



# Walwa Bush Fire Recovery

## Walwa/Guys Forest/Mt Alfred/Burrowye/Pine Mountain

Hello All

As you may know, a small group of community minded persons has been meeting over the past few weeks to facilitate Walwa and District Bush Fire and Pandemic recovery. The objective of the group is to prioritise activities / projects to improve future resilience of our community in face of another disaster and to grasp current opportunities for funding community projects.

Our mission is to:

- provide advocacy on behalf of our community in relation to recovery, support, and resilience
- assist other community groups with their goals of completing projects (most of which have been long on the back burner due
- take the lead to achieve community projects (infrastructure and support).

We are open to community input to our meetings and would welcome community participation, but pandemic restrictions have compromised the community meeting scenario. Instead, we put out a request to the community via a flyer, asking for feedback and comment. Below is a summary of priorities as raised by the community.

### **Priorities identified: (not in order)**

- Communicate with BWFNC to progress the ideal of creating a committee of management of the Walwa Recovery Centre in the period of the BWFNC's recess. To manage the facility for the benefit of community. This committee would also resource assistance to the district in the event of a crisis and in accordance to a Disaster Plan which will be developed by the committee and will sit under the Municipal Emergency Management Plan of Towong Shire Council.
- Advocate for our community re communication issues (during a disaster and power outage and in general)
- Progress the move towards incorporating the Walwa CFA base with the Recreation grounds (large shed to maintain resources/ equipment on recreation grounds / facilities available to the CFA for meetings and training.)
- Create community events to promote social cohesion once pandemic restrictions ease.
- Progress Walwa Hall upgrades to align with community needs as an evacuation centre in the case of an emergency and for community support and activities.

- Generator installation to recreation grounds to provide back up power to the facility and sewage works in the event of an emergency or prolonged power outage. Investigate similar generator supply to other critical community facilities.
- Installation of SES Emergency Pod at recreation grounds
- Shelter construction in the Walwa Cemetery near the Memorial Wall
- Support BlazeAid activities when they return to the area (they will re-commence activities on 13/7/20 with an approved Covid Safety Plan) and work from Walwa Recovery Centre to help vulnerable stressed farmers.

The Mayor, Dave Wortman, provided assurances that the walking track projects (Walwa-Jingellic and Walwa to River) which have been on the community wish list for a decade, will be addressed by council in next 12 months and may include a pedestrian bridge across the Murray in association with old pylons. This will be a fabulous boost for our district in terms of amenity and tourism.

The group will meet again this week to progress a formal association and to discuss funding and a pathway to community recovery. We will keep the community informed, welcome feedback via email /post (leave note at the post office and Belinda will forward to our group) or happy to chat. Once Covid restrictions are lifted we aim to organise a community meeting and if you are keen to join the committee please advise.

Currently our group is comprised of Hayden Drummond, Chris Wood, Helen Marshall, Sandi Grieve, Marshall Tuck, Heidi Conway, Melinda Short, Simon McKenzie, Tom, Donna and Ash Greenhill, Dave Hanna, Sara Jenkins, and Janice Newnham.

Towong Shire Recovery Officers: Nola Tudball and Kaye Nankervis, and Bushfire Recovery Victoria Regional Recovery Director, Alicia Keogh have been assisting the group.

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