

# Rebuilding Marysville & Triangle

## The Communities

Situated in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, and surrounded by the Yarra Ranges National Park and the Cathedral Ranges, Marysville and Triangle includes the townships of Marysville, Narbethong, Taggerty, Granton and Buxton.

In the Shire of Murrindindi, Marysville is just under two hours from Melbourne. About 12 kilometres further east of Marysville is Lake Mountain which is a popular destination for cross country skiing and bushwalking.

The area is also popular with holiday makers, with around 40 per cent of all residences in the township of Marysville owned by part-time residents. Due to its scenic location, set in heavily forested mountains, Marysville has been a popular tourist retreat with accommodation and food services making up more than 40 per cent of business activity in the town.

## The Bushfires

The February 7 bushfires had a devastating effect on Marysville and the Triangle region.

There were 34 deaths in Marysville and four at Narbethong.

Around 530 properties, 95 per cent of the retail businesses and the commercial centre of Marysville were destroyed.

Only one business has managed to remain open throughout the recovery period.

An estimated 50 per cent of employment in Marysville has been lost with most of the hospitality and tourism jobs gone.

The primary school, retirement village, community centre, post office, medical centre and police station were also destroyed, as well as a large number of accommodation places, including conference facilities.

The Marysville Country Club, including the golf course, also experienced severe fire damage to shedding, equipment and 12 holes of the golf course.

The Marysville DSE office was damaged. Devastation to the surrounding forest has had a significant impact on the timber industry.

The water treatment plant was also damaged by the fires, resulting in poor water quality. Telecommunications capabilities in the area are also limited.

## Recovery to date

Over the past eight months a massive clean up project has been undertaken by individuals, community groups, governments, councils and the non-profit sector.

The Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund has disbursed around \$29 million in grants to Marysville and surrounding communities to date.

To date 736 properties have been cleared in the region. Of the 2439 kilometres of fencing damaged across the Murrindindi Shire, 1641 kilometres (67 per cent) have been replaced to date.

Dangerous trees on roadsides and private properties have been removed and a fire refuse disposal facility has been installed.

Roads and roadside infrastructure has been repaired and signage replaced.

Within weeks of the fires, plans were announced for Community Services Hubs, which are located at Marysville, Narbethong and Buxton. A temporary village, located on the ESA Camping and Conference Centre on Buxton Road, was also established and is now home to more than 120 people displaced as a result of the fires. Communal infrastructure including kitchens, meeting spaces and outdoor recreational facilities have been established at the temporary village and are accessible for wider community use.

These facilities have provided important support services and accommodation for residents during the rebuilding.

Material Aid Centres established in Narbethong and Buxton in the aftermath of the fires were consolidated and re-established in Marysville in June, where an average of 150 people a week continue to access aid.

Soon after the fires a marquee was established at the site of the former Cumberland Hotel in Marysville's main street, Murchison Street, to temporarily house business and meeting facilities.

The Marysville DSE office was quickly repaired and is now fully functioning, housing other Government agencies until their buildings are reinstated.

The State and Federal governments are investing \$2.4 million to purchase the former Motor Museum, which is currently being refurbished, to provide businesses with interim accommodation while the rebuilding program takes place.



A Rebuilding Advisory Centre is being constructed in the main street, where people can get expert advice on all aspects of house building. A current mobile service has been in place while the permanent facility is built.

More than 600 individuals and business owners from the Marysville and Triangle community undertook extensive consultation and workshops with input from a range of stakeholders, expert planners and designers to develop the Urban Design Framework.

This vision, which sets out future initiatives and projects, went out for public consultation until 10 October and will be collaged into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme once all feedback has been incorporated.

**Community events have been a significant component of the area's ongoing recovery over the past months with the following events funded through grants made available from all levels of government, VBAF and private and philanthropic organisations.**

**They include:**

- The Buxton "Winter Chill Out"
- Thank you to the emergency services
- Welcome Strangers Australian Fiddle Tunes
- Marysville Pub Vs Buxton Footy match and commemorative concert.

**The State Government and private donors have also provided financial support for a range of local activities and projects including:**

- Funding for memorials across Murrindindi Shire
- \$500,000 from VBAF for a Youth program in the Murrindindi Shire area
- \$200,000 for resurfacing the bowling club green and making it an all weather surface at the Marysville Bowls Club
- \$100,000 for cricket club and swimming pool
- \$86,000 – junior cricket club
- \$30,000, supporting bushfire-damaged childrens services

- A new football oval at Gallipoli Park
- Upgrade of the Telstra exchange
- \$10,000 for Marysville Cemetery Fund
- Roadside recovery and weed and erosion management
- Additional staff to help coordinate disaster relief and community recovery activities
- Buxton Gym Equipment – donation provided by Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
- Circus Oz to perform in Marysville – donation provided by Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

### Community Process/Priorities

There are a number of active and prominent community groups and associations that existed in Marysville prior to the fires and some that emerged as a response to the fire.

All of these groups have been instrumental in creating the Marysville and Triangle Community Recovery Plan.

The Community Recovery Committee (CRC) has been the key coordinator and driver of the Community Plan, with the 100 plus community ideas that are now listed in the Plan having come from a wide range of individuals and groups at a range of consultation forums.

**The Marysville and Triangle Community Recovery Plan has prioritised more than 100 projects for the community as it recovers including:**

- A community services hub incorporating a new school building, community, health and recreational space
- The rebuilding or the upgrade of community spaces and facilities including Narbethong Hall (complete rebuild), Buxton Hall and Taggerty Hall (upgrades)
- The redevelopment of Gallipoli Park, an area central to the design heart of Marysville
- Small business recovery
- Incentives for part timers to return

to the area

- Emergency communications and an alternative route out of the area
- Repair and upgrade of damaged tourism and environmental assets
- Marketing and promotion of the area
- Repair damage to Lake Mountain visitor facilities.

**In addition to identifying the large and significant factors such as economic and environmental projects needed to rebuild this area, the community also identified a number of smaller projects important to its recovery:**

- A range of arts therapy projects for children and adults including after school art programs
- Community garden and vegetable patch
- Replacing the Brownies equipment lost in the fires
- Replacing wildlife rescue equipment lost in the fires.



## The Plan

### Key highlights of the Rebuilding Together Plan for Marysville:

- Marysville Community Learning, Health and Recreation Hub (\$5.2 million)
- The restoration of Lake Mountain Alpine Resort as a major summer and winter tourist destination (\$9.2 million)
- Redeveloping and upgrading Steavensons Falls (\$2.6 million) as well as infrastructure linking the Falls to Marysville, Keppels Lookout and Lady Talbot scenic drive.
- Reconstruction of Marysville Police Station (\$2.4 million)
- Fit-out of Marysville motor museum as an interim business hub (\$2.4 million)
- Construction of the Marysville Rebuilding Advisory Centre
- Development of the Marysville and Triangle Urban Design Framework (\$500,000)
- Restoration of the Marysville Caravan Park (\$500,000)
- Construction of a Marysville skate park (\$150,000)
- Construction of a Triangle Walking and Cycling Trail connecting communities in the Marysville area
- Community gardens and vegetable growing
- Replacement of Narbethong Community Hall
- Redevelopment of Narbethong streetscape
- Upgrade of Buxton Hall
- Repair of key visitor facilities in Cathedral Ranges State Park
- A Kids After School Arts program.

### People in bushfire-affected communities may also benefit from a range of funding programs in the Rebuilding Together Plan including:

- \$17.5 million for ongoing housing, accommodation and support services
- \$13 million from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund for further personal and community support services
- \$9.2 million for the continued operation of bushfire recovery services, including ten Community Service Hubs
- \$4 million in additional funding to help people with accommodation or re-establishment expenses
- \$1.8 million for support services via a Red Cross Outreach Program
- \$4.6 million to assist councils with rebuilding community and council assets
- \$4.4 million for rebuilding advisory services
- \$1.7 million to support agri-businesses and farming families, plus \$500,000 to help farmers stabilise and restore their land
- A multi-million dollar Victorian Bushfires Business Investment Fund plus \$600,000 for a small business recovery program
- \$5.8 million for land stabilisation works on public land, including final tree risk assessments and erosion control
- \$5.8 million to help control weeds and pests
- \$2.9 million to regenerate severely burnt forests
- \$1 million to protect threatened species.

## Next Steps

The Rebuilding Together Plan delivers the next phase of funding for projects identified as priorities in Community Recovery Plans.

To support these Plans, the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF) has allocated \$43 million for community projects. Specific projects with funding identified as part of the Rebuilding Together Plan account for approximately \$12 million of that allocation. This means a significant level of support is still available for other Community Recovery Plan projects.

In addition, \$20 million in donations from corporate and philanthropic supporters has been committed for community projects.

Many projects identified in Community Recovery Plans, but not announced in the Rebuilding Together Plan, will receive funding once they have undergone more detailed planning and community consultation.

The Authority will continue to work with Community Recovery Committees and local councils over the coming months to refine and deliver the community priorities in their Plan.

