

YOUR VOTES ARE IN!

For those who were not able to attend our Community Consultation Wrap Up session on Tuesday, we've attached a copy of the script beneath. The script contains the top five/ten initiatives for each of the four pillars you voted on. We've yet to make progress on Aboriginal Healing and Culture pending consultation with traditional owners.

A video of our presentation and a copy of the voting report will be placed on our website madrecovery.com. This will not happen straight away as a more user-friendly copy of the voting report is being currently being compiled. Further, we did not have our own website and rely on the external body which hosts our pages for any updating.

We are also in the process of updating our Recovery Plan to reflect voting results and recent funding announcements. At the same time, we are putting together our letters of advocacy – where these do not breach individual privacy – for publication on our website. This too will take a bit of time! But it will happen...

[Community Consultation Wrap Up Session Presentation Script](#)

Your votes are in! And the purpose of today's session is to take you through the results!

But while we've got you, there's a couple of other things we want to discuss.

First off, is a progress report on what's been achieved to date. We as a community can be proud.... Next the results of the voting and, finally, where to next?

We'll pause between each section to take your questions.

[Recovery Achievements](#)

As a community we've come a long way since the bushfires. Add in floods and COVID-19 on top.....we've had a lot to deal with.

There is often considerable lag between seeking assistance and receiving it, but we're starting to see the results of our advocacy. In recent days, we've had important breakthroughs in housing assistance, complex site assessments, fuel management, and replacement economic and recreational infrastructure. This will make a huge difference for individuals and for our community.

We've encouraged agencies to provide ongoing status reports, so community is informed of plans and progress.

We've found our persistence in conveying local knowledge is paying off. Even the best processes break down and we've been able to provide data and information which would not have otherwise made it to the relevant agencies.

There is much underway, and we encourage you to read the Recovery Plan to learn more.

Our Recovery Plan and letters of advocacy can be found on our website madrecovery.com.

Many people have worked hard on our recovery...volunteer organizations, sports and interest groups, our politicians, and our funding and delivery partners. By working together, much has been achieved. Through the efforts of community groups -combined with MADRA's advocacy and support - to date, our community has well over \$32m in funding.

Projects include the Main Hall, Mallacoota Abalone Limited, the Genoa-Mallacoota Road, the Combined Emergency Services Facility, the Skate Park, the Pony Club, the Golf Club, Parks and Lakes Infrastructure, Digital Hub feasibility, Street Scaping, Genoa Bridge, a new kindergarten, Genoa Hall and Genoa Tennis Courts, people supports including youth workers, psychologists and school and adult social workers, the P-12 College, Youth projects, the Bunker Museum Native Bush Walk, a roof for the Art Gallery courtyard, Emergency Equipment and a Fire Shed for Genoa.

Gipsy Point will receive a 4G base station, NBN is here ahead of schedule. Funding has just been announced for energy resilience projects. Envite is working with locals on revegetation projects.

One of the good things we've been able to obtain is professional grant writing assistance for community groups together with funding for feasibility studies and concept plans.

We are still awaiting the outcomes of some funding applications and details of new funding programs..... There is more funding to come...

Paris hit the nail on the head – that's a lot of sausage sizzles we don't have to have....Sorry Bonnie and Ferret!

[Voting for Recovery Projects](#)

Early on, we realised many areas of our recovery are 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 included:

- Mental health and case work support
- Housing
- Fuel Management
- Replacement/upgrading emergency and economic infrastructure
- Influencing infrastructure replacement to build back better suitable for local conditions.
- Preparing for future disasters.
- Recreational facilities and social connections.

At the same time, we sought your recovery ideas! And – despite COVID-19 restrictions - you responded with gusto! We received many many 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 work of other community groups. So, if it looks like something is missing, it's probably already happening.

The voting report has been put together by an independent body and copies of the report will be made available on our website madrecovery.com. Hard copies are also available on request.

Based on the results, we will take our Recovery Plan from 'draft' to 'endorsed'.

[And – finally – the Results...But first, the fine print...and some observations...](#)

Every project put up for voting received a majority vote... that is, over 50% of community members who voted supported the project. Of the 68 projects put to the vote, 64 received a vote of over 72% and 57 received a vote of over 80%.

The percentages do not tell the whole story, however. Some people were not sure about all aspects of projects or wanted more information before committing. So, if a project seems to have lower support, this is not necessarily the case. Our analysis will be informed by your comments.

Effectively, we'll have a list of projects which are 'good to go' and a list of projects for which further work and consultation is needed.

Some community members expressed the fear community led recovery will lead to unwelcome change. This is reflected in comments such as "don't change the nature of our town too much" and "Don't destroy what you came here to enjoy". There is also conjecture on what is meant by 'sustainable'.

Our recovery is based on – and must be compatible with - our values; in particular, our love of our pristine environment and the desire to keep it that way. ‘Sustainable’ means our way of life continues but is enhanced by initiatives aimed at protecting the people and the things we love and fixing the things that are broken. Our recovery is also about a strategic approach which anticipates future problems and addresses them up front. So not about change in an unwelcome sense but necessary initiatives which complement our way of life and why we are here.

For People and Wellbeing:

We received 410 votes. Your top five:

- Seek support from EGSC and other government agencies to create apprenticeships, training, and work opportunities for our young people.
- 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.
- Develop a mechanism for ensuring emergency response crews from outside Mallacoota and District are informed about the local community and its features i.e. alternative evacuation routes for flood prone and fire risk areas and existing local services that can be activated.
- Establish collaborative protocols and partnerships between regional and local emergency services for the Operations and Recovery phases of emergencies.
- For disasters and emergencies, improve continuous communication, early warning, and advice of supports to Mallacoota and District.

Comments in relation to People and Wellbeing centre on volunteerism and aged care.

“We are volunteers – don’t commit us too much!” As a community we can only bite off so much. Just as water finds its own level, the important things will happen, and are already happening, thanks to the efforts of many individuals and groups within our community. If a project is the responsibility of an agency, we will advocate for it.

Aged care was an issue before the fires, and we originally considered it ‘out of scope’ for bushfire recovery. However, as our planning moves from ‘recovery to resilience’ and aged care is integral to our resilience, we have included it in the Recovery Plan. As several local organizations are working on aged care, our role will be one of advocacy.

Our Federal MP Darren Chester has encouraged MADRA to advocate for Aged Care and we are awaiting the guidelines for the \$280m recently announced by the Feds to see what can be achieved.

For Buildings and Infrastructure:

We received 434 votes. The top ten:

- Emergency Diesel Storage
- Conduct an independent fire audit to identify and assess critical infrastructure, risk, emergency resources, and other disaster considerations.
- Review and update Mallocoota and District Planning overlays to incorporate bushfire lessons learned
- Develop and implement a footpath plan for Mallocoota and District.
- In addition to funding for the Genoa-Mallocoota road, road improvements including roads subject to inundation, regular grading, repairs to holes and unstable shoulders and verge clearing.
- Information Boards and signage to replace damaged items.
- Refurbish the Mudbrick Pavilion
- Enhance our recreation spaces and parks.
- Improvements for the WW11 Bunker including stand alone power, improved BBQ facilities and a display/meeting room.
- Upgrade the Genoa Tennis Shed to a more user-friendly clubroom.

Your comments include “where’s the swimming pool?” and “didn’t vote for this as it’s the responsibility of government.”

We didn’t ask people to vote on a swimming pool as its already in the recovery plan.

Re infrastructure initiatives, there is not enough money for everything – if it’s not happening and is important for our community, we will advocate for it with government – as we have been and continue to do....

For Environment and Biodiversity:

We received 384 votes. The top five:

- 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. (Repair)
- An annual review of Fuel Management Action Plans.
- Overseeing the implementation of Fuel Management Action Plans. (Both of these initiatives will need resourcing)
- Seek additional human and other resources for protection and management of our wilderness (Ongoing maintenance)
- Support and promote sustainable tourism, in keeping with our natural and community values.

Your comments here related to firebreaks and sustainable tourism – the latter, characterised by comments such as “we don’t want tourism to get out of hand”.

Re firebreaks - The Fuel Management Group is working hard on this issue and seeking a balance between maximizing biodiversity and enhancing fire safety.

Community members recognized the need to broaden and diversify our economy, including sustainable tourism initiatives. Our values-based approach means tourism initiatives must be in keeping with our desire to protect our pristine environment.

For Business and Economy:

We received 383 votes. The top five:

- Encourage greater participation in the local Artisans and Produce market.
- Support for, and establishment of social enterprises. Social enterprises are businesses which trade intentionally to tackle social problems, provide access to employment and training, or help the environment.
- An environmental studies program including information about local flora and fauna, guided bush walks and field days.
- Events with a local or topical theme. Ideas include a film festival featuring local productions and an annual Forest Management conference.
- Land management industry certification and training together with local employment in land management projects.

The comments on Business and Economy projects did not have any recurring themes, however, the projects voted for in this category reveal an emerging theme across the pillars – that is, combining training and employment opportunities with environmental protection, remediation, and ongoing management.

Taking projects forward...

If a project has not made the top five or ten does not mean it will be discarded. If a project has been supported by a majority of voters, it will be included in the Recovery Plan.

Our Recovery Plan will reflect changes to project descriptions based on voting results and your feedback.

Some of the projects for which you voted can now be pursued. We will forward those suggestions which have a logical owner to the relevant agency or organisation for consideration.

Other initiatives will need further fleshing out – this will require working groups, project owners and further consultation. If you have a particular interest, please consider being part of a working group.

We know as volunteers it's a big ask! But Your Community Needs You!

Where to next?

18 months after the bushfires and the language is shifting from Recovery to Resilience. Our Recovery Plan is morphing along the same lines. Effectively, it's becoming a quasi Mallacoota and District towns plan containing both recovery and resilience elements.

The Thinking Group got us started.... On our watch, we've put together a recovery structure. We are a Charity with Deductible Gift Recipient status. We have an endorsed Recovery Plan. And we've built solid relationships with government and donors.

But there is still work to do - our Recovery is ongoing... A strong community voice is crucial as we move towards our Vision of a strong, resilient, vibrant, and safe community.

We hold our AGM in August. At that time, many of the Rats will be standing down. New MADRats are needed! Please consider sticking your hand up for the MADRA committee...

We envisage the next committee will continue:

- Advocating for our community
- Looking at ways in which donated funds can be best utilised (guided by community)
- Updating the Recovery Plan as projects are implemented and new ideas and funding streams emerge.

Don't worry, we'll still be around to lend a hand, just as the Thinking Group was for us...