Recovery Team to discuss with a Council Planner.

Planning and Building Requirements

While planning and building approval costs for bushfire affected applications have been waived, permits are still required on all structures to comply with State Government legislation.

Building approvals cover structural integrity and may include sheds, pool fencing, possibly even cubby houses. Planning approvals concern land use and the impact on the surrounding environment. Both approvals are needed, even if you are rebuilding a shed.

Residents are reminded that all sheds require a planning permit, even if they are simply replacing an old shed. All sheds need to be looked at as new builds and State Government legislation requires a planning permit. You may not get insurance if it’s not done properly, and it could become a headache when you sell.

Residents are advised that rebuilding is exempt from advertising, as long as conditions are met.

Council is working to streamline building and planning fire recovery applications and site inspections. However residents are asked to keep in mind that some aspects may take longer where they include flood overlays or land inundation overlays.
Planning and building approval costs for bushfire affected applications have been waived though there may still be some costs for those using private consultants.

To talk through your planning and building requirements, speak to Council’s Planner, Elke Cummins by calling 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. Further information is also available at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery.

Replacing Tanks
In most cases a planning permit is not needed for water tanks and fees have also been waived for installation of septic tanks. We recommended checking first with a Council Planner, call 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au

Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation
Where people have lost their primary place of residence and require assistance to source temporary accommodation, BRV are working with DHHS, housing assistance services and philanthropic organisations to assist in filling the gaps in local communities.

If you have urgent or immediate housing needs please call BRV’s case support services on 1800 560 760 who can assist you coordinate your housing requirements.

Caravans Provide Temporary Housing Relief
Three new caravans arrived in the Upper Murray earlier in the month, providing a flexible housing arrangement for some families who have lost their homes and are wanting to remain on their property as they rebuild and make future plans. The caravans have been a group effort thanks to the work of BRV, DHHS, Eastern Caravans and Council’s Recovery Team.

Hazardous Trees, Road Access & Firewood
Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) have helped the community regain access to local roads as quickly and safely as possible.

Under normal circumstances, the local road network is a local government responsibility, however the unprecedented fallout from the fires has seen RRV continue to deliver coordinated bushfire recovery efforts in partnership with Council.

RRV will continue to assist Council as recovery efforts continue, with the new partnership using local knowledge and experienced resources from both organisations set to quicken the recovery timeline significantly.

In Towong Shire more than 480 of 520 kilometres of arterial roads and highways have been reopened, along with 200 kilometres of local roads. Recovery efforts are ongoing on many of these roads.

During the extensive repair process, Benambra-Corryong Road will remain closed from Stacey’s Bridge. It’s too early to know how long it will take to get this 40-kilometre section of road to a satisfactory level to reopen for use by the public. RRV will continue to keep the community informed.

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVC) recovery teams are continuing to assist with fencing recovery works, track clearing and hazardous tree removal.
Crews have recently completed 35km of hazardous tree works along the Benambra- Corryong Road between Stacey’s Bridge in the north and Gibbo River Bridge in the south.

DELWP Fencing
More than 100 successful fencing funding applications have been completed, covering over 260 kilometres of boundary fencing adjoining public land impacted by fires. We encourage residents that have had fencing adjoining public land affected by the bushfires to take up the opportunity for funding. Contact DELWP to undertake an assessment on your property — (02) 6071 5359 or email hume.recovery@delwp.vic.gov.au

All fencing activity will continue to comply with DHHS requirements and prioritise the safety of the Victorian community as well as Victorian government staff.

More Log Trucks in the Upper Murray
Over the coming months, you will notice more log trucks on the Murray Valley Highway and Shelley-Walwa Road as they collect any timber that can still be salvaged by logging experts. It’s expected there will be about 60 log trucks making up to 200 trips each day through this area to successfully extract all the salvageable timber. This operation could run for the rest of the year.

For all road and track closures we recommend visiting www.parkweb.vic.gov.au, and www.traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au for up-to-date information.

Firewood
Due to the fires and ongoing recovery works, there will be changes to firewood collection in the Upper Murray. Many of the usual areas have been burnt and pose serious safety risks due to hazardous trees.

Dedicated firewood collection sites have been set up to allow for safe firewood collection. This includes a new site recently opened in the Nariel Valley for local residents. The site uses salvaged trees from the Corryong-Benamba Road works. The initiative has been delivered by Forest Fire Management Victoria and VicForests in partnership with Council and forms part of the Victorian Government’s Bushfire Recovery Program.

This is welcomed news after the majority of designated firewood collection areas near Walwa and the Nariel Valley were impacted by the fires.

Please visit the website, or your local DELWP office or the FFMVic website before heading to a collection point to check it is open for the day.

For more information visit or call your local DELWP office on 136 186 or visit: www.ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood/firewood-collection-in-your-region

CFA - Register Planned and Private Burning
The Fire Danger Period finished on March 23 2020. You no longer need a CFA permit to conduct a planned burn. Residents that wish to conduct burn-offs on their private properties need to follow some basic rules; register your burn-offs first and foremost, check weather conditions and monitor the wind, and follow local council laws and regulations.

As well as registering your burn-offs, you should alert your neighbours to the fact that they may see smoke. CFA crews have been extremely busy this fire season and would like to avoid having to respond to false alarms because people are not registering their burn-offs.

By registering your burn-off, when somebody reports that they’ve spotted smoke, the incident will be cross-checked with the burn-off register and prevent a CFA crew from having to respond to a false alarm that takes them away from family, friends, work and other potential emergencies.

We understand that smoke from planned burns may cause concerns for those who have experienced trauma from the recent bushfires. We encourage you to reach out to support services if you are feeling overwhelmed by planned burns happening in your area.

- Keep your burn-off safe and legal
- Check fire restrictions in your area and always register your burn
Community Recovery

- Check and monitor weather conditions – particularly wind
- Warn your neighbours beforehand that there will be smoke in the air
- Stay in attendance the whole time your burn is going
- Sufficient equipment and water to stop the fire spreading

Landowners can register their burn-off with Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA). Call 1800 668 511 or email burnoffs@esta.vic.gov.au

People should be prepared to give some basic information including location, date, expected start and finish times, estimated size, and what they intend to burn.

Council Requirements for Open-Fires
Residents are encouraged to contact Council on 02 6071 5100 for advice before undertaking any burning activities. The requirements vary depending on where you live or what time of the year it is, so it is best to speak with us before starting a burn.

In a township area a fire can only be lit within purpose built equipment, such as a barbecue, stove or chiminea for heating or cooking purposes.

A permit is required for Rural Living Zones all year round. A permit is not required in a Rural Activity Zone or Rural Farm Zone (out of fire danger period), a permit is required in the fire danger period.

CFA Rehabilitation
The CFA is continuing to inspect and repair fire control lines and fences on private land that were impacted by fire suppression efforts. To date 161 properties have scope of work agreements in place, with 369 kilometres of fire control lines and 15 kilometres of damaged fences recorded.

More than a quarter of properties have now been repaired and restored, with work continuing. If you are yet to register call 02 6043 4630, text 0419 501 580 or email ne-region-rehab@cfa.vic.gov.au

Water
Following feedback that access to potable drinking water remains an issue, DELWP and Towong Shire Council have responded by developing a Household Potable Water Delivery Recovery Program.

The program recognises that some fire-affected residents have had their potable water tanks destroyed and others are unable to pump water from local creeks because of poor water quality.

The program aims to bridge this gap by providing access to immediate potable water supply. Funded by DELWP and administered by Council, guidelines are in place to ensure support is provided to those that need it most.

As every situation is different, please contact the Recovery team to discuss your needs on 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au. The program will remain open while funding is available until June 30 2020.

Residents requiring stock water are asked to contact the Recovery Team on 1800 518 222.

To subscribe to the digital newsletter email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au
For past editions visit www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery
Agriculture Victoria Recovery Support

Agriculture Victoria continues to support on-farm recovery for fire affected producers across the North East.

Fire affected farmers are able to access technical support on a range of recovery issues such as; animal health, nutrition and feed budgeting; grazing and pasture management; farm water planning and management, livestock water quality, irrigation systems and management; soil erosion management; and farm planning.

For more information contact Kylie Macreadie, Agriculture Recovery Manager on 0428 975 728 or email kylie.macreadie@agriculture.vic.gov.au. Or contact the following staff for technical advice:

- Animal health and biosecurity: Dr Jeff Cave, 0418 583 654
- Dairy Industry: Brett Davidson, 0407 938 065
- Beef Industry: Greg Ferrier, 0438 738 634
- Animal nutrition and feed budgeting: Nick Linden, 0438 369 486
- Grazing and pasture management: Ian Gamble, 0437 362 620
- Farm water planning and management & stock water reticulation systems: Greg Bekker, 0417 340 236
- Irrigation systems and management & stock water reticulation systems: Dennis Watson, 0429 304 567
- Soil erosion management: Brad Costin, 0439 347 488
- Back to Business Vic: Lyndon Kubeil, 0418 532 085

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements will examine coordination, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters as well as improving resilience and adapting to changing climatic conditions and mitigating the impact of natural disasters. The inquiry will also consider the legal framework for Commonwealth involvement in responding to national emergencies.

Thank you to those of you who provided submissions to the first phase of the Royal Commission. Submissions closed on the April 28 2020.

You can watch the video from the first public hearing on their website: naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/ or call 1800 909 826 for more information.

Council has provided a submission, available to view at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery

Victorian Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season

The Victorian Government is conducting an independent inquiry by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) into the 2019-2020 Victorian fire season.

Through this Inquiry, IGEM is examining Victoria’s preparedness for the fire season, response to fires in large parts of Victoria’s North East, Gippsland, and Alpine regions, and relief and recovery efforts.

The first report focused on preparedness and response. Following local meetings, online sessions and submissions which closed on April 28. Council has provided a submission, available to view at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery

The Nicholas family property in Tintaldra being prepared for sowing rye grass after being impacted by the fires in January.
The second report will focus on relief and recovery, and submissions on these topics will be considered until April 2021. Individuals and organisations are invited to provide submissions, addressing the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference, through:

- Emailing a submission to igem@igem.vic.gov.au
- Mailing a submission to: Inspector-General for Emergency Management, GPO Box 4356, Melbourne VIC 3000
- Or completing an online submission at www.igem.vic.gov.au/Fire-Season-Inquiry

Get To Know Your Local Recovery Team

Council’s dedicated and passionate Recovery Team are here to support you. The small team works together with Bushfire Recovery Victoria and supporting agencies.

Pete Dikschei, Local Area Recovery Officer for Towong, Thowgla and Corryong

A little about yourself? You might know me as the fanatical cyclist that gets around all over the district! I’ve lived in Towong for 2 years with my wife, after retiring from Victoria Police. We first connected to the region when I was in charge of Corryong Police station from 2001 – 2004. I came out of retirement to do what I could in the wake of the bushfires.

How can you help? I am and will continue to be meeting with as many people as possible from Corryong, Thowgla and Towong, to assist them in whatever way I can to deal with bushfire related issues.

That might involve identifying and assisting in applying for grants, advocating for better services or support, helping to achieve larger ideas that make our community a better/stronger/more resilient place to live.

What part of Recovery are you most passionate about? Helping individuals to sort through their mess and to find hope.

When things get tough, what drives you to keep going? My love of the area and not wanting to let people down.

What have you learned so far? Despite everyone’s best intentions, most things don’t happen as quickly as I would like.

Something you are proud of? Bringing a practical approach to a horrible situation.

One piece of advice for community members? Whatever your perception of Council, please trust that the Recovery Team is here to assist or advise you with anything bushfire related. We really do care.

Recovery Contacts

Bushfire Recovery Team

The Upper Murray Community Recovery Hub is currently closed to walk-ins. As always, Recovery staff and services continue to be here to help.

Phone: 1800 518 222 (Mon—Fri 9am—4pm)
Email: recovery@towong.vic.gov.au
Website: www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery
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