

Chapter Seven – Buildings and Infrastructure

Shortfalls in our critical infrastructure and facilities were revealed during the bushfires and our priority is for these shortfalls to be rectified. In so far as is possible, future proofing¹ and fireproofing Mallacoota and District (MAD) is crucial to our recovery.

The bushfires also destroyed many things which we loved and/or were of cultural and historical significance. We seek to have these iconic assets restored or replaced in a sensitive way.

Improving and hardening our economic infrastructure – communications, energy and access - is also a high priority.

Project plans for each of these items must be within the broad MAD town planning context to ensure consistency, interoperability and economies of scale. A flow on benefit of renewing our essential infrastructure will be training and employment opportunities for locals.

This chapter contains the ideas we received for repairing, replacing and rethinking our buildings and infrastructure under the following headings:

- Emergency facilities
- Community and visitor facilities
- Heritage and cultural sites
- Communications
- Energy systems
- Access

Once we have received community feedback and endorsement, we will work together with project owners, funding and delivery agencies to get as many projects as possible implemented.

Not all proposals have project owners. These projects will be difficult to pursue unless there is a local group willing to champion the project and an owner organisation with responsibility for project management, initial funding and ongoing operational costs.²

Where community groups and/or government agencies have commenced working on projects, the status of those projects is noted. Projects without a status have yet to commence or require community endorsement.

¹ Future proofing is the process of anticipating the future and developing methods of minimizing the effects of shocks and stresses of future events. Future proofing is also about the design of things to be valuable and low risk into the future.

² For example, the Mallacoota Halls and Recreational Reserves Committee is a volunteer committee of management which is championing the refurbishment of the Main Hall. The owner organisation is EGSC.

Town Planning

MAD town planning is governed by a number of overlays and design frameworks which reflect the desire of our community for sustainable building design, materials and planting in line with our coastal and wilderness setting³. Comprehensive town planning last took place in 2007. Now is timely to review our planning settings in light of bushfire 'lessons learned'.

The documents which currently guide town planning are available in PDF form on the EGSC website⁴ :

- Urban design framework
- Vegetation Quality Plan
- Planning and Overlay controls
- Urban Design Analysis
- Strategy Plan
- Master Plan and Master Plan 3D

Also available on the EGSC website are the following plans and reports:

- Mallacoota Recreation Reserve Master Plan⁵
- Mallacoota Foreshore Management Plan
- Mallacoota Sustainable Energy
- Mallacoota Ocean Access Boat Ramp at Bastion Point
- Mallacoota Sustainable Energy Feasibility Study – Synopsis Report.
- Gipsy Point Urban Design Framework
- Gipsy Point Vegetation Quality Plan
- Gipsy Point Zoning Plan
- Gipsy Point Urban Design Analysis
- Gipsy Point Strategy Plan
- Gipsy Point Master Plan.

The EGSC website also contains copies of the Mallacoota Connects documents which provide insight into planning decisions up until September 2017.

The Genoa Strategy Plan 200-2012 (not on the EGSC website) outlines strategic actions focused on liveability, viability and sustainability. The Plan contains 27 individual components under eleven headings:

- Petrol
- Provision of hot showers at the Wayside Stop
- Signages
- Around the town
- Walking trail and river loop
- Walking trail and town loop
- Walking trail – Alexanders Road Arm
- Genoa Peak extension

³ 2007 Mallacoota Urban Design framework

⁴ https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Community/Plans_and_Projects/Mallacoota_and_District

⁵ The Mallacoota Recreation Reserve Master Plan is currently being updated by the Mallacoota Halls and Recreations Reserves Committee of Management.

- Tourist attractions sign/map in wayside

Projects identified in the town planning space are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Expand the industrial estate.

Make available additional commercial land to attract missing trades and families to MAD. A number of businesses have indicated the desire to be located in Mallacoota.

Conduct a comprehensive independent fire safety audit

Conduct a comprehensive independent fire safety audit (risk assessment) to identify and assess:

- Critical infrastructure resilience (sewerage treatment plant, emergency battery/generator, communications towers, airfield, P-12 college etc).
- Areas of greater risk within the built environment, community infrastructure, industrial and commercial businesses.
- Location and proximity to forest interface.
- Hazardous areas of vegetation both within the town boundary and at its interface.
- Safety of road access.
- Beneficial resources such as water availability, community safer areas and shelters.
- Essential services – water, sewerage, power.
- Emergency service resources and capability.
- Community demographics and vulnerability.
- Communication and information resources – local.
- Internet and telecommunications services.
- Tourist/visitor evacuations.

Review and update MAD planning overlays and frameworks

Commence a review and update of MAD planning overlays and frameworks in light of bushfire ‘lessons learned’. Components could include a land capability study, a local environmental plan and a cultural heritage plan.

A land capability study would investigate:

- Planned retreat of businesses and houses currently located in fire and flood prone areas.
- Precinct planning for public spaces where people gather in emergency situations.
- Building codes to reflect increased intensity of natural hazards risk.

The purpose of a local environmental plan is to ensure future development plans take into consideration the area’s environmental capacity to maintain its character and to reduce risks and impacts of local hazards.

The cultural heritage plan would list our cultural heritage icons and how to restore/protect/preserve them. This includes newly discovered pieces of our built history which were uncovered during the bushfires including a cricket pitch near the airfield and a third WW11 bunker.

Emergency Facilities

Refurbish the Mallacoota Main Hall

In non-emergency situations, the Main Hall is used as a sporting venue (basketball and badminton), for events and as a Cinema over Christmas.

During the bushfires and thereafter the Main Hall acted as a refuge, assembly and relief centre and venue for town briefings. The report of Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster arrangements notes:

“Communities rely on evacuation and relief centres during natural disasters as safe places to avoid the effects of natural disasters. It is important, therefore, that these centres are selected and maintained appropriately to be able to accommodate those who seek short term shelter, sustenance and support”.⁶

The Main Hall is around 45 years old and its shortfalls are manifest:

- No stand-alone power and water
- Access issues for people with a disability or have limited mobility
- No handicapped car parking
- No air conditioning
- No air washers or filtration
- Poor acoustics
- Limited showers and toilets not up to modern standards
- No WiFi or telephone facilities
- Poor internal and external lighting
- Poor insulation
- No public address system.

Status: The Mallacoota Halls and Recreational Reserves Committee is working with EGSC to progress refurbishment designs and priorities.

Emergency Services Facility

Our volunteer emergency services include the CFA, SES, Coast Guard (CG), Surf Life Saving Victoria (SLSV), Ambulance Victoria (AV) and the Red Cross. The CFA has its own purpose built shed and is located next to the SES shed on Lees Road.

The SES has inadequate storage facilities, training rooms, offices and change room facilities. During the bushfires, the requirement for SES members to be on standby 24/7 saw visiting volunteers forced to sleep on mattresses in the shed.

Both the CG and SLSV do not have facilities of their own. The CG stores its vessels in a temporary location at the Abalone Co-operative yard where they are exposed to the elements. Surf lifesaving equipment is stored in shipping containers on the SES site.

Current arrangements severely hinder the ability of our emergency service organisations to operate and respond efficiently and safely. Consolidation and collocation of the emergency

⁶ p.264

services would generate considerable economies of scale, cost savings and joint training opportunities.

This project has the support of the Emergency Services Commissioner and the Emergency Services Infrastructure Authority.

Status: Under investigation by EMV

[Community Fire Shed and Emergency Fire Fighting Equipment at Genoa](#)

Genoa Town Committee has received a very generous donation to help build a small Community Fire Shed that will house three water trailers. Basic private trailer set ups with water-pod, pump and hose were used by a few locals in town during the fires to great effect especially for putting out spot fires, ember attack and mopping up hot spots after the main front had passed. The Committee opted for multiple water trailers over a fire tanker due to their manoeuvrability, ease of use, price tag, low ongoing maintenance, registration and insurance costs and there was also no need for specialist training. Anyone with a standard vehicle can tow and utilise one of these trailers as opposed to a truck. The shed will also have a water tank connected to it for catchment to be used for fire-fighting purposes.

The Community Fire Shed and trailers are a pro-active way to secure our future preparedness for bushfires but are not intended to be a replacement for CFA assistance. They will be a stand-by community asset available to local residents should the need arise again.

Status: Underway

[SES equipment at Genoa](#)

The SES identified the need for a cache of emergency stores and equipment to be pre-positioned at Genoa. A suitable site is currently being explored. The cache would be a lockable storage facility – such as a shipping container or box trailer – and would contain items such traffic management equipment, a 3kva generator, lighting, hessian bags for sand bags and other materials which could be required during fire and storm events, road accidents, and search and rescue operations. The availability of such items would considerably improve response times as SES volunteers who live in our outlying districts could be on scene 30 minutes prior before Mallacoota crew. The SES will service and maintain items on a regular basis.

The SES trailer will be housed in the Genoa Community Fire Shed.

Status: Underway

[Emergency Fuel Storage](#)

During the bushfires fuel deliveries were limited. Some diesel was initially supplied by the ESSO offshore support vessel Far Saracen and then by HMAS CHOULES. Diesel was limited to emergency vehicles. Unleaded petrol was eventually rationed down to \$10 per day for generator use only. Emergency fuel stocks in the lead up to bad fire seasons would

alleviate some of the issues experienced during the bushfires. This would necessitate fuel storage vessels for both diesel and unleaded fuel.

Community and Visitor Facilities

Parks, Lake and Beach Infrastructure

During the fires we lost a significant amount of our waterfront infrastructure including jetties, lookouts, boardwalks and steps. Many of our walking trails were also damaged.

We have been working with Parks Victoria and EGSC influence design and timing of replacement infrastructure with the aim of better access, amenity and durability.

This includes replacing some of the damaged jetties around the top and bottom lakes with floating jetties or a combination of jetty and floating platform and allowing for future installation of wheelchair hoists where appropriate. Picnic sites around the lake are also being restored including damaged toilets.

Initiatives pertaining to beach infrastructure subject to community consultation are:

- Rebuilding the temporary stairs at Bastion Point to incorporate a wheelchair friendly ramp.
- Replacing the damaged infrastructure at Betka Beach.

On 18 November 2020, the State government announced funding for projects that bring visitors back to Gippsland, including \$2.8m to improve access and visitor facilities at Mallacoota Inlet.⁷

Status: Underway

Accessible Boat and Canoe Facilities

Boating and canoeing are difficult for people with a disability or limited mobility.

Boat hoists assist people to get in and out of boats and can be used with wheelchairs. The installation of boat hoists at the town, Karbeethong and Gipsy Point wharves would open up more opportunities for people with a disability to enjoy our waterways.

Canoeing for people with a disability is becoming very popular and to have a disability canoe launching ramp would benefit those who enjoy this sport.

Benefits of expanding our boating and canoeing infrastructure include:

- Improved access and inclusive use of our lakes for people with disabilities.
- Flow on economic benefits for MAD.
- Enhanced visitor experience and facilities.

Status: Under investigation with Parks Victoria and EGSC

⁷ <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/backing-projects-bring-visitors-back-gippsland>

Skate Park

The Skate Park has not changed since being erected and is not in keeping with modern standards in terms of visual amenity and function. The Skate Park is popular with our youth and visitors. The community has been lobbying for over 10 years to have it changed. The Sanctuary Youth Group was established during the bushfires and is currently creating a proposal to develop the existing site. The Halls and Recreation Reserves Committee is also looking at landscaping for the site and the possible inclusion of a BMX track around the perimeter of the Skate Park.

Status: Funding application submitted

Swimming and Hydrotherapy Pool

Life Saving Victoria (LSV) is campaigning for state and federal governments to fund regional aquatic centres with heated lap lane and hydrotherapy pools, gyms and other community facilities based on European models for such facilities in small communities. LSV will assist with economic costing and a business plan. Mallacoota has been selected as the first town in LSV's campaign for funding.

A swimming pool and a hydrotherapy pool would provide many benefits for our community and visitors:

- Therapeutic exercise benefits
- Children can learn to swim in a safe environment without having to travel to NSW for classes
- Opportunities for social events and connections
- An additional visitor/tourist attraction.

A preliminary working group from Mallacoota Surf Lifesaving Inc is ascertaining community support for LSV for to lobby for our community and to have an open discussion about possible locations. A fact sheet and supplementary information appeared in the Mallacoota Mouth dated 12 November 2020.

Status: Underway

Information Boards and Signage

Many of the information boards and signs along our walking trails and parks were destroyed during the fires. The opportunity exists to make replacement items colourful and informative through the use of local artwork and technology. This could include the use of QR codes which can be scanned on mobile phones to provide links to:

- Historical photographs and information
- Videos of locals telling stories about what was on that site.
- Information on flora, fauna and geography.

This has the potential to be a collaborative project between responsible agencies – such as EGSC, Parks Victoria and DEWLP – together with local artists and film makers.

Genoa Tennis Courts

The Genoa Town committee is investigating refurbishment of the Genoa tennis courts which have fallen into disrepair. The tennis courts were part of the social fabric of the Genoa district with the Nan Bridle Cup being a regular hard-fought competition. The roots of a nearby poplar have emerged beneath the surface of the courts and the court surfaces themselves are in poor condition. In addition to repairing root damage and resurfacing, some kind of root barrier will be necessary.

Status: Funding application being submitted by the Genoa Sports Club

Genoa Sports Club Rooms

The Genoa Sports Club rooms, together with the tennis courts, are the only access to sport in Genoa. These facilities are considered instrumental in the health and well-being of community members.

Status: The Genoa Sports Club is intending to apply for funding under the Local Economic Recovery Program.

Mud Brick Pavilion

The Mallaoota Mud Brick Pavilion is at the heart of Mallaoota's entertainment, market and event activities. The Pavilion is 35 years old having been built in the mid-eighties. Originally built by the Soccer Club as a club house/change room, the Pavilion has morphed into a facility for performing arts. The building was not built for this purpose and its shortfalls preclude a number of visiting acts. The district has a vibrant arts community and an upgrade to the current building is long overdue. Minor maintenance has taken place over the years but more along the lines of a patch job until major renovations could occur.

Status: This project is incorporated in the Mallaoota Halls and Recreational Reserves Strategic Plan, but funding has yet to be identified.

Mountain Bike Trails

Biking is a popular past time in MAD. MAD offers many opportunities for mountain biking with the opportunity to construct new trails linking in with the High Country and South Coast mountain bike circuit. The potential exists for a series of world class mountain bike tracks stretching from the high country to the coast.

Benefits include:

- Exercise and social connection opportunities
- Employment opportunities in construction and upkeep
- An additional visitor and tourist attraction
- Economic boost for the MAD economy
- Increased patronage to Genoa

A working group has done some preliminary investigation into a mountain bike development which includes 15km of single track in bushland reserve, mapping and development of existing fire roads into cross country circuits and pump/skills tracks.

Status: Under investigation

Recreation Spaces and Parks

Community consultation has revealed the desire for more recreational park space within MAD. Ideas include:

- More park benches and better picnic facilities around the Bastion Point area
- Using fire breaks as walking and riding trails with picnic facilities
- Seating and parking for mobility scooters and wheelchairs at scenic points.

One suggestion is for a Reflections Park, a place where people can remember the bushfires, acknowledge those who provided assistance during and after the bushfires (including the ADF, emergency services and volunteers) and those organisations who made philanthropic donations towards bushfire recovery.

Bike Track Mallacoota to Eden via Gipsy Point and Genoa

Within Victoria, cycling trips are a popular past time. The Around the Bay in a Day and the Great Victorian Bike Ride are examples of formal cycling events which are well attended. A cycling track from Mallacoota to Eden via Gipsy Point and Genoa would offer an additional community and visitor attraction with minimal environmental impact and could be incorporated into proposed road upgrades. Over time, a cycling event could be added to the MAD event calendar.

Mallacoota Village Square

The 2007 Mallacoota Design Framework depicts pictures of the Maurice Ave shopping precinct reimaged as a Parisian like boulevard with wide footpaths and extensive awnings. The idea has re-emerged with the addition of a village square on the site of the centre carpark. Traffic and parking will need to be reconfigured to realise this concept.

Township Works Genoa

The Genoa Town Committee has identified street scaping and beautification works including kerb and channel, parking lighting, shade trees, garden beds and footpaths linking both sides of the river from footbridge.

Heritage and Cultural Sites

Genoa Bridge

The historic Genoa Bridge was destroyed during fires. EGSC is working with the Genoa Town Committee on a replacement bridge which reflects the design of the bridge which was lost.

Status: Ongoing

Old Genoa School Site

The Old Genoa School was a museum but was sadly destroyed during the fires. The Genoa Town Committee has received permission from the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), Department of Education and Training (DET) ⁸ to proceed with a Community Lease Agreement between Genoa Town Committee Inc. and the DET for that site.

The site will be home to the Community Fire Shed. Other ideas for development of the site include:

- A BMX pump track – there is currently no other dedicated BMX pump track facility in our area and the aim is for the track to be both visually appealing and low maintenance.
- A multi-use building which could be used as an indoor/outdoor museum, art space, cultural centre, visitor information and/or shopfront to showcase local produce/arts/crafts.
- A big wall of street- style artwork (either along the side of the building, fences or freestanding) with scenes of our beautiful historic bridge, the Genoa Falls, Genoa Peak or of our stunning twin rivers merging at Gipsy Point.
- A children’s playground (an all-abilities, open ended play space suiting the local environment)
- Community and/or bush tucker garden
- Picnic tables, shade, BBQ area, toilet block and upgraded parking.

WW11 Bunker Museum

The WW11 Bunker Museum is a very popular tourist attraction which is run by Mallacoota and District Historical Society (MDHS) volunteers that during normal years hosts some 4000 visitors. In addition, it houses extensive archival material collected over the years from members of the local and broader community and provides a wealth of information on the history of Mallacoota and surrounding districts. As the museum expands its collections and archives, it is hoped to add value to the site with new or upgrades to the existing ‘built environment’ with improved BBQ facilities and the installation of a display/meeting room. A Bush Food walk is also envisaged to attract additional visitors. All these facilities would be available to the wider community.

Power is an issue for the museum, currently it relies on a generator and a small solar power unit. With more outbuildings, power needs will increase. Humidifiers are also desirable. Solar power with panels placed on the ground with battery storage would give the Bunker and any future display shed(s) necessary power. There is a possibility of power being connected underground to the nearest power pole.

Communications

Our mobile and internet coverage is poor at the best of times and worse during emergency and peak visitor times. Our desire is for improved communication services, including mobile phone and internet coverage to cope with increased demand during peak holiday season and ensure early warning systems are communicated during emergencies.

⁸ VSBA (DET) letter dated 19th August 2020

NBN Network

We are liaising with NBN Co to understand NBN progress and installation activities. NBN status as at November 2020 is:

- The 10 fibre nodes have been installed and connected to the local electrical network
- Before the nbnTM network can be made operational, the 63km transit link between Mallacoota and Cann River has to be rebuilt. The service is now going underground. This work is currently on track.
- Commencement of construction activities for the 13km section of the Croajingolong National Park is dependent on NBN Co receiving a number of approval from different statutory bodies including Parks Victoria, Aboriginal Victoria and DEWLP. These approvals are ongoing and progressing well at present.
- Construction on other sections of the overall transit link are anticipated to commence in September 2020.

At this stage, NBN anticipate having the nbnTM network ready for service and available to premises by February 2021 unless there are unforeseen cultural heritage or engineering issues. NBN has committed to a two monthly update and is running workshops in Mallacoota and Genoa in November 2020.

Improved Mobile Coverage

Telstra is planning to participate in the Victorian Government – Digital Connectivity Service Program (ITP) and Commonwealth Regional Connectivity Program (RCP) and under the Victorian Government program, Telstra will be seeking funding to update our existing telecommunication network with mobile coverage and to build a mobile tower that will provide better mobile coverage for Mallacoota, Gipsy Point and our outlying districts.

Status:

- **NBN workshops were originally scheduled for Mallacoota and Genoa to inform on progress in November 2020 but have had to be deferred to a date to be determined by NBN Co.**
- **Letters of support sent to Telstra re improving mobile coverage in MAD.**

Energy

A reliable sustainable, renewable energy supply for Mallacoota brings numerous environmental, economic and social benefits:

- Reduction in greenhouse gases to reduce the impact of climate change that will help mitigate the severity of the bushfires.
- Local employment in system installation, maintenance and management
- Solar roof top power potential not wasted during outages
- Standalone power systems for the district with a microgrid for Mallacoota will improve reliability for the whole community, including associated benefits for businesses
- Over time, a revolving renewable energy fund for solar panels would reduce electricity bills for the town

- A small-scale solar farm set up as a ‘solar garden’ would include customers who are currently locked out of solar systems; for example, through tenancy shading or financial considerations.

In 2011 the Mallacoota Sustainable Energy Group (MSEG) was formed. MSEG started a project to address the increasingly frequent minor and major electricity outages in Mallacoota, as well as the time it took for any outage to be fixed. As a result, Ausnet Services and East Gippsland Shire funded a feasibility study, working with the community to investigate options for Mallacoota that would provide a reliable, sustainable, renewable energy supply for Mallacoota. The study, completed in 2014, recommended a solar farm, battery with a backup diesel generator, and grid connected microgrid that allows the town to be islanded during an outage.

In 2014, based on the feasibility study, a commercial partner (SunPower) was found and a proposal was submitted to the Australian Renewable Energy Authority (ARENA) to co-fund the \$8m project. Unfortunately, the submission was not successful, and the project stalled.

The recent bushfire, where most of the town was left without power for a protracted time, highlights the need to pursue this matter further.⁹

Time has moved on:

- Technology has developed and costs have reduced significantly (i.e. batteries, PV efficiency, etc).
- Community projects are beginning to be successfully initiated, funded and installed.
- Renewables are becoming more mainstream and there is a growing awareness of the benefits of renewable energy in the general population.
- A smaller scale, locally managed and run facility would be appropriate.

MSEG has stayed in regular contact with Ausnet Services and community energy initiatives and was recently a member of the Reference Group for a research project undertaken by Energy Networks Australia looking into ways of ‘enhancing network resilience’, specifically for remote towns at the end of long feeder lines, such as Mallacoota.

In 2018 Ausnet Services decided to install a one-megawatt battery with a backup diesel generator in Mallacoota, at a site near the water treatment plant. The installation is scheduled to be completed in early 2021.

The battery and generator system will provide a permanent capability for backup power supply to the entire Mallacoota township. The system starts up almost as soon as an outage occurs, firstly with the battery and then with the generator, and the two power sources work in tandem to supply the whole town. Mallacoota will be disconnected from the grid and run as an electrical ‘island’ until main grid power is restored. This will provide a more reliable power supply for Mallacoota and can be the basis for future sustainable and renewable upgrades.

⁹ Source: MSEG submission to MADRA July 2020

When the system detects that the network supply has been restored and is stable, the system will transition the Mallacoota island back onto the network supply, the generator will shut down, and the battery will start recharging.

In good news for Mallacoota, customer solar will continue to operate as normal during grid outages.

In the rare circumstance where our rooftop solar is creating more power than we are using as a town, and the battery is fully charged, there is nowhere for the power to go. This may make the 'island' unstable. At such times our rooftop solar may be temporarily switched off but we will still be connected to the island' power.

Those members of our community upstream of the battery system (ie outlying districts), will not directly benefit from the battery and generator system, however, AusNet has committed to looking at those communities as part of its broader scan of opportunities across our network for stand-alone power systems and other resilience measures.¹⁰

Next steps are:

- Working on a collaborative renewable energy project with other small towns in Gippsland.
- Getting more people involved in our reliable, renewable energy journey.
- Investigating a revolving renewable energy fund for solar panels (with a potential goal of locally produced, lower cost power for the town in the future).
- Pursuing opportunities for stand-alone power systems for our outlying districts.
- Maintaining ongoing connections to community power organisations.
- Looking at immediate (short term), medium (2-year horizon), and long term (5 years plus) sustainable energy solutions
- Becoming part of the new paradigm - virtual power plants, solar gardens, etc.
- Investigating V2g (electric) Vehicle battery to grid – stabilizes the grid – longer term.¹¹

Status: Ongoing

Access and Safety

Roads

Road closures during emergency times can have significant impact on our health and wellbeing. During the fires logistic support and evacuation of people by sea and air was possible. Notwithstanding, extreme weather conditions – such as dense smoke and heavy seas – can mean these fall-back options are not available.

Additionally, our economy has a heavy focus on tourism. A priority is ensuring visitors feel safe to come back to our district during the peak summer tourist season.

¹⁰ AusNet email to MSEG dated 3rd November 2020

¹¹ mallacootasustainableenergy@gmail.com email dated 23 November 2020.

Within our townships, through roads must remain open during emergencies. During fire and flood situations, people may become stranded and emergency vehicles may not be able to get to those in need. Roadworks might include raising low lying road, regular grading or tarring of dirt roads, repairing damage (holes and unstable shoulders) and keeping roadside verges clear of dangerous trees.

There is only one sealed road into Mallacoota. Just before the bushfires hit, locals were evacuating as tourists were entering town. The tourists were trapped when the road was closed and forced to evacuate by air and sea, leaving their vehicles, caravans etc behind. After the fires, the Princes Highway west of Genoa was closed for a significant period of time. Trips east to Eden were only possible under SES escort.

A number of low-lying roads in Mallacoota are subject to inundation during rain events. Several houses were cut off during a recent flood which saw Lakeside Drive inundated. There is also danger to motorists and pedestrians as there is poor signage to indicate water depth. There is a strong need for all weather access to ensure community safety on a day to day basis and during emergencies.

The access to the SES shed is via Lees Road. Lees Road is a narrow dirt road offering poor access. Turning large emergency vehicles and vehicles with trailers is extremely difficult. The situation is made worse when operations are taking place and the number of emergency vehicles increases as there is no off-road parking.

Key roads for which works are needed for 24/7 accessibility include:

- The Princes Highway west and east of Genoa - major arterial road.
- The Genoa-Mallacoota Road – the only tarred road in and out of Mallacoota
- Lakeside Drive – in heavy rain events when the mouth is closed, this road is subject to flooding cutting off homes between Mirrabooka Road and Angophora Drive.
- Lees Road – this road provides access to the SES Shed and an alternative driveway to the CFA shed, the road is narrow and untarred. When additional emergency vehicles are in Mallacoota, access and parking are problematic.

Status:

- **Funding for the Princes Highway and the Genoa-Mallacoota Road has been sought by our local MP Darren Chester**
- **Action needed for other roads.**

Road Signage

Road signage is inadequate for roads in low lying areas subject to inundation. In particular, flood depth indicators are needed.

Footpaths

The development and implementation of a footpath plan for MAD is highly desirable. There is considerable scope for improved connectivity and access within MAD including better access for wheelchair and motorised scooters, pedestrians and cycles.

Many roads in our district do not have footpaths including through roads such as Mirrabooka Road and Karbeethong Road and Avenue. This is cause for concern for safety and mobility reasons. A sealed concrete bike and pedestrian-friendly path linking the free campground, township and old school site at Genoa is would improve both safety and amenity.

In addition, some existing footpaths are in poor repair. This is dangerous for both pedestrians and drivers and an impediment for those with mobility issues.

Kerbs and Gutters

The development and implementation of a kerb and guttering plan for MAD is also highly desirable. Many roads in our townships do not have kerbs and gutters or existing kerbs and gutters are in poor condition. This is not just an aesthetic issue. During weather events, problems are caused due to debris and blockages. Roads are made impassable or unsafe. Repairing and maintaining roads, gutters and kerbs offers local employment opportunities as does keeping roadside verges clear of flammable vegetation.

Bastion Point Boat Ramp

During the bushfires, the Bastion Point boat ramp was used by Naval and other vessels to evacuate locals and visitors. With the only sealed road into Mallacoota closed and air evacuations subject to smoke conditions, evacuation by sea was sometimes the only available option. The approach was so shallow some vessels were unable to come alongside. One vessel grounded and had to be towed off to seaward. As many supplies came by sea during the fires, including diesel fuel, access is critical.

In addition to its economic importance, the boat ramp needs to be fit for purpose for emergency situations including evacuations and delivery of essential items, such as fuel and food. The solution must also take into account environmental considerations, such as habitat and disposal of dredged materials.