



AGM

**Sunday 2nd of April 2023 at the
Buchan Valley Golf Course at 12:00**

Presidents Report

The last twelve months has seen us working through something of a sorting and implementation phase in our community's renewal. In the first 2 years we have worked to establish strong communications with clubs and community organisations, embedding key lines of communication with the community. The ongoing trials of complex challenges faced in Buchan's recovery has also necessitated enduring formal processes and communication with external stakeholders and agencies such as East Gippsland Shire Council and Emergency Vic to name the most common touch points. As a committee we have focused on a great deal of negotiating with key stakeholders, with the Renewal committee advocating on behalf of the community in aligning the voice of community and continuing to work towards the stated outcome the community has identified as best meeting their needs. At times this has meant mediating conversation and at other times it has been asking for a different approach on key work with the agencies and organizations. This has often led to challenging and very honest dialogue about the need to maintain the focus of community first, place-based recovery. This year two local projects delivered in Buchan and Gelantipy will ensure that in an emergency event we have standalone facilities that can dispense fuel and internet availability in the face of power failure and loss of public services. This is one place-based project that makes us a more resilient community. Much of the dialogue has focused on pushing for increased actions and outcomes that show we are renewing facilities and building our communities resilience after the loss and destruction of the fires. Some of these facilities and projects have required a great deal of time and capital investment and we are having to adapt as we uncover each additional need with the refurbishments. The cost of materials and ability to attract the appropriate trades people in a timely manner remain major obstacles in progressing some of our projects efficiently. The recovery process for locations impacted by the fires is not finished yet as we start to identify some collateral impacts to our community post fire and drawn-out pandemic period which upset social and economic recovery process. Key emerging issues include;

- Workforce shortages
- Reduced housing availability in the local area
- Record low levels of rental availability
- Dwindling local workforce and increased average working hours across households
- Clubs and social groups are identifying shortages of volunteers
- Access to trades and professional services in rural localities is a real struggle

The nature of our communications continue to center around our organizations principals of supporting our community and those individuals who were impacted by the fires in our districts, working to prioritize the needs of our community in its recovery and striving for betterment. With this in mind we again reviewed our rationale and reorder development for progressing the challenges that were being identified. We have held community engagements where we have asked community to identify and clarify what are the priorities going forward and what do they feel we need to work on next as we work towards publishing our community recovery plan. We have worked broadly in two streams, focused community recovery targeting the previously identified priorities whilst still seeking to respond to the ongoing challenges experienced by individuals still progressing through complicated recoveries. We welcome and invite continued invite feedback from our broader community on the issues as they arise. We continue to facilitate public meetings around priorities and have co-created a number of working parties who are deeply engaged in managing the operational implementation of projects we are working on in the community.

Current working parties include:

- Recreation Ground redevelopment reference Group (Fortnightly)
- Play space Reference Group (As required)
- Streetscape Reference Group (As required)
- Parks and DEECA reference Group (Fortnightly)
- Recovery and Resilience Preparedness through DEECA (Monthly)

The Ongoing Work of the renewal Committee:

Current Projects:

The Community Facility Project delivery Plan which will see over \$120,000 worth upgrades take place, has now been completed for the work on our community facilities. This includes improvements to the Gelantipy Hall, Buchan Hall, Wulgumerang Sports Ground and fitment of a generator at the Buchan REC facility that can and will be adapted into the new upgrades of the facility when they occur.

Crossco are our Project Managers for these works and Susan our Admin & Project Support Officer will be the go between with Crossco and Community to try and reduce the workload on our already busy but productive community volunteers. Contractors are expected to be engaged by April to begin most of the works. Re-stumping works have been finalised at the Buchan Hall, though as expected nothing ever goes to plan and there are now a number of compounded issues to address with drainage, plumbing and building complications! It seems we will need some extensive maintenance and repair to the upper section of the hall before we can replace the kitchen.

The Buchan Hall Committee have received a quote and revised drawings for the new kitchen which can be commenced after issues are resolved post restumping and the availability of High Profile Cabinets.

Children's Play Area:

The Renewal Committee has requested that Council reconvene meetings with our community reference group to continue this somewhat frustrating process of trying to identify a mutually acceptable location and development of a plan that is consistent with our communities needs and expectations. Rachel Eastman our Place Manager and Eva Grunden from Council are working with Donna Mraz from our Renewal committee who has been the contact person leading the Community Playground Reference group to reconvene a meeting. Our community has made it clear that this project to create a quality play space in town is amongst our highest of priorities. The community reference group has completed extensive consultation and conducted a comprehensive examination of the community landscape to identify an appropriate site. The priority site identified by this group was the "Windmill Paddock". Council continues to refuse to support the "Windmill Paddock" location due to Flood Risk. Council request that we re-examine the current site of the playground below the garage adjacent to the public toilets as this would be the most convenient and easily upgraded site. The Community Playground Reference group along with the families and community contributors in good faith reviewed this site, but again find it does not meet the needs identified in the priorities for the new play space. We therefore come back to the table to review other opportunities. This like many other projects in Buchan has not been a simple solution and families have been frustrated at the slow progress. We continue to prioritise and work towards meeting our communities needs and not taking easy options that will not meet our communities long term needs. We know there are those that are worried our kids will be grown up before we get this fixed. If that is you then I encourage you to throw your weight behind the project and support Donna and the Renewal Committee in what ever way you can. We will provide an update in the next Phoenix with ideas and identified opportunities for you to show your support. Eg letter writing, fund raising, joining planning meetings etc.

Buchan REC Redevelopment Project

Things have started to take shape with the Buchan REC Redevelopment Project with A Project Reference Group formed comprising of representatives from each of the community organisations engaged in the Rec use. At this stage the meetings are fortnightly and are taking place locally at the Rec. The first draft concept plan was explained to the Reference Group at the start of March and they continue to work through and seek to codesign a community facility fit for our communities needs. A priority for the group is not only to progress the planning and consultation but to concurrently seek the remaining funding to finalise the stages of the plan, which the Renewal committee is partnering them in managing.

The East Gippsland Saw Milling Project

The saw milling project is continuing to support local community members and is working with local farmers to support their recovery by milling lumber on landowners farms. They are currently seeking to renew their project funding via Council and other Agencies.

Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts Community Renewal Plan

Work is progressing with inputs from community being used to draft the plan. A huge thank you to everyone who participated in the Feedback Session on 2 March at the REC. Thank you to Ean and Coran along with the rest of the Cricket Club volunteers for catering and making it a really warm, inviting community event to be at. Thanks to the additional people who have made time to come and meet with Susan and other members of the committee to contribute your ideas and thoughts as we wrap up our community consultation. In the last month we have had more than 70 community members come and contribute ideas and refinements to the Community Recovery Plan. This is an excellent level of representation for a community our size. It is also pleasing to have had people from across a number of different locations and age groups have inputs. We will work internally first to try and formalise the inputs and theme them according to priorities and future strategic directions, before handing the content on to the Warm Corners Consultancies team to work into a draft for our working party to approve.

Future funding and opportunities to continue holding community gathering events:

The CRC is actively pursuing a series of community resilience grants to continue to maintain and upgrade our community facilities. There are multiple projects that have received funding or have been approved as projects that can be planned and made shovel ready for funding. The CRC is a pivotal conduit to accessing funding and is often sort sort to float opportunities that community groups can apply to. We encourage all local groups to continue working with our committee and Susan our community Project and liaison officer to pursue grants that will assist in the communities ongoing resilience and recovery.

New Committee Members:

We have three positions open on the Community Renewal Committee for renewal association members. If you are interested or know someone who may be interested then we encourage you to nominate and have a renewal association member second your nomination. New energy would be welcome on the committee.

As a committee we feel we have worked consistently over the past year to address the ongoing recovery which presented an enormous and wide reaching challenge in our catchment. Our organization whilst acknowledging the breadth of challenges at the outset, has constructively sort to address our priorities together in a targeted and productive fashion. Many of our committee have commented on the apparent traction and tangible outcomes that are starting to come as we enter into our fourth year of operation. We encourage everyone to continue being persistent and communicating their needs, as we work to improve wellbeing and seek betterment for our catchment by overcoming challenges and barriers. Our community and its humanity is something we can all be proud of in the shadow of what we have faced in an extraordinary era. We look forward to seeing some of the outcomes we have fought for, take shape over the coming year and we are committed to the ongoing endeavor of renewal for our districts. We know there is still work to be done.

Katie Hodge

Chairperson

Buchan Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Committee