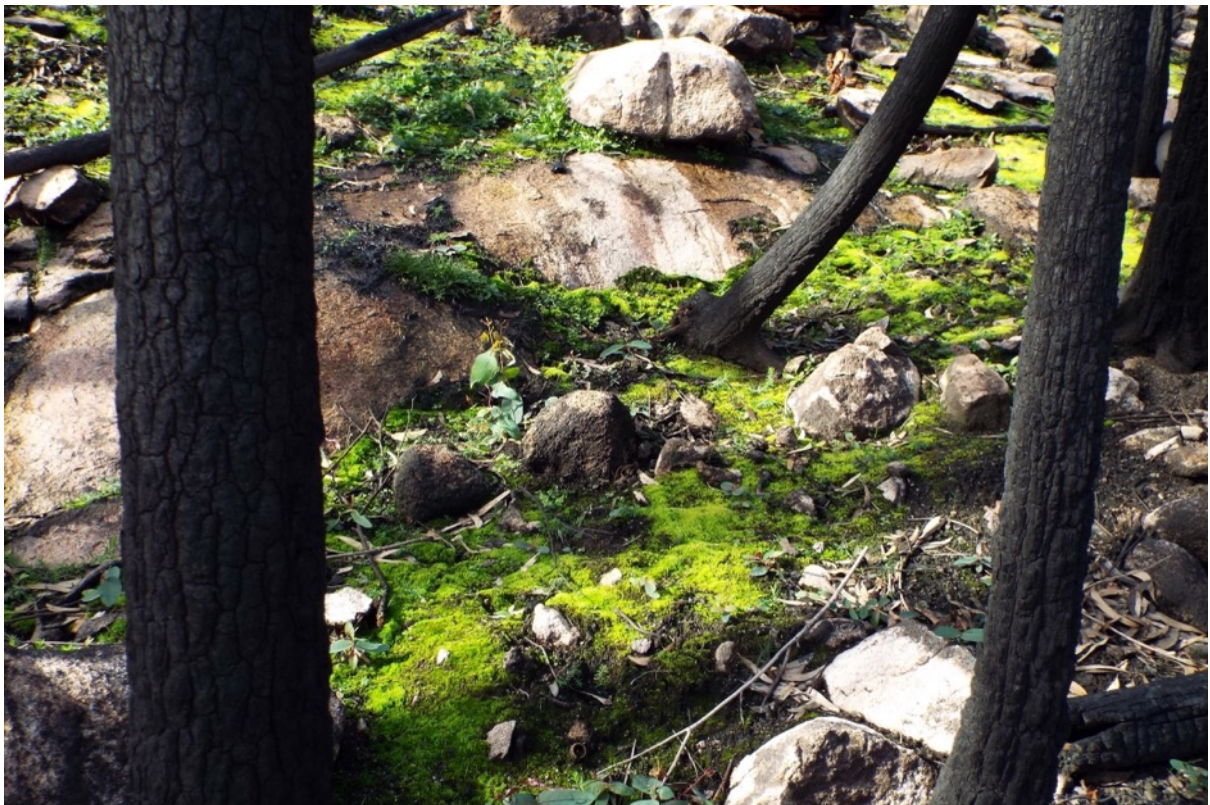




COMMUNITY LED RECOVERY PLAN

Voting Report



Mosses Growing in a Crevice (Photo: Phillipa Hamilton)

MADRA acknowledges All Traditional Custodians of this Land on which we live and recognise their continuing connection to Land, Waters, and Culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Methodology.....	5
Statistical analysis.....	5
Qualitative review	5
About the survey	6
Process	6
Design.....	6
Overall results.....	6
Summary of top ranked projects per pillar	8
People and Wellbeing	8
Buildings and Infrastructure.....	8
Environment and Biodiversity	8
Business and Economy	8
People and Wellbeing	9
Detailed results.....	9
Commentary themes	12
Community connections/social opportunities.....	12
Our youth.....	13
Emergency management	13
The arts, music and creative activities	14
Our history	15
Buildings and Infrastructure.....	16
Detailed results.....	16
Commentary themes	19
Emergency facilities	19
Town planning	19
Community and visitor facilities	19
Heritage and cultural sites	22
Access and safety.....	23
Environment and Biodiversity	25
Detailed results.....	25
Commentary themes	27
Natural environment priorities	27
On ground works	29
Fuel management	29
Land management industry	29
A note on comments related to Indigenous involvement	29
Business and Economy	31
Detailed results.....	31

Commentary themes	33
More strings to our economic bow	33
Tourism opportunities	34
Digital recovery	36
Buy local.....	36
Environmental education and training	37

Introduction

The Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Inc (MADRA) committee had its first meeting in June 2020. Early on, we realised many areas of our recovery were time critical, and we needed to get moving on those things quickly.

First and foremost, people are at the heart of our recovery. Houses and infrastructure can be rebuilt - shattered lives are harder to put back together. Our immediate priorities therefore focused on mental health, wellbeing, case work support and disaster preparedness. We also needed to influence infrastructure replacement early to build back better and suitable for local conditions.

At the same time, we sought your recovery ideas. And, despite COVID-19 restrictions, you responded with enthusiasm via letter, email, phone calls and utilising our good old-fashioned suggestion boxes! We received 68 great suggestions for projects that build on our core recovery effort.

Thank you to the many members of our community who submitted ideas for our recovery, and to those who voted. We asked you to vote for several reasons:

- so, our community's thoughts could be heard and shared
- so, we know which projects have the most support – as volunteers with limited capacity we need to know where to focus our efforts
- so, we could further shape the nature of projects based on your insights and comments.

We knew not all projects could be funded and some projects might be funded from the same finite 'bucket of money'. We therefore needed to understand community priorities.

We asked you to vote on projects that had not yet commenced. Many of the projects in the Recovery Plan are already underway – either through our advocacy efforts or the hard work of community groups and individuals. So, if it looks like something is missing, it's probably already happening.

This voting report has been put together by Bushfire Recovery Victoria. We thank them for undertaking this enormous task which comprised of analysing over 1600 votes and extracting the underpinning comments, which are important in shaping and refining project descriptions!

Every project put up for voting received a majority vote; that is, over 50% of community members who voted supported the project. Based on the results, we have incorporated all suggestions into our community-led Recovery Plan and changed the status from 'draft' to 'endorsed'.

Where to next? Project implementation will depend on two things: funding availability, and project working groups. If there is a project you are passionate about, please raise your hand for a working group. Those projects which are the purview of government agencies will be pursued through them.

Of course, our recovery is ongoing – new recovery projects will emerge as will new funding schemes. This is the start of ongoing community consultation. Please continue to share your recovery ideas with the MADRA committee.

Thank you,

MADRats

Methodology

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis of the survey was guided by the following assumptions and requirements.

Assumptions

The votes tallied in this report were received either from: (a) Mailchimp Online Survey results, or (b) scanned copy of paper ballot form. In counting the votes, it was assumed that:

- All voters had agreed to the Terms and Conditions of the survey and understood that this was a requirement for all valid votes.
- Only one vote was submitted per person, and that this was done in good faith.
- Votes were submitted prior to the closing date of 11:59pm 30 May, 2021.

Valid Votes

The following conditions were required to be met for all valid votes:

- The vote was legible.
- The number of preferences did not exceed the maximum allowed.
- The complete ballot paper had been submitted.
- A name or signature had been provided.
- The terms and conditions had been agreed to (for Mailchimp votes).

Blank responses – all blank responses were taken to be an indication from the voter that they were *Unsure*.

Unsure Votes

To account for the uncertainty of voters, results have been provided for the top five or 10 projects as follows:

- (a) Proportion of YES when Unsure votes added to the YES votes (YES = YES + Unsure, NO = NO)
- (b) Proportion of YES when Unsure votes are added to the NO votes (YES = YES, NO = NO + Unsure)

Qualitative review

A thematic content analysis approach was undertaken for the qualitative review which included the following approach:

- Reading 700+ survey submissions, cross-checking against spreadsheet supplied by Bushfire Recovery Victoria, and cleaning data where required.
- Segmenting comments under each question as:
 - positive
 - positive with caveat (where there were concerns or stipulations)
 - negative
 - negative with caveat (where there were concerns or stipulations)
- Analysing comments per question to identify key themes and assess alignment to the voting responses. Analysis is provided under each project group within a pillar. The analysis focuses on projects that received the highest proportion of votes, as well as projects that attracted commentary irrespective of the votes they attracted. Where relevant, general commentary (not specific to any project), was included to show the range of sentiment.
- Providing editorial comment around the key themes and voting results.

About the survey

Process

- From October 2020, draft chapters of the Recovery Plan were progressively released for community comment, input, and suggestions. The draft chapters were disbursed via email and the Mallacoota Mouth. Hard copies were also available.
- Online and hard copy voting forms were compiled in March to coincide with community consultation sessions on each bushfire recovery pillar (below).
- The sessions took place over several weeks during April and May 2021 and offered community members the chance to discuss recovery matters with MADRA and agencies.
- During May 2021, MADRA members made themselves available outside the Recovery Hub to discuss recovery issues, to encourage people to vote, and to assist with voting forms.

Design

- The survey sought a vote on 68 projects proposed by the Mallacoota community.
- All projects were grouped under four Bushfire Recovery Pillars:
 - People and Wellbeing
 - Buildings and Infrastructure
 - Environment and Biodiversity
 - Business and Economy
- The projects were further categorised into project groups under each pillar (*see Table 1 for distribution of project groups per pillar*).
- Respondents were asked to indicate next to each project whether they supported the idea by voting 'Yes' or 'No'. Respondents were asked to leave a blank if unsure.

Overall results

- 1,611 votes across 700 surveys were received.
- Every project received a majority vote, meaning over 50 per cent of respondents supported the project.
- Of the 68 projects put to vote, 64 received a vote of over 72 per cent, and 57 received a vote of over 80 per cent.

Table 1: Distribution of project groups under each pillar

Pillar	Project group	No. of projects per group
People and wellbeing 20 projects	Community connections/social opportunities	4
	Our youth	1
	Emergency management	6
	The arts, music and creative activities	6
	Our history	3
Buildings and infrastructure 24 projects	Emergency facilities	1
	Town planning	3
	Community and visitor facilities	13
	Heritage and cultural sites	2
	Access and safety	5
Environment and biodiversity 9 projects	Natural environment priorities	3
	On ground works	2
	Fuel management	3
	Land management industry	1
Business and economy 15 projects proposed	More strings to our economic bow	2
	Tourism opportunities	3
	Digital recovery	3
	Buy local	3
	Environmental education and training	4
Total		68

Summary of top ranked projects per pillar

People and Wellbeing

1. Seek support from the East Gippsland Shire Council and other government agencies to create apprenticeships, training, and work opportunities for young people.
2. A readily available evacuation plan developed by government and community members which factors in key issues such as seasonal populations, evacuation routes, sheltering facilities, jurisdictional boundaries, messaging to communities and risks to safe evacuation.
3. Develop a mechanism for ensuring emergency response crews outside Mallacoota and District are informed about the local community and its features.
4. Establish collaborative protocols and partnerships between regional and local emergency services for the Operations and Recovery phases of emergencies.
5. For disasters and emergencies, improve continuous communication, early warning, and advice of supports to Mallacoota and District.

Buildings and Infrastructure

1. Emergency diesel storage.
2. Conduct an independent fire audit to identify and assess critical infrastructure, risk, emergency resources, and other disaster considerations.
3. Review and update Mallacoota and District planning overlays to incorporate bushfire lessons learned.
4. Develop and implement a footpath plan for Mallacoota and District.
5. In addition to funding the Genoa-Mallacoota Road, road improvements including roads subject to inundation, regular grading, repairs to holes and unstable shoulders and verge clearing.
6. Information boards and signage to replace damaged items.
7. Refurbish the mudbrick pavilion.
8. Enhance our recreation spaces and parks.
9. Improvements for the WWII Bunker including stand-alone power, improved BBQ facilities and a display/meeting room.
10. Upgrade the Genoa tennis shed to a more user-friendly clubroom.

Environment and Biodiversity

1. Building on the work of existing volunteer groups and agencies, ongoing remedial works including weed removal, coast care, pest control, erosion control and revegetation projects.
2. An annual review of fuel management action plans.
3. Overseeing the implementation of fuel management action plans.
4. Seek additional human and other resources for protection and management of our wilderness.
5. Support and promote sustainable tourism, in keeping with our natural and community values.

Business and Economy

1. Encourage greater participation in the local artisans and produce market.
2. Support and establish social enterprises; businesses which intentionally trade to tackle social problems, provide access to employment and training, or help the environment.
3. An environmental studies program including information about local flora and fauna, guided bush walks and field days.
4. Events with a local or topical theme. Ideas include a film festival featuring local productions and an annual forest management conference.
5. Land management industry certification and training together with local employment in land management projects.

People and Wellbeing

People and their wellbeing are at the heart of Mallacoota and District's community-led recovery efforts. The projects proposed by community members in early consultations focused on supporting vulnerable people through the recovery and beyond and providing opportunities for youth to live and work in their local communities.

There was significant focus on how people could learn from the bushfire experience to better prepare for future emergencies, and this was reflected in the numerous projects proposed under emergency management. Many community members recognised arts and music as intrinsic to community health, and wanted projects which supported local artists and creative activities. The final list of projects under this category demonstrates the community's desire to preserve and honour their local history.

Detailed results

Total surveys submitted	410
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Local playground

The following table provides the detailed results of each project on the survey form.

Table 2: People and Wellbeing – yes/no results per project

1. Community connections / social opportunities		Yes	Unsure	No
1A	An off-lead dog beach.	340	26	44
1B	Regular dances and/or dance lessons.	255	81	74
1C	More new shows and events: a busking showcase, a festival to showcase our local food (this might be an extension of the Seafood Festival), revive the Easter Festival.	337	39	34
1D	A campaign to encourage volunteering. Areas could include: emergency services, mentoring, committee positions for local clubs, membership of local clubs and organisations, tutoring activities.	328	56	26
2. Our youth		Yes	Unsure	No
2A	Seek support from the East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) and other government agencies to create apprenticeship, training and work opportunities for our young people.	386	18	6
3. Emergency management		Yes	Unsure	No
3A	Establish collaborative protocols and partnerships between regional and local emergency services Operations and Recovery phases of emergencies.	362	33	15
3B	Develop a mechanism for ensuring emergency response crews from outside Mallacoota and District are informed about the local community and its features by designated local emergency services personnel i.e. alternative evacuation routes for flood prone and fire risk areas and existing local services that can be activated.	358	38	14
3C	Develop a Mallacoota and District handbook (hard and electronic copies) containing information about the responsibilities of individuals and agencies before, during and after emergencies as well as existing education programs on bushfire and flood safety for dissemination to residents, second homeowners and visitors.	326	56	28
3D	A readily available evacuation plan developed by government and community members which factors in key issues such as seasonal populations, evacuation routes, sheltering facilities, jurisdictional boundaries, messaging to communities and risks to safe evacuation.	359	39	12
3E	Improve continuous communication, support and early warning to Mallacoota and District: social gatherings/meetings/events continue to be promoted by community groups to enable people to meet each other and develop networks; explore diverse communications techniques and methods to address different age groups; actively encourage community members to participate in community education programs provided by EGSC and emergency agencies and encourage members to make use of the VicEmergency app.	342	53	15
3F	Establishment of a Persons at Risk list that is shared between agencies and organisations and updated annually prior to the fire season. (This is different to the Vulnerable Persons list held by Police which has a restricted distribution.)	332	53	25
4. The arts, music and creative activities		Yes	Unsure	No
4A	A film festival showcasing the work of local filmmakers and those who come here to learn about film making and editing.	271	73	66
4B	Writing workshops and storytelling.	273	78	59
4C	The return of the popular Café Culture series and other theatrical productions.	310	57	43
4D	Multimedia projects and teaching skills including text, images, audio, video and animation.	291	68	51
4E	Dance workshops.	243	96	71
4F	Photography classes and exhibitions of student and local photographers' works.	319	61	30
5. Our history		Yes	Unsure	No
5A	An audit of cultural and historical icons to ensure these are preserved and protected.	326	57	27
5B	Contributing to the Bunker Museum bushfire collection.	313	65	32
5C	Support to capture our stories on film and in writing and songs.	279	81	50

The following table shows the five projects that received the highest proportion of votes under this pillar.

Table 3: People and Wellbeing – adjusted total results by rank

Rank		Project	Yes	Unsure	No	Total	Adjusted total	Proportion Y adjusted total	%
1 st	2A	Seek support from the East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) and other government agencies to create apprenticeship, training and work opportunities for our young people.	386	18	6	410	392	0.9847	99
2 nd	3D	A readily available evacuation plan.	359	39	12	410	371	0.9677	97
3 rd	3B	Develop a mechanism for ensuring emergency response crews from outside Mallacoota and District are informed about the local community and its features by designated local emergency services personnel.	358	38	14	410	372	0.9624	96
4 th	3A	Establish collaborative protocols and partnerships between regional and local emergency services.	362	33	15	410	377	0.9602	96
5 th	3E	Improve continuous communication, support and early warning to Mallacoota and District.	342	53	15	410	357	0.9580	96
	3F	Establishment of a Persons at Risk list that is shared between agencies and organisations and updated annually prior to the fire season.	332	53	25	410	357	0.9300	93
	1D	A campaign to encourage volunteering.	328	56	26	410	354	0.9266	93
	5A	An audit of cultural and historical icons to ensure these are preserved and protected.	326	57	27	410	353	0.9235	93
	3C	Develop a Mallacoota and District handbook containing information about the responsibilities of individuals and agencies before, during and after emergencies.	326	56	28	410	354	0.9209	92
	4F	Photography classes and exhibitions of student and local photographers' works.	319	61	30	410	349	0.9140	91
	1C	More new shows and events.	337	39	34	410	371	0.9084	90
	5B	Contributing to the Bunker Museum bushfire collection.	313	65	32	410	345	0.9072	90
	1A	An off-lead dog beach.	340	26	44	410	384	0.8854	89
	4C	The return of the popular Café Culture series and other theatrical productions.	310	57	43	410	353	0.8782	88
	4D	Multimedia projects and teaching multimedia skills including text, images, audio, video and animation skills.	291	68	51	410	342	0.8509	85
	5C	Support to capture our stories on film and in writing and songs.	279	81	50	410	329	0.8480	85
	4B	Writing workshops and storytelling.	273	78	59	410	332	0.8223	82
	4A	A film festival showcasing the work of local filmmakers.	271	73	66	410	337	0.8042	80
	1B	Regular dances and/or dance lessons.	255	81	74	410	329	0.7751	77
	4E	Dance workshops.	243	96	71	410	314	0.7739	77

Commentary themes

Community connections/social opportunities

The off-lead dog beach (1A) proposal sparked several comments. Although predominately positive, people wanted to see parameters regarding the location.

"The off-lead dog beach should be away from the beaches that are easier to access for families with young children."

"I support a dogs' off-leash beach in principle. It needs to be chosen carefully so that any impacts to the local wildlife and broader environment are minimised. It also needs to be regularly patrolled so that dog owners are made responsible for picking up after their dogs. I am not a great fan of dogs and cats in Mallacoota because of their impact on wildlife, however I respect the need for an off-leash area (and the fact that the existing rules are often ignored by some locals and many tourists)."

"Actually, could we have ONE beach where dogs are NOT off-lead?"

Encouraging volunteering (1D) was generally well received, however, comments warned against an overreliance on regular volunteers.

"Volunteerism has always been high and quite draining."

"A lot of the things on this list can happen anyway, but what I think is important is that we don't have an over reliance on volunteering in the community - we are a small number and even smaller number that coordinate things for people to do. Perhaps it is about support for grant writing to get funds to put things on and pay people for their time."

"The importance of volunteering is very important to all things going forward. Do not leave it to few."



Mallacoota skate park gets an upgrade thanks to the advocacy of Mallacoota youth (Photo: Rachel Mounsey)

Our youth

Respondents were resoundingly in favour of activities to help youth to prosper (2A) and this was the highest ranked project under this pillar. Comments were all favourable, indicating how important respondents felt it was for the future of the Mallacoota community.

"Take care of the youth for they are the future."

"Mallacoota has an amazing range of retired absolute top professionals, trades and artists etc, much better use could be made of their knowledge to assist those younger. Mentor lists needed and available to those who could benefit."

"Support for our students and teachers who have had to navigate and educate through all this mess. Encourage new educators to consider Mallacoota as an employment opportunity. Fresh educators bring new energy, fresh ideas and stimulation to students/teachers."

Emergency management

Four of the five top ranked projects related to emergency management. This indicates widespread community support for activities to strengthen resilience to emergencies. However, comments show confusion as to why these projects were put to a vote, why measures were not already in place, and who had responsibility for them.

"Most of the emergency service questions are already undertaken by various emergency services and health organisations. Emergency Management is controlled by legislation e.g. Emergency Management Act and EMV emergency management manual. A better way to learn about these protocols is to join an emergency service within Mallacoota."

"There is already a persons at risk list, located with the relevant local emergency authority and is updated annually. Our local emergency service agencies already work closely and liaise together regularly. MADRA has yet to make contact with the commanders of the local agencies to gain insight on what they achieve collaboratively during emergency events."

"Many items in the emergency management section should already be in existence, if not then why not?"

"You would imagine that Emergency Management suggestions would already be in place?"

"I don't feel able to prioritise. The Emergency Services are obviously a priority, but I haven't been able to attend any meetings, and I think the emergency services personnel would have a better idea about what's most important and whether or not these are all good/practical ideas."

A readily available evacuation plan (3D) and mechanism for improving emergency response crews (3B) were the second and third ranked projects respectively. Respondents left no comments under either project.

Establishing collaborative protocols and partnerships (3A) was the fourth ranked project. Comments reflect how important respondents consider this project.



The Mallacoota and Districts Bushfire Recovery Hub

“Also, it needs to be documented that the identified need for services still has not been met. We are now entering crisis point for many of these services. So, we as a community have moved from potential preventative measures to reactive measures and this will cause increase needs of the current services. Many of whom are at capacity.”

“Emergency management is also critical. Coordination between the various emergency service organisations is vital ie idea 3A. preventative measures to reactive measures and this will cause increase needs of the current services. Many of whom are at capacity.”

Improving continuous communication (3E) ranked fifth. Comments highlighted areas of communication respondents believe need to be addressed.

“Total negligence was exercised letting uninformed tourists into our town and area at the extreme height of a bad fire season.”

“Peoples’ wellbeing may be improved with the knowledge that the threat of bushfire is being reduced, to the area. Summer months create fear in people that is not always expressed; only when it’s over, do we breathe a sigh...that summer is over, we have a reprieve from that looming threat of fire.”

The arts, music and creative activities

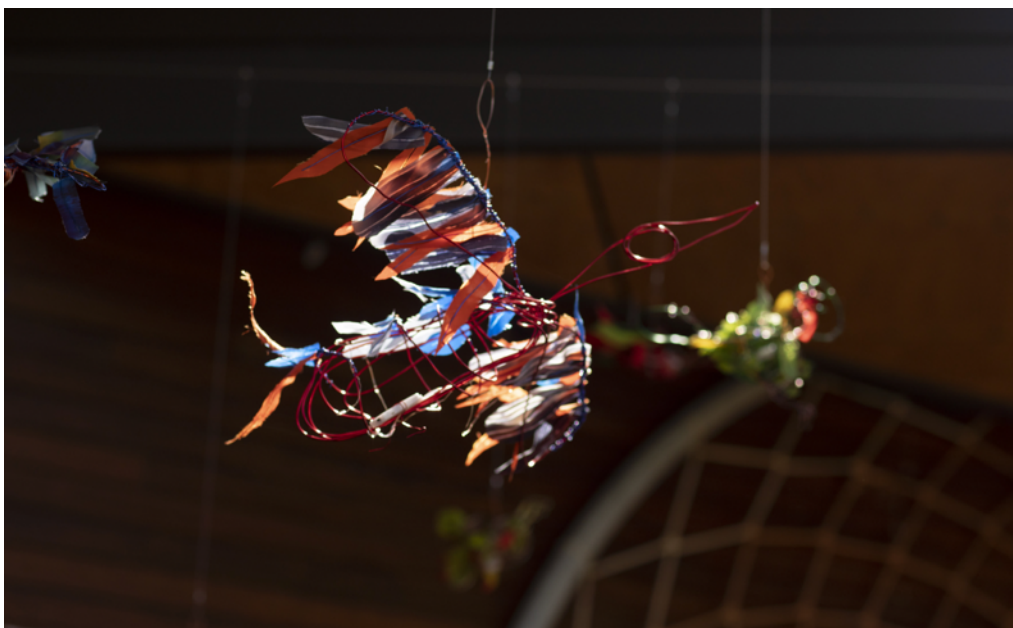
Respondents were mixed in their responses to projects in this category. Some felt that although appreciated, the arts should emerge organically. Some respondents were also concerned that the proposed activities did not cater sufficiently for young people.

“In the arts section many items will be driven by those wanting them; can't force demand.”

“To me this seems to be all about the ARTS, a lot of these ideas are in place and is this for the children (re: dance); it seems not.”

“Community Arts are vital for the well-being of people and we have so many talented people in this community.”

“Any space for drama/youth theatre/workshops?”



Our history

Comments under this category reflected the importance of the Indigenous community and culture to projects, despite there not being specific projects with an Indigenous focus.

"There is an opportunity to better incorporate the Indigenous heritage and history into Mallacoota area which was clearly well inhabited prior to European settlement. It would be good for Mallacoota to show leadership in this area and incorporate this in more projects."

"Activities that promote closer connection to country and Indigenous history would also be good."

"I would like to add for future consideration after attending the Wurinbeena Walkabout Drive-In on Saturday night. This was a healing and reconciliation event bringing together local people who have been traumatized by the fires and members of the surrounding Indigenous societies who have been deeply traumatized by loss of country etc. I would like the area of the caravan park where this historical event took place to be preserved as a meeting and keeping place where both local and Indigenous peoples can freely meet."



Buildings and Infrastructure

The bushfires revealed weaknesses in critical infrastructure and facilities, and destroyed culturally and historically significant objects and places. The community wanted to upgrade infrastructure and facilities to make them fire and future proof, as well as restoring iconic pieces of collective identity. This was viewed as crucial to recovery.



Detailed results

Total surveys submitted	434
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The following table provides the detailed results of each project on the survey form.

Table 4: Building and Infrastructure – yes/no results per project

1. Emergency facilities		Yes	Unsure	No
1A	Additional diesel fuel storage for emergency vehicles.	410	11	13
2. Town planning		Yes	Unsure	No
2A	Conduct a comprehensive independent fire safety audit to identify and assess critical infrastructure, risk and emergency resources etc.	381	24	29
2B	Review and update Mallacoota and district planning overlays and frameworks to incorporate 'bushfire lessons learned'.	369	31	34
2C	Expand the industrial estate to attract missing trades/services to our district.	316	33	85
3. Community and visitor facilities		Yes	Unsure	No
3A	Accessible boating – such as wheelchair hoists – and canoe launching facilities to enable people of all abilities to participate in lake activities.	349	23	62
3B	Information boards and signage to replace damaged items. New information boards could incorporate local artworks and QR codes with links to relevant information pertaining to sites of interest.	356	29	49
3C	Upgrade the Genoa Tennis Shed to a more user-friendly clubroom, member meeting space, storage facility for sports equipment, a space for social gathering, events, markets, fundraisers and emergency staging area.	341	37	56
3D	Refurbish the iconic Mallacoota Mud Brick Pavilion which is used for social events, performances and markets.	360	21	53
3E	Utilising existing fire roads to develop mountain bike trails.	342	23	69
3F	Enhance our recreation spaces and parks: park benches and picnic facilities (Bastion Point), fire breaks as walking/riding trails with picnic facilities, seating/parking, shade sails, exercise equipment.	347	35	52
3G	A Reflections Park, a place where people can remember the bushfires, and acknowledge those who provided assistance during and after the bushfires.	206	58	170
3H	A bike track to Eden via Gipsy Point and Genoa.	247	44	143
3I	A fit trail with outdoor exercise equipment and instructions installed along one or more walking tracks.	261	37	136
3J	Additional seating along main thoroughfares.	318	37	79
3K	A Mallacoota Village Square.	199	64	171
3L	Streetscaping and beautification works at Mallacoota and Genoa.	329	46	59
3 M	A community gymnasium. This might be part of the swimming pool project and or CHIRF's Mallacoota Wellbeing Recovery Centre or a separate project.	325	30	79
4. Heritage and cultural sites		Yes	Unsure	No
4A	Redevelop the Old Genoa School site to include recreational facilities, the fire shed, a multipurpose building and a BMX pump track.	293	45	96
4B	Improvements for the WWII Bunker Museum including stand- alone power, improved BBQ facilities, a Bush Tucker walk and the installation of a display/meeting room.	344	35	55
5. Access and safety		Yes	Unsure	No
5A	Funding for roads has been received, however, additional funds are needed to improve roads subject to inundation, regular grading and/or tarring of dirt roads, repairs to holes and unstable shoulders, roadside verge clearing.	358	35	41
5B	Flood depth indicators for roads in low lying areas subject to inundation.	291	47	96
5C	Development and implementation of a footpath plan for Mallacoota and District to improve connectivity, safety and access.	373	23	38
5D	Development and implementation of a kerb and guttering plan for roads in Mallacoota and District.	312	40	82
5E	Improving access at Bastion Point boat ramp to ensure it is fit for purpose for emergency and economic reasons, taking into account environmental considerations such as habitat and disposal of dredged materials.	292	33	109

The following table shows the 10 projects that received the highest proportion of votes under this pillar.

Table 5: Building and Infrastructure – adjusted total results by rank

Rank	Project		Yes	Unsure	No	Total	Adjusted total	Proportion Y of adjusted total	%
1 st	1A	Additional diesel fuel storage for emergency vehicles.	410	11	13	434	423	0.9693	97
2 nd	2A	Conduct a comprehensive independent fire safety audit.	381	24	29	434	410	0.9293	93
3 rd	2B	Review and update Mallacoota and District planning overlays and frameworks.	369	31	34	434	403	0.9156	91
4 th	5C	A footpath plan for Mallacoota and District to improve connectivity, safety and access.	373	23	38	434	411	0.9075	90
5 th	5A	Additional funds to improve roads.	358	35	41	434	399	0.8972	90
6 th	3B	Information boards and signage to replace damaged items.	356	29	49	434	405	0.8790	88
7 th	3D	Refurbish the iconic Mallacoota Mud Brick Pavilion.	360	21	53	434	413	0.8717	87
8 th	3F	Enhance our recreation spaces and parks.	347	35	52	434	399	0.8697	87
9 th	4B	Improvements for the WWII Bunker Museum including stand.	344	35	55	434	399	0.8622	86
10 th	3C	Upgrade the Genoa Tennis Shed.	341	37	56	434	397	0.8589	86
	3A	Accessible boating – such as wheelchair hoists – and canoe launching facilities.	349	23	62	434	411	0.8491	85
	3L	Streetscaping and beautification works at Mallacoota and Genoa.	329	46	59	434	388	0.8479	85
	3E	Utilising existing fire roads to develop mountain bike trails	342	23	69	434	411	0.8321	83
	3M	A community gymnasium.	325	30	79	434	404	0.8045	80
	3J	Additional seating along main thoroughfares.	318	37	79	434	397	0.8010	80
	5D	Development and implementation of a kerb and guttering plan for roads in Mallacoota and District.	312	40	82	434	394	0.7919	80
	2C	Expand the industrial estate to attract missing trades/services to our district.	316	33	85	434	401	0.7880	79
	4A	Redevelop the Old Genoa School site.	293	45	96	434	389	0.7532	75
	5B	Flood depth indicators for roads in low lying areas subject to inundation.	291	47	96	434	387	0.7519	75
	5E	Improving access at Bastion Point boat ramp.	292	33	109	434	401	0.7282	73
	3I	A fit trail with outdoor exercise equipment and instructions installed along one or more walking tracks.	261	37	136	434	397	0.6574	66
	3H	A bike track to Eden via Gipsy Point and Genoa.	247	44	143	434	390	0.6333	63
	3G	A Reflections Park.	206	58	170	434	376	0.5479	55
	3K	A Mallacoota Village Square.	199	64	171	434	370	0.5378	56

Commentary themes

Emergency facilities

The storage of emergency vehicle fuel (1A) was the highest ranked project under this pillar. There were no comments from respondents.

Town planning

Despite the fire safety audit (2A) being the second ranked project, comments indicate the activity was contentious. A common theme was the need to ensure the audit was conducted by an independent body, and that more information was needed before respondents could make a decision.

"Safety audit must be conducted by an INDEPENDENT body to avoid deliberate misrepresentation to suit agency agendas and departmental budgets."

"I need further information. It seems like another classic waste of time, effort and money with no real outcomes."

"Fire safety audits - perhaps a better approach is to wait for the outcomes of the various meetings e.g. IGEM [sic] and review the findings and comment on gaps or actions."

"Upgrading of main hall should be a priority, plus creating an actual fire refuge area."

"A fire safety audit would be good if you knew the persons doing the job had no affiliation to any groups and were totally independent."

"We shouldn't be asked to prioritise basic infrastructure projects such as a footpath plan, or kerb & guttering, or flood depth indicators, or a fire safety audit. These should automatically be part of a civic infrastructure program by Council and other authorities."

The project to update Mallacoota and District planning overlays (2B) was ranked third. No comments were left.

Community and visitor facilities

Four of the top 10 ranked projects under this pillar were voted from this category, indicating how important respondents felt facilities were to recovery.

Respondent supported upgrades to boards and signage (3B), making this the sixth ranked project.

"Info boards good but, in keeping with their locations, s/b 'understated' whatever their content."

"Mallacoota has way too many signs."



Refurbishing the Mallacoota Mud Brick Pavilion (3D) ranked seventh. Only one respondent commented indicating wide spread support for the project.

"There are many projects that are necessary that I have not included in my top 10 that have been excluded simply because they will likely happen anyway e.g. the upgrade of the Muddie [sic]."

The proposal to enhance recreational spaces (3F) ranked eighth. Respondents made quite a few suggestions for how these spaces could be enhanced, including more BBQs and parking.

"It would be great if the paddocks on Lakeside Drive near the fishing jetties could be used for a state-of-the-art playground and community garden to use in the busy times. Also, continuation of the footpath in the Vista/Radley reserve."

"Community utilization of the paddocks in front of Lakeside Drive, installation of playground/BBQs near the fishing jetties."

"We need another complete set of BBQs with coverage (weather) at Betka."

"Beach, as when the summer season brings Mallacoota lots of visitors, the two sets of BBQs are not enough."

"No, but yes to fire breaks as walking/riding trails with picnic facilities."

"Better parking and access to Bastion Point beach. Additional toilet facility, picnic and park area town side of stair access."

"As time goes on parking will become more difficult in and around the town. This, I feel, needs priority consideration."

The project to upgrade the Genoa Tennis Shed (3C) ranked tenth, and only received one comment.

"Is this going to make Genoa's existing very superior Community Hall redundant?"

While not making it to the top 10, comments for accessible boating (3A) were predominately in support of overdue improvements.

"Our jetties need replacing and improving. And we need more of them."

"We need to get the jetties around the Top and Bottom Lake restored. Genoa River, Double Creek, Cape Horn, the jetty opposite Alan Head (not sure what it is called). These essential recreational facilities have been awaiting repair for over 15 months. This is too long. The congestion over Easter was very noticeable and will put off tourists if it is not addressed urgently."

"Don't understand need for more work on Bastion Point boat ramp - hasn't enough been done there, or will you be improving its environmental impacts, and how?"



Respondents generally supported using fire roads for mountain bike trails (3E). Comments showed concerns about ensuring trails were passive and shared.

"Great job, hope that development of mountain bike trails will not cut out horse riders that already use the tails. Mallaquito Pony Club would like some further information about this."

"Proposed 'bike' tracks should not be for motorised trail bikes. Some existing walking paths are rather narrow, and mountain bike riders can tend to be travelling at speed, and at time listening to music - as such may not be aware of other pedestrian users on the track. If tracks are to be 'multi' use there should be signage that this is a shared pathway and bikes give way to walkers AT ALL TIMES!"

"Making use of the existing fire trails is a cost efficient and clever idea to bring more people to town to enjoy the environment, without changing the human footprint in the region."

Although the reflections park (3G) did not make the top 10, there was a common sentiment that the community needed to 'look forward'.

"Future, forget the fire."

"I would prefer a place to look forward to a brighter future rather than reflect on the disaster of the bushfire. I would suggest a demonstration site, where a degraded natural space is rehabilitated into an example of what the best balance of fire safety, biodiversity and public amenity looks like. I would suggest the corner of the Terra Nova firebreak and Nelson Drive as one possible location, (it appears to be an area that was previously disturbed by machinery and let to grow back as thick under-storey regen, then burnt by the bushfire). If we could sit there happily and have a picnic, be able to manage it for fire safety effectively AND it had much improved biodiversity outcomes from what it was previously I think we could hold it up as an example of what the right balance looks like. If we could agree as a community what this looks like in a public space, then it would demonstrate that we are moving to a better place and not repeating the mistakes of the past."

"3f and 3g should be made one in the same at Bastion Pt. Remove the depressing black sticks left from the fire. This is having a big effect on delaying many people in town from having a quicker recovery. Replace them with lawn area, park tables and chairs overlooking the view to Gabo similar to the Betka river picnic area."

Beautification works (3L) were generally supported but with considered stipulations for maintaining the landscape.

"It is very important to me that any upgrades to the district building and infrastructure are in keeping with the current town landscape and character. I would be disappointed to see additional infrastructure constructed that isn't in sympathy with the natural features and character of the area. The development at Bastion Point is a good example where new works were not in sympathy with the existing landscape or character. It looks out of place and would be better suited to the St Kilda esplanade in Melbourne."

"Concerned about the impact that building works would have given the shire's track record of installing bright lime green facades and making Mallacoota look like Bairnsdale. Designs and work in the past have shown no sympathy to the natural environment and the materials and colour choices appear to be done in the cheapest possible way with little consideration of the natural beauty of Mallacoota."

"I think it is very important in any beautification projects to make much more careful selections of plants. How fire resistant are they? They should be chosen with natives in mind, specifically natives that provide food or textiles for humans or benefits for native wildlife. Ease of care should also be a factor, as well as making sure they are not going to block views of oncoming traffic for even low riding vehicles. While technically a native, and easy to care for, agapanthus have been so over planted along roadsides and in subdivisions that they are now being considered a weed by many. The "back to nature" feel of Mallacoota should be preserved and accentuated."

Comments for the community gymnasium (3M) indicated widespread support. Quite a few respondents mentioned a swimming pool, which also appeared across other survey categories.

"I would also like to see a community gym and a heated pool for all populations to exercise safely. And for swimming lessons as we currently run lessons for school at the pub pool which is inappropriate. All of these projects bring the community together in a positive and healthy way."

"A community gymnasium would benefit the whole community, so too would a community pool."

"Given the high average age of residents in Mallacoota, infrastructure that assists our ability to age in place e.g., safer mobility options and exercise facilities (e.g. a seniors outdoor exercise park) and particularly a hydro-therapy pool, is a very high priority."

"Swimming pool so our children get sufficient swimming lessons and elderly can exercise."

Heritage and cultural sites

The project to improve the WWII Bunker Museum (4B) ranked ninth and was generally supported in the comments. One respondent raised concerns over safety and location.

"Fire shed and multipurpose building (museum?) I understand and support but given the existing Community Hall is on the opposite side of the Princes Highway, I cannot see why anyone would want to encourage children whose families may be attending an event at the hall to cross the highway to use recreational facilities - if not at the hall why would they be out there??"

The proposal to redevelop the old Genoa school site (4A) received one of the lowest votes for this category. Comments indicated concerns of safe access to the area.

"I don't think that the old Genoa school site is a suitable location for the BMX pump track and other recreational facilities as it is on the highway without easy and safe access, especially for children. These

facilities would be better located at the recreation reserve (tennis court area) where there is ample room, will be able to be safely accessed once the bridge is completed and also able to be used by visitors staying at the old caravan park."

"The pump track at Genoa would be better placed at the recreation space near the tennis courts, safer access than the old school grounds."

Access and safety

The footpath plan (5C) ranked fourth, with respondents advising that footpaths needed to be urgently improved.

"'Door to Store' footpath access for all ages (making us an All Ages-friendly Community)."

"To include where possible disabled access."

"Need a footpath urgently going up MIRRABOOKA DRV near corner of LAKESIDE DRV before someone gets killed."

"Provide wider footpath in front of shops/post office etc and cover by a new unifying roof."

There was generally strong support for road improvements (5A) and this was the fifth ranked project. While there appeared no opposing comments from respondents, a few stipulations were requested.

"Yes, but not a carte blanche to remove any tree that might possibly be dangerous."

"Don't remove our curves. It is how our visitors and we 'slow down' as we approach our special town."

Despite not making it to the top 10, Bastion Point Boat Ramp (5E) received the second-highest number of comments, evenly opposed and supported.

"Our Bastion Point Boat Ramp proved to be a valuable asset for Mallacoota, and can be much improved for all future boat safety."

"The bushfire demonstrated how important the Bastion Point Boat Ramp is to the town. Thought should be given to making it usable at all times."

"Move the boat ramp from Bastion Point, remove the wall and return the site to its natural state. The rocky shores ecology to the west of the boat ramp has been totally obliterated by the constant dredging. Every dredge amounts to a major pollution incident. Opposite the airport house (or where it used to be) would be ideal for a boat ramp (I understand it was the best choice initially but was ignored by EGSC). It is a natural harbour with no hard engineering required in the marine environment. Plenty of space on the airport house block and adjacent paddock for car and boat trailer parking."

"As little as possible needs to be done at Bastion Point. We do not need more boating facilities but we do need better removal of sand from dredging. Our swimming beach needs to remain prominent and is an important all-abilities access point. Stop having it degraded as an industrial zone. The beach is for the town not just to facilitate part-time boat users."

"The current boat ramp is a constant accident waiting to happen and needs urgent attention to rectify."

Similar to comments under the People and Wellbeing pillar, respondents raised concerns for the elderly despite this not being a direct survey question.

"No matter the project, it still needs to be catering to all ages, abilities, use of mobility aids or prams etc. I have found this not be considered sufficiently for some projects and activities to date, which concerns me significantly in our ageing/aged population.

"Access for elderly and handicapped to patrolled beaches."

"Given the age group of permanent residents and the majority of tourists to the area it makes sense to improve footpaths and access around the town for aging and disabled persons."

"We need a clearly defined safest place for ELDERLY, WALKING FRAMES, WHEEL CHAIRS etc to go to in emergency even if it isn't 100%. Many of us have nowhere to evacuate to."

"Servicing the aged & youth in our community to have enjoyment in safety, exercise, freely in a natural habitat."

As with comments under the People and Wellbeing pillar, respondents questioned the ownership of infrastructure projects.

"A lot of these projects should lie with the responsibility of the council and local government."

"There are many projects listed here that I feel should already be the responsibility of the EGSC to deliver to the community. In my opinion it's best to focus on the existing infrastructure and recreational activities in the town rather than trying to start completely new projects."

"We shouldn't be asked to prioritise basic infrastructure projects such as a footpath plan, or kerb & guttering, or flood depth indicators, or a fire safety audit. These should automatically be part of a civic infrastructure program by Council and other authorities."



Mallacoota Wharf

Environment and Biodiversity

Mallacoota and District communities recognise the natural environment as their district's biggest asset. Proposed projects focused on activities which would balance reducing the risks of bushfires while protecting the natural environment. Community members wanted to support and promote sustainable tourism in line with community values, encourage sustainable and renewable energy projects and scientifically backed, viable and well-resourced fuel management programs.

Detailed results

Total surveys submitted	388
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The following table provides the detailed results of each project on the survey form.

Table 6: Environment and Biodiversity, yes/no results per project

1. Natural environment priorities		Yes	Unsure	No
1A	Foster partnerships for preserving, promoting and protecting our natural environment (including Parks Victoria, DELWP, universities, environmental organisations and agencies).	323	39	26
1B	Support and promote sustainable tourism in keeping with our natural and community values.	331	35	22
1C	Establish a post-bushfires baseline to inform conservation, regeneration and repopulation goals and initiatives. (For example, the 2016 Bush Blitz recorded flora and fauna species, another similar exercise post the bushfires will determine the extent of damage.)	321	42	25
2. On ground works		Yes	Unsure	No
2A	Building on the work of existing volunteer groups and agencies, ongoing remedial works including weed removal, coast care, pest control, erosion control and revegetation projects.	350	31	7
2B	A nursery for growing endangered plants and plants for regeneration and sale.	300	55	33
3. Fuel management		Yes	Unsure	No
3A	Overseeing the implementation of Fuel Management Action Plans.	334	33	21
3B	An annual review of Fuel Management Action Plans.	333	35	20
3C	Exploring possibilities for using firebreaks for recreational opportunities.	312	38	38
4. Land management industry		Yes	Unsure	No
4A	Seek additional human resources for protection and management of our wilderness environment inducing volunteer and training opportunities.	327	40	21

The following table shows the five projects that received the highest proportion of votes under this pillar.

Table 7: Environment and Biodiversity – adjusted total results by rank

Rank	Project		Yes	Unsure	No	Total	Adjusted total	Proportion Y of adjusted total	%
1 st	2A	Building on the work of existing volunteer groups and agencies.	350	31	7	388	357	0.9804	99
2 nd	3B	An annual review of Fuel Management Action Plans.	333	35	20	388	353	0.9433	94
3 rd	3A	Overseeing the implementation of Fuel Management Action Plans.	334	33	21	388	355	0.9408	94
4 th	4A	Seek additional human resources for protection and management of our wilderness environment inducing volunteer and training opportunities.	327	40	21	388	348	0.9397	94
5 th	1B	Support and promote sustainable tourism in keeping with our natural and community values.	331	35	22	388	353	0.9377	94
	1C	Establish a post-bushfires baseline to inform conservation, regeneration and repopulation goals and initiatives.	321	42	25	388	346	0.9277	93
	1A	Foster partnerships for preserving, promoting and protecting our natural environment.	323	39	26	388	349	0.9255	92
	2B	A nursery for growing endangered plants and plants for regeneration and sale.	300	55	33	388	333	0.9009	90
	3C	Exploring possibilities for using firebreaks for recreational opportunities.	312	38	38	388	350	0.8914	89

Commentary themes

Natural environment priorities

A clear theme running through all survey pillars was the value the community places on the natural environment. In line with this, respondents left considerable comments on projects under this category, with many stipulating that any activity must take into consideration the long-term future of the environment.

"In my opinion, protecting and enhancing the natural environment is critical to the future health and well-being of the Mallacoota and District community. I believe it's largely what brings people to the area. Consequently, I am surprised there aren't more projects in the Environment and Biodiversity category."

"Preservation, protection and promotion of our natural environment is of utmost importance as that is where I feel our greatest and most irreplaceable loss occurred during the fires. Each of these ideas should be very important to Mallacoota."

"It has been my observation that the majority of environmental organisations and universities - academics and researchers (particularly those linked to the study of climate change and ecology) - are sadly incapable of seeing the big picture when it comes to taking practical action to protect our environment. Their obsession with limited species, a lack of any practical experience in the bush and an apparent ignorance of relevant history is more likely to contribute to the destruction of our environment than its preservation."

"All projects need to be implemented with their impacts on climate change taken into consideration. Taking action to reduce carbon emissions is more important in the long term than cutting down trees to reduce fire risks."



Bastion Point, Mallacoota

Sustainable tourism (1B) ranked fifth and attracted only minor opposition and comment.

“Atmospheric Warming, degeneration of bioms [sic], human impact on natural environment, the objectification and subsequent exploitation of living creatures both wild and agricultural, mass extinctions in all classes of organisms and flora, plastics, water degradation, burning carbon are the most important issues facing our community both locally and nationally. We as a community need to move away from tourism, encourage projects in vegetarian local food security, take plastics out of the construction industry, discourage recreation that is hydro-carbon intensive and encourage a rigorous return-to-source program on packaging. We hold the fate of our children and their children in our hands. Failure to act is tantamount to a genocide of our own species and a major degeneration of planetary biodiversity.”

While not making the top five, fostering partnerships (1A) attracted both positive and negative comments.

“Our main focus should be learning by our mistakes, our government departments are totally restricted, they cannot perform because of the ridiculous ongoing rules and regs. The severity of last summer’s fires may not have been as devastating if proven bush practices were allowed.”

“Parks DELWP they already have their fire management plans. I feel we need a lot more fire breaks around Mallacoota to make the town a safer place to be, because with the way things are going I for one will not feel safe this summer season.”

“Very important to retain as much of the environmental character around Mallacoota, which makes the place so unique and special, as possible. Partnerships with organisations to attract resources also very important.”

While establishing a post-bushfires baseline (1C) did not make the top five, this activity drew significant comment, reflecting the importance respondents place on preserving and maintaining the environment.

“A baseline is important that can be used to help assess how the environment might change but also to assess whether the activities undertaken were positive negative or had no impact. E.g. does feeding animals result in weed issues or over browse [sic] of regenerating species, which plants are worth planting and which naturally respond in abundance, which invasive species respond quickly and are there times when these species are most easily targeted. I would be more supportive of sustainable tourism if it was clearly ecologically sustainable and not just a green wash which often it is.”

“I feel that due to the fact that fire has been all but eliminated in the township and the immediate area around the township through to Karbeethong. That a few plant species have not been controlled by fire leading to a dominant few dictating the lack of biodiversity in these areas. As we are responsible for the no burn areas, we should also be responsible to monitor & compensate by remedial of some species to bring back a balance in & around the township & in turn re-establish a less fire prone & more diverse landscape, this would - 1: beautify the township, 2: reduce the fire danger, 3: re-establish look & more consistent with burnt areas. To establish gardens etc. in around town, would allowable to see our amazing local species without the need to travel & those with limited ability could also experience our local beauty.”

“Obvious enough, but to say we aim to remind regularly of the changed and changing nature of our environment with the changed and changing climate and the need to be flexible and dynamic in creating and implementing plans.”

“Cool fuel reduction and regeneration burns should be carried out as a priority to ensure a healthy ecosystem for native flora and fauna. This has been sadly neglected since Croajingolong National Park was gazetted in the early 1980s. Huge fuel loads need to be controlled as was the case prior to NP lockup and leave alone mentality.”

“Through carefully selected re-vegetation, introduce greater vibrancy in Spring and colours in Autumn around the village, camp ground and Lakeside Drive (for example).”

“I wish to see the black sticks and all dead vegetation removed and the border of the town environment managed to be kept clear in a natural looking way that still provides a sustainable firebreak. I wish to see public

spaces such as foreshore Bastion Point Road, perimeter of golf club and Mortimer Paddock cleared of dead trees and weed growth and replanted with suitable species of grasses or heathland in between surviving trees.”

On ground works

Building on the work of existing volunteer groups and agencies (2A) was the highest ranked project under this pillar. The few comments indicated the community were satisfied with this project.

“More funding for park staff and research into plant communities post fire.”

“Camera stations to record animal movements within those communities plus GPS locations of significant trees within park e.g. stag trees for hollows and old growth trees.”

Comments for a nursery for growing endangered plants (2B) indicate the project was already established, which may explain the low ranking of this project.

“Friends of Mallacoota have started by establishing a hothouse to propagate endangered and native species for revegetation.”

“2B: this is already in place.”

“Like to see nursery but unclear who would pay. An initiative to reach wider than Mallacoota would need business plan/model.”

Fuel management

The two fuel management projects (3B and 3A) and were met with overwhelming support being the second and third ranked projects respectively. However, similar to comments made under the People and Wellbeing pillar, several respondents questioned why authorities and government were not managing these responsibilities.

“Fuel Management and fire prevention/minimisation is the single most important initiative that needs to come out of the Mallacoota and District Recovery in my opinion, is thus mandatory and should not even be subject to voting. As opposed to previous chapters, though, I have included a vote on this simply because it is so important.”

“I think that it is appalling that we are not able to trust the various government agencies responsible for the fuel management to do their jobs adequately - especially after our Black Summer.”

“More fuel reduction. Should be burning off every year and there should be less red tape to get it done locally.”

Land management industry

The project seeking additional human resources to protect and mandate the wilderness (4A) was ranked fourth. There were no comments under this project.

A note on comments related to Indigenous involvement

Across the various survey categories and proposed projects, respondents felt strongly that the Indigenous community should be invited to help implement the recovery and management of the natural environment. Seeking help from traditional landowners was a common theme throughout the survey, particularly within Environment and Biodiversity.

"I believe Fuel Management/Reduction should be done in conjunction with and in respect to traditional land owners - there is currently a pause of some fuel management practices on Gunai-Kurnai Country due to protests over a lack of traditional land owner consultation. I feel we should learn from this and promote appropriate and respectful fuel management practices."

"I would really like to see an Indigenous approach to fuel management. i.e. cool burning. This protects flora and fauna as well as providing fuel management."

"You need to include Traditional owner groups in all of the above. They should have the opportunity to implement and manage everything not the other groups they can work hand in hand."

"Being mindful and inclusive of our First Nation peoples' knowledge on the environment and their understandings of the original flora/vegetation in the areas plus their knowledge and sharing that knowledge on traditional burning is fundamental in our recovery."



Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust (Photo: courtesy LTAT Facebook page)

Business and Economy

The Mallacoota community recognised the importance of a strong economy for realising their vision for a resilient, safe, and vibrant community. Proposed projects to support long-term economic recovery focused on turning around the local economy and making good economic losses, promoting greater year-round economic diversity and balancing tourism with the wishes of permanent residents.

Detailed results

Total surveys submitted	383
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The following table provides the detailed results of each project on the survey form.

Table 8: Business and Economy – yes/no results per project

1. More strings to our economic bow		Yes	Unsure	No
1A	Events with a local or topical theme. Ideas include film festivals featuring local productions, an annual Forest Fire Management conference in Winter and reinvigoration of the Easter Festival.	324	24	35
1B	Aquaculture, horticulture and food including locally caught and harvested foods, propagation of native plants, cooking classes, and regional collaborations.	309	35	39
2. Tourism opportunities		Yes	Unsure	No
2A	Beautification projects to make our district more attractive, including street scaping and refurbishment projects.	290	40	53
2B	Becoming part of regional food, art, sport and other trails.	307	37	39
2C	Enhancing the Mallacoota and District brand to appeal to a range of market segments including building our environmental credentials through ecotourism and projects such as Dark Skies.	282	45	56
3. Digital recovery		Yes	Unsure	No
3A	A business centre to support local businesses in a range of activities including information technology, business planning, website development etc.	269	53	61
3B	Support to establish and run online businesses.	267	65	51
3C	Support and opportunities to enable people to work from home.	287	57	39
4. Buy local		Yes	Unsure	No
4A	Participation in online campaigns such as Click for Vic, Buy from the Bush and Empty Esky.	259	62	62
4B	Encourage greater participation in the local Artisans and Produce market.	316	42	25
4C	Support for, and establishment of, social enterprises (businesses which trade intentionally to tackle social problems, provide access to employment and training or help the environment).	291	64	28
5. Environmental education and training		Yes	Unsure	No
5A	An environmental studies program including information about local flora and fauna, guided bush walks and mini field days.	315	34	34
5B	Establish a Mallacoota Environment Education and Research Centre (MEERC).	288	43	52
5C	Associated with a MEERC (see 5B above), projects including residential workshops with visiting academics, an observatory and community owned telescope, and a longitudinal estuarine study.	278	51	54
5D	Land Management Industry certification and training together with local employment in land management projects.	298	51	34

The following table shows the five projects that received the highest proportion of votes under this pillar.

Table 9: Business and Economy – adjusted total results by rank

Rank	Project		Yes	Unsure	No	Total	Adjusted total	Proportion Y of adjusted total	%
1 st	4B	Encourage greater participation in the local Artisans and Produce market.	316	42	25	383	341	0.92669	93
2 nd	4C	Support for, and establishment of, social enterprises.	291	64	28	383	319	0.91223	91
3 rd	5A	An environmental studies program.	315	34	34	383	349	0.90258	90
4 th	1A	Events with a local or topical theme.	324	24	35	383	359	0.90251	90
5 th	5D	Land Management Industry certification and training.	298	51	34	383	332	0.89759	90
	1B	Aquaculture, horticulture and food including locally caught and harvested foods.	309	35	39	383	348	0.88793	89
	2B	Becoming part of regional food, art, sport and other trails.	307	37	39	383	346	0.88728	89
	3C	Support and opportunities to enable people to work from home.	287	57	39	383	326	0.88037	88
	5B	Establish a Mallacoota Environment Education and Research Centre (MEERC).	288	43	52	383	340	0.84706	85
	2A	Beautification projects to make our district more attractive.	290	40	53	383	343	0.84548	84
	3B	Support to establish and run online businesses.	267	65	51	383	318	0.83962	84
	5C	Associated with a MEERC, projects including residential workshops with visiting academics, an observatory and community owned telescope, and a longitudinal estuarine study.	278	51	54	383	332	0.83735	84
	2C	Enhancing the Mallacoota and District brand.	282	45	56	383	338	0.83432	83
	3A	A business centre to support local businesses.	269	53	61	383	330	0.81515	81
	4A	Participation in online campaigns such as Click for Vic, Buy from the Bush and Empty Esky.	259	62	62	383	321	0.80685	81

Commentary themes

More strings to our economic bow

Support for local economies was evident with respondents calling for greater investment in business activities.

"There is scope for all these projects to be linked and work collaboratively together. It is chicken and egg. To attract more people off peak we need our cafes to stay open and feed them and present as a vibrant happening little town. Yet right now businesses find it hard to stay open for winter. A coordinated strategic approach would help everyone."

"I feel only projects that the entire community have access to should be funded. Using the money where only a few business owners, or those savvy to what is going on, can capitalize on the funds happens a lot and is always detrimental to those most in need as they are often least educated and aware of the funds being put in place to acquire. Because of that, I believe community projects that everyone has access to are the best use of funds."

"We do not have any true leaders in the business and tourism sector and I think this is hampering efforts for growth. True leadership will acknowledge potential business growth without personal opinion clouding judgment. A unified approach will lead to success however I'm sceptical this could occur without a strong BTA."

"Mallacoota needs to diversify its economic base to provide a sufficient range of training and employment opportunities."

Events with a local or topical theme (1A) proposal was the fourth ranked project. The few comments indicated little opposition.

"Events and festivals need to be created for off-peak periods."

"I'm only supporting the Forest Fire Management Conference and don't give a rats [sic] about any other events which would happen in due course anyway if the right people want."

While the aquaculture project (1B) did not make the top five, there was support for the project. Comments indicate strong community feeling over this.

"John Wood-Ingram's idea from many years ago: Looking into having an abalone licence allocated to the Mallacoota district communities - a social enterprise; creates employment; and all profits go back into the community."

"As a business owner that has the opportunity to expand core employment, I am baffled as to why aquaculture has been included as we are the only aquaculture licence I am aware of and MADRA did not support us when requested."

"Relying on traditional income streams such as tourism and abalone have been severely exposed with bushfires and COVID. Support for smaller businesses needs to be shown."

"Actual support for local businesses is needed, written support for vital grants that are current: we are a sustainable aquaculture business that cannot take the next step of growth including vital employment etc because we are not being supported through local advocates or local and state government to secure these grants. We are looking to go to NSW to progress due to the lack of support. We are the oldest offshore aquaculture site in Vic and the only abalone Pearl producers in Aus, and have the ability to safely and sustainably culture upwards of 15t of abalone product that can go through local cannery. We could employ up to 15 people. The hardest hurdle is internal corruption in local and state government organisations that can be broken down by actual support from MADRA and positive communication moving forward."

Tourism opportunities

Tourism opportunities received the greatest number of comments for this category despite the projects not making the top five. Most comments didn't reference a specific project but revealed a desire to support local businesses beyond the tourism market.

"Please take care of locals so locals can stay & work & survive in our beloved town. There's so much more to Mallacoota than tourism. Whilst amazing, tourism can also push locals out of their home town making it hard to encourage our next generation to stay. Locals are the backbone & strength of any successful, thriving community."

"Options are too selective and do not consider a range of alternatives so cannot be prioritised. The proffered options all involve importing visitors which is ok, but no consideration is given to the necessary population/growth to ensure viability of current businesses, all of which appear to be struggling. Population will decline naturally unless there is sustained growth to replace departures and natural decrease."

"Mallacoota needs time to breathe and recover. This is a unique, remote place loved and enjoyed for the possibility of peace and quiet in exceptional natural surroundings. To date, tourism efforts here appear focused on attracting people with big boats and jet skis who want to race around noisily, regardless of the detrimental impact on others. There are many other places which have already bought into that type of tourism and most of us never want to go there."

"Economic diversification, especially reducing the reliance on tourism, should be a priority."

"Focus on local/sustainable rather than external tourism."

"Bigger isn't always better. The environment can be loved to death by businesses and wealth being more important. Do not spoil the very reason tourists come to Mallacoota by over development, over populating and promotion."

"We do not have any true leaders in the business and tourism sector and I think this is hampering efforts for growth."



(Photo: Rachel Mounsey)

While not making the top five, many respondents supported the beautification and street scaping project (2A) with comments offering suggestions and some stipulations.

"Street beautification is too broad a term. If you are just going to plant agapanthus and oleander everywhere like they have through the rest of Australia, it is just going to ruin the natural feel of Mallacoota. I am very against that."

"Maurice Ave Streetscape yes, others no."

"Beautifying the township area with cleaning and managing Lakeside, Shady Gully, Mortimers and Bastion Point to create accessible, safe and attractive contemplation clean and accessible native garden areas, shared 'all abilities' paths and trails etc."

"Please do not take any parking away from the main street, beautify it - yes please."



Respondents had mixed views on which ecotourism markets (2C) segments to consider, and this did not make the top five.

"Any business and economy considerations should target our natural environment. We need to attract more eco-tourism rather than just fisher people and boaters/jet skiers who simply want to burn fuel and empty our waters of life for fun."

"Tourism is ecological death and promotes inequality. We need to encourage real industries and jobs and local self-sufficiency."

"Dark sky tourism is a great idea, and Mallacoota is an ideal (and rare) location. Engaging with local and traditional agricultural practises also taps into emerging but meaningful industry."

"I think any investment in new businesses in Mallacoota and District should be complementary to the primary sector business of tourism. People come to Mallacoota to holiday for specific reasons and we need to fully

understand why so that we don't compromise our appeal - this will require market research which needs to be planned and analysed by market research professionals."

"Any business ideas are Academic unless the town is made Safer. Unmanaged bush needs to be taken further away. Climate change and extremes will be with us for decades and threaten Mallacoota with future Insurance becoming unaffordable as in parts of QLD. Telescope will simply not work for long as it is a dry sky pursuit. Mallacoota has notoriously cloudy skies. Amateur Astronomers would not come this far for questionable views. Same with dark skies."

Digital recovery

This category, although supported, was not prioritised by respondents. Comments raised concerns for how this type of investment should be implemented.

"I feel only projects that the entire community have access to should be funded. Using the money where only a few business owners, or those savvy to what is going on, can capitalize on the funds happens a lot and is always detrimental to those most in need as they are often least educated and aware of the funds being put in place to acquire. Because of that, I believe community projects that everyone has access to are the best use of funds."

"There is a big need for many community groups to have ongoing learning and mentoring in governance, grant writing, grant acquittals, and financial management. This could all happen out of a business centre."

"Good quality internet for people is an absolute priority. Too many people relying on 4G sim cards in a modem which is totally unusable in busier times in town - a period which is extending as town seems busier. Unable to work at home, even load an email if you do not have connection to the ADSL. No new ports for new homes being built either. During previous home learning periods in lockdown communication with students was incredibly hard, and the quality of the internet was not up to the job at all - with there still being some potential for a repeat of covid lockdowns this is a concern."

"The creation of a "Business" centre could help to build a platform for a local industry whose primary resource is ideas. This would build on our communities most abundant and sustainable resource - art, music and literature. For example, writing musical scores for film or documentary, art for creative animation, advertising or website content, stories/film/photography, digital content creation (e.g. YouTube channels), gaming production (requires story, music, characters, animation, coding)."

"Online businesses would suffer supply and shipping problems but maybe surmountable."

"There is a big need for many community groups to have ongoing learning and mentoring in governance, grant writing, grant acquittals, and financial management. This could all happen out of a business centre."

Buy local

Comments across the various categories under this pillar displayed support for local business, however two out of the three proposed projects in this category did not receive overwhelming support.

Encouraging greater participation in the local artisan and produce markets (4B) was the highest ranked project under this pillar. Only one respondent commented, indicating no opposition.

"Bringing back the joy of the big markets, festivals would be great for the town economically and socially. I would love to see us dive more into eco-tourism and environmental education as this is what draws many of us here and the most precious thing to us."

The project to establish social enterprises (4C) ranked second. This project attracted only one comment, indicating general support.

"4C can be a killer. People come to Mallacoota to feel good, not to tackle problems that fill the air waves every day. Businesses should cooperate and cover each other, to provide a full restful resort experience. Grow the pie rather than arguing about shares."

Further comments supported this category by proposing their own ideas.

"Would like to see the opportunity for development of more retail spaces to allow new businesses to open in Mallacoota."

"Buy Local should also include Bank Local."

Environmental education and training

Respondents were passionate about preserving their natural environment.

"All projects should meet stringent criteria about being environmentally sustainable and use clean energy targets!"

"These are all really great ideas. My only suggestion would be that I think we need to always be mindful of how environmentally vulnerable the Mallacoota & surrounding district is especially after the fires. I think it is imperative that any future planning or expansion of businesses and the economy absolutely must take into account the importance of the local environment making sure that the natural environment is protected & enhanced for the survival of what is left of our incredible flora and fauna."

The environmental studies program (5A) was the third ranked project. Other projects in this category received little opposition but comments provided stipulations and suggestions.

"5A and 5B environmental educational research inclusive of marine studies could create a local biosphere of learnings, specialist skills and wonderful opportunities for young and old."

Land Management Industry certification and training (5D) ranked fifth with respondents concerned about ensuring community safety.

"Land management schemes could be referenced to local Aboriginal people in many of their areas of expertise."

"Any business ideas are Academic unless the town is made Safer. Unmanaged bush needs to be taken further away. Climate change and extremes will be with us for decades, and threaten Mallacoota with future Insurance becoming unaffordable as in parts of QLD."

"5A to 5D get my support only if they are strongly focused on improving and promoting community safety by achieving healthy forests through increased fuel reduction burning in the broader landscape. Without this focus I could not see the point in any of it as it will all burn again far sooner than anyone realises."

While establishing Mallacoota Environment Education and Research Centre (MEERC) (5B) did not make the top five, it was generally supported.

"Develop the MEERC in collaboration with Traditional Owner groups. It could be a Cultural and Environmental Centre."

"MEERC would explore and place the emphasis on our incredible natural environment - and thereby hopefully preserve it. Parks should also be better resourced to encourage visitors who appreciate unspoilt beauty. There are few places like Mallacoota left in Australia and it needs to be protected - we mustn't wreck where we have chosen to live because it is different and undeveloped and a few people would benefit from its exploitation."



*Commemorative log placed at the Mallacoota Wharf
to honour fire fighters and the community*