



Chairperson's Report 2023

MADRA Annual General Meeting, 31 October 2023

It is an honour and a privilege to acknowledge the many people who have gone before us as team members and contributors to what MADRA has become and I'm proud to talk to you tonight about our most recent achievements and that which is yet to come.

As you know, MADRA was set up to lead our town through its recovery from the Black Summer bushfires which impacted the town so seriously. Little did we know back then about the impacts that were still to come. Since then, we have had floods, a pandemic and upheavals across the world. The impact of climate change is showing its force everywhere and our resilience, cooperation and support of each other are needed as much as ever. These things have impacted our residents who lost homes more than anyone and they have had the most difficult years of all of us. I'd like to especially acknowledge their resilience, strength, patience, and support of each other through an inexplicably tough period that is far from over.

Because of the complexity and importance of our continued recovery journey, two things stand out to us as being essential: The first is to stay deeply connected to the vision articulated to us in the Recovery Plan and to continue the work remaining under its pillars. Some of its goals are not yet achieved and matter as much as they ever have. The second is to recognise that our town has changed and grown and there are some important needs that impact our future resilience and capacity as a community. I'll talk about both things shortly.

Firstly, I'd like to recognise and thank the past, present and future members of the MADRA team and the subcommittees and working groups that surround MADRA. We've navigated some complex, exhausting and emotionally charged issues along the way and I'm proud of how loyally and respectfully we have been able to do that. We're one of the best teams I've ever been part of.

Volunteers of Mallacoota, you have been punching so far above your weight for so long now. We salute you. We hope you each take deep pride in what has been achieved. The big and small seen

and unseen tasks all combine to make us the community we are. If ever your work has been unnoticed, please acknowledge yourselves – sometimes the unnoticed action is the most important one to the eventual recipient. We thank you for every single big and little thing you've done to support us and contribute to our shared journey.

Families and loved ones of MADRA team members and community volunteers – we thank you too. We know that your volunteers' hours can mean time taken away from your lives together and impact you as well. We appreciate your patience and support. We wouldn't all be here without you.

The list of organisations that have supported our community in the last four years is very long now. It includes all levels of Government and stretches far and wide. In particular, East Gippsland Shire Council and the East Gippsland Community Foundation have been unwavering. They have grown and changed and adapted and compromised and listened and heard and taken action to allow us to achieve so much, not just the aspirations of the MADRA committee itself but also the wide web of community groups that have taken community goals and turned them into realities.

I've included a list of achievements here which have taken place since 2019 either directly or in partnership with MADRA. It probably isn't complete – so many things have been set in train in that time that it's nearly impossible to list them now, but here are some:

- The Mallacoota Main Hall, refurbishment is close to shovel-ready, enabling us to be better prepared in the event of another disaster. Yes, this has been a very long process, thank you Halls and Rec for your persistence.
- The Mallacoota Mudbrick Pavilion upgrade is happening now.
- Genoa Bridge is back.
- Genoa Hall and tennis courts upgraded.
- Genoa-Mallacoota Road upgrade – still in the pipeline. Needs to be monitored.
- Lakes and Beach Infrastructure – some complete, some requiring ongoing follow-up.
- Repair of walks esp. Pittosporum Walk requires ongoing follow-up.
- Combined emergency services complex – in planning stage.
- Joint Fuel Management Plan – up to date with all scheduled works complete. More works scheduled for 2024 and beyond.
- Ongoing support available for mental health, casework and social work.
- Wilderness Workspace Pop-up operating very successfully. Social enterprise education in school, education opportunities and much more!
- Mallacoota and Genoa Streetscaping: planning and consultation is being carried out.
- The Skate Park – is wonderful!
- Mallacoota Pony Club: lots of great work has been done and is planned!
- Mallacoota Golf Club – works are well underway and should be complete next year.
- Mallacoota Abalone Co-op has been rebuilt and reopened.
- A new Kindergarten has been completed.
- The Bunker Museum works completed.

- MSEG's efforts to bring fully sustainable energy to Mallacoota continue.
- Gipsy Point and Mallacoota's telecommunications – are reportedly due to commence any day – watch this space!
- Ten new social and affordable homes are due to be completed in the next year with Hunter Street out of the ground and potentially available this year.
- Research into the barriers to rebuilding has been completed and a report written by Richard Teychenne for distribution to Government and other interested parties. Support for families rebuilding continues.

There is much on the list that is ongoing and requires continued attention to make sure that nothing slips away unnoticed or remains incomplete. Our vigilant advocacy remains as important as ever.

There are also a number of significant unmet needs that our community has identified that we see an opportunity to begin a conversation about: They include, aged care, childcare, spaces for community activities and storage, health and wellness spaces, a swimming or hydrotherapy pool, spaces for services such as massage or other therapy, spaces for innovation and social enterprise, spaces for group activities and so on.

We see an opportunity to have a united conversation and some planning in this area as well as our continued work under the pillars of the recovery plan. We hope that this next committee will also be able to bring interest groups together to investigate what's possible for the future. (I'm calling it Project X!)

I hope I have made the point that the need for MADRA to continue is as important now as ever and that there is exciting work ahead. If you have thought about joining now might be just the time. Please consider either nominating tonight or get in touch to find out how you can join in at some point in the future.

Last but definitely not least. I'd like to thank Maggie both from the committee and also myself personally. There is no MADRA without Maggie (and Amy and Sabine before her). She keeps the wheels on this train.



Carol Hopkins
Chair
Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Inc.