Community Recovery Plan

Working Draft
29 March 2021

Message from the Chair on behalf of the Alpine Community Recovery Committee

It is with pleasure that the Alpine Community Recovery Committee (Alpine CRC) shares the first working draft of the Alpine Community Recovery Plan. This is a living document that we wish to update as we gain more understanding and insights from the communities in the Alpine region.

During the plan's development, we collated what we understood to be our community's needs and priorities. These were collected through informal discussions across our committee members' networks and through the formal community survey undertaken in 2020. The strength of a community plan comes through the broad engagement in the process and the sharing of ideas.

But a plan is only words on a page without action. Implementation of ideas is the core process in achieving our aspiration for the Alpine region:

> *Our communities are connected and resilient. They have the capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from adversities, are self-reliant when needed, and can create the future they want.*

The Alpine CRC is not an implementation body. However, implementation can come through many pathways.

- Using our voice to inform governments of our priorities to seek change in policies or programs.
- Provide a focus for collaboration between existing and new community actions and projects.
- Raising awareness of how communities can help themselves to be better prepared before the next bushfire emergency in our region.

From the rich detail of ideas and concepts that are included in the plan, the Alpine CRC have identified the following priority areas:

- **Increasing Preparedness**: The Alpine CRC will increase community preparedness for bushfires by advocating for projects and programs that build community awareness and improve the connection between people and information.
- **Improving Response Capacity**: The Alpine CRC will advocate for continued action on the recommendations on the independent inquiries including the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) and the Royal Commissions.
- **Improving Recovery Capacity**: The Alpine CRC will advocate for new and improved approaches to connect the community with the social and economic supports in the aftermath of a bushfire.
- **Strengthening Resilience**: The Alpine CRC priority will be to advocate for and promote activities that reinforce community cohesiveness and connectedness and build economic strength and diversity to strengthen the resilience of the region.

I wish to thank the 337 people who completed our community survey, my fellow volunteers on the Alpine CRC for the many hours and the contribution to the process of the CRC and the considerable support we have received from Bushfire Recovery Victoria and the Alpine Shire Council. The release of this first draft of the CRC plan is the next step in our journey to building a resilient community to create the future we want.

Fiona Nicholls (Chair)
on behalf of the Alpine Community Recovery Committee

Our aspiration

Our communities are connected and resilient. They have the capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from adversities, are self-reliant when needed, and can create the future they want.

Contents

Alpine Community Recovery Committee

The Alpine Community Recovery Committee (Alpine CRC) was established in 2020 to assist community recovery from the 2019–2020 bushfires. The fires directly impacted 29% of the Alpine Shire area with private land comprising 6% of the burnt area. In addition to direct losses of farming and related infrastructure sustained by some residents, broader psychological, social, economic and environmental impacts have reverberated throughout the shire. In the three months following the fires, 70% of local businesses reported revenue losses of 75%, with job disruptions in the order of 670–900 FTE. These losses and their impacts are compounded by the ongoing disruptions associated with Covid-19, which has further impeded recovery efforts.

The Alpine CRC acts as an interface between the community and different levels of Government. It works to listen, understand and advocate for community needs and priorities, support and encourage community-led activities and projects that facilitate recovery, build resilience and improve preparedness and response capacities for future emergencies.

The Alpine CRC includes members from five bushfire-affected communities and their surrounding areas: Myrtleford, Bright, Harrietville, Dinner Plain and the Kiewa Valley, as well as representatives from the two Alpine Resorts in the Shire: Falls Creek and Mt Hotham.

Alpine CRC – Community Recovery Plan: Working Draft

This Plan was developed by the Alpine CRC in consultation with the community. The Plan aligns with the Committee's Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1) and will remain a 'living document' or working draft, to be updated and modified as required.

How the Alpine CRC and Community Recovery Plan fits into regional recovery efforts

Planning and recovery actions are occurring at multiple levels within the Alpine region, with Federal National Bushfire Recovery Agency (NBRA) State Government agencies, Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV), Alpine Shire and the Alpine CRC all undertaking planning and recovery activities. The roles and relationship between these different agencies, organisations and planning efforts are shown in Figure 1. These connections, close liaison and cross-committee membership ensure recovery efforts are coordinated to avoid duplication and best meet the needs of our communities.

The Alpine CRC provides a direct community voice to these organisations and structures, advocating for the community's recovery priorities and needs at all levels. The Alpine CRC Community Recovery Plan is an important part of this advocacy.
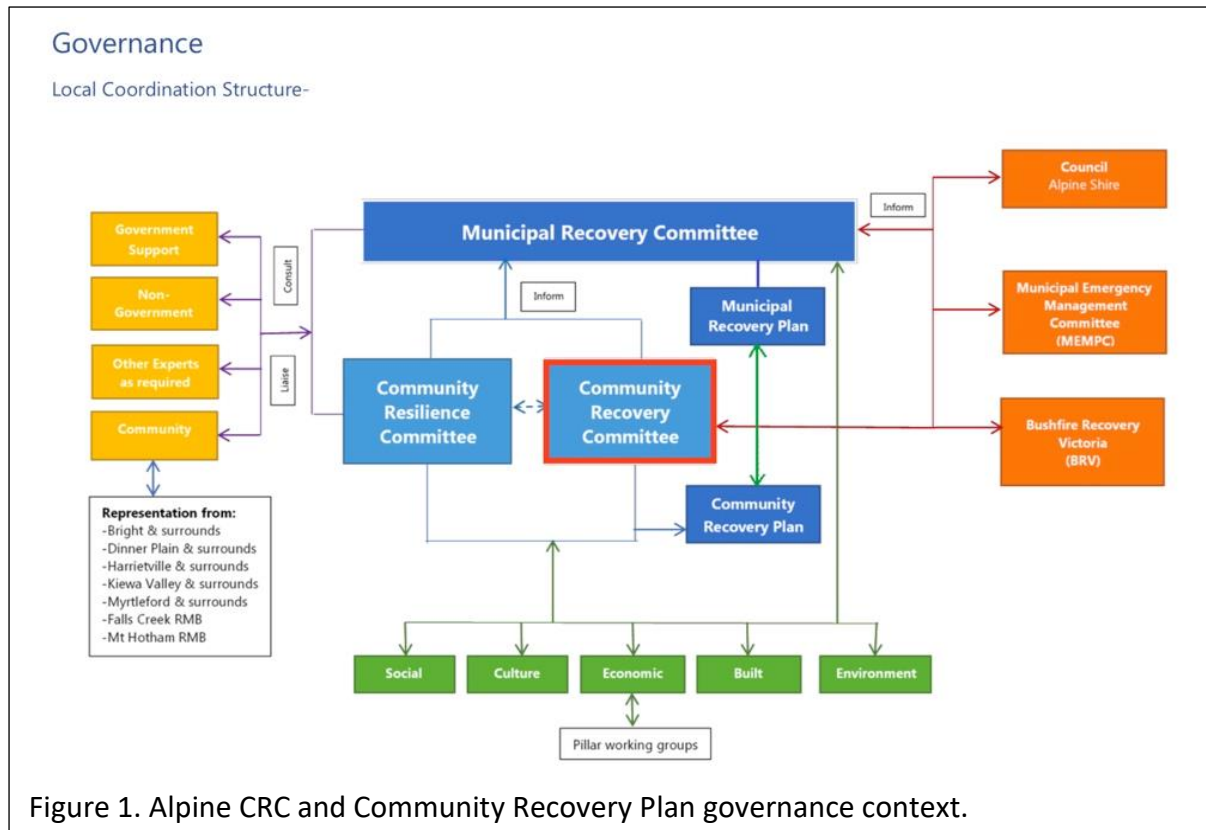
Figure 1. Alpine CRC and Community Recovery Plan governance context.

Plan framework

Figure 2 illustrates the Alpine CRC Community Recovery Plan framework and the conceptual approach taken by the committee in developing this plan. The aspiration for the future we want (Page 4), is the key organising principle of the plan. To realise this aspiration, we need to achieve goals around community resilience and community capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from future shocks and disasters.

Known regional and local scale projects that build toward the overall aspiration and reflect community needs and priorities are organised by four programs that address the goals. These programs are: Increasing preparedness; Improving response capacity; Improving recovery capacity and Strengthening Resilience.

Figure 2. Alpine CRC Community Recovery Plan framework
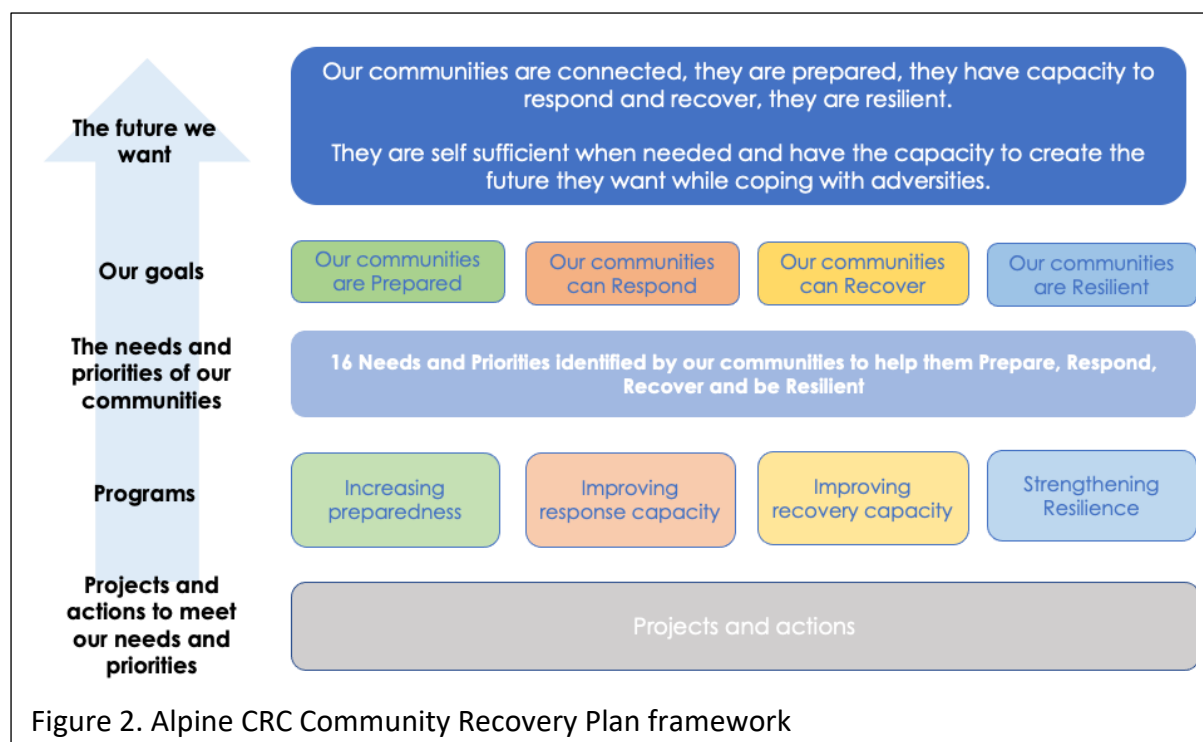
Listening to our communities to identify needs and priorities

Community needs and priorities were identified from responses to the Committee's 2020 Community Survey, which was completed by 337 people across the localities and surrounds of Myrtleford, Bright, Kiewa Valley, Harrietville, Dinner Plain, Falls Creek and Mount Hotham.

The Community Survey investigated:
- aspects of bushfire impact and recovery
- awareness of recovery support and experiences in accessing support
- personal and community needs for future bushfire preparation
- ideas for community strengthening
- aspects of bushfire preparation, response and recovery unique to specific localities
- the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on respondents' bushfire recovery.

In brief, the survey found that nearly 4 in 10 people impacted by the bushfires are making only some or no progress in recovery. However, another 4 in 10 people who were impacted are progressing well. There are impacted people in every locality (and surrounds) that are not making progress and recovery is variable across the community and across locations. The smaller communities higher in the alpine landscape have a higher proportion of people not progressing well (approx. 1 in 4, compared to 1 in 10 for lower elevations).

The survey also found that 1 in 3 people are unaware of recovery supports on offer, although there was overall high awareness of business grants. Covid-19 restrictions have impacted individual and community recovery in multiple interacting ways including through personal and business disruption, economic loss, mental health pressures and social isolation.

Survey respondents identified a range of needs and priorities relevant to bushfire preparation, response, recovery and building overall community resilience to future shocks and disruptions. These needs and priorities have formed the organising framework for the projects collated in this plan. Please note, extended key findings from the 2020 Community Survey are provided in Appendix 2.

Exploring community needs and priorities

Sixteen broad community needs and priorities were identified from multiple questions in the 2020 Community Survey and organised into the four key programs (preparation, response, recovery, resilience - see Figure 2 above.), which build towards the overall aspiration for our communities. Known projects were collated into these groupings to determine where good progress is occurring and where gaps exist.

These needs are priorities are summarised in Table 1 and presented by key program. While the committee recognises the connections and overlaps between programs (for example, a project that builds community resilience may also improve its disaster response), it has organised needs and priorities as indicated based on current 'best fit' for planning purposes but acknowledges these may change as the Plan evolves over time.

Table 1. List of community needs and priorities identified from the Alpine CRC 2020 Community Survey

Program	Community need/priority
Our Communities are Prepared	Improved environmental protection and management (including hazard reduction and initiatives such as free or reduced green waste disposal at tips)
	Fire preparation assistance (practical help for people who need it)
	Information on community and home and property preparation as well as on-site assessment and guidance
Our Communities can Respond	Improved local safe places and/or evacuation facilities/capacities. Officially called Relief Centres
	Increased firefighting resources (including subsidies for/knowledge of firefighting resources)
	Better coordination of services
	Information about evacuation procedures and places
	Accurate, localised information (clear reliable info pre, during and post fire)
	Improved communication during a bushfire event
Our Communities can Recover	Assisting vulnerable people
	Providing/continuing post fire recovery support (multiple aspects including co-ordination, leadership, business planning and support, financial assistance, insurance clarity, and telecommunication resources)

Our Communities are Resilient	Community cohesiveness, participation and community building initiatives to build shared resilience (including community hubs, fostering co-operation, and action on climate change).
	Identification of the need to diversify income potential.
	Improved internet, telecommunications, electricity supply
	Greater access to local water resources
	Mental health support

> Taking a broader view: regional-scale projects and initiatives to improve preparation, response, recovery and resilience capacities.

Committee members identified additional, overarching and region-wide proposed projects and initiatives through a workshop process in January 2021. Members developed project ideas for each of the four key programs (Prepare, Response, Recover, Resilient) that build towards the overall plan aspiration while addressing the needs and priorities identified through the community survey. The program contents are described below and the projects are listed in Appendix 3 along with other existing or planned regional scale initiatives.

Increasing Preparedness

The 2020 Community Survey highlighted the need for better preparedness at the individual, property, community and regional scales. Survey respondents nominated a range of activities and initiatives for improving preparedness. These included:

- Information on home and property preparation as well as on-site assessment and guidance

- Community level education and awareness on fire plans and fire plan development at the personal and community scale

- Reliable communication infrastructure

- Clear evacuation procedures and locations including guidance/support for directing tourists in high-risk situations

- Hazard reduction and controlled burning.

The Alpine CRC is aware there is a wealth of information that exists and is publicly available from the Alpine Shire, the CFA, SES, DEWLP, local neighbourhood centres and other sources. However, our survey results indicated that some members of our communities are unaware or unable to access and/or understand this information.

There is also a common human tendency to seek information only when it is needed, rather than beforehand when it is readily available. To address this tendency and in doing so, increase community preparedness, the Alpine CRC believes a combination of different approaches and new initiatives are needed to connect people to available information and to encourage our community to prepare for future emergencies

Improving Response Capacity

The 2020 Community Survey also highlighted the need to improve disaster response capacities. Again, survey respondents nominated a range of activities and initiatives to address this need. These include:

- Increased fire-fighting resources and better co-ordination of services
- Reliable communications to underpin information transfer
- Accurate, localised information during disaster events
- Improved availability and access to PPE resources and information on health risks of smoke
- Better co-ordination of services.

The Alpine CRC is aware each fire is different and the strength and intensity of fires changes with the local weather and the global trend of climate change. Learning from past fires is ongoing and a clear focus of numerous government inquiries. The Alpine CRC will advocate for continued action on the recommendations on the independent inquiries including those held by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) and the Royal Commissions.

Improving Recovery Capacity

Ten months after the 2019–2020 bushfires the CRC survey found that:

- Nearly 4 in 10 people that were impacted by bushfire are making only some or no progress in recovery.
- Equally, another 4 in 10 people who were impacted are progressing well.
- There are impacted people in every community not making progress.
- Higher elevation communities have a higher proportion of people not progressing well (approx. 1 in 4, compared to 1 in 10 for lower elevations).
- Around 1 in 3 people are unaware of the support programs on offer; only business grants have high awareness.
- Further promotion and advertisement of available grants and supports may be useful across some sectors including farming advice, rebuilding resources, business advice, grants for individuals, mental health support and grants for farming/agriculture.
- People accessed a range of other supports to assist their recovery, including support from the government and not-for-profit sector, as well as social networks highlighting the importance of social capital, self-organisation, and other forms of recovery support in some communities.

Various needs and priorities were also identified by the community through the 2020 Community Survey process. These included short and long-term practical support for individuals, communities, organisations and businesses. A range of supports are needed, particularly across financial and economic viability and mental health and well-being. The community also identified the need to support and assist vulnerable people in the community. Rather than the need for more programs, the CRC found that the priority is for new ways to create a better connection with existing programmes. The Alpine CRC will advocate for new and improved approaches to connect the community with social and economic supports in the aftermath of a bushfire.

Strengthening Resilience

Strengthening resilience is an over-arching goal of the Alpine CRC Community Recovery Plan so our communities *are self-reliant when needed and can create the future they want.* In the Community Survey we asked for ideas on building our social and economic strength, and overall community resilience. The community responded with a diverse range of ideas, including:

- Events, gathering places and community hubs to foster and enable community cohesiveness, participation and cohesiveness
- Diversifying the economy to not be so reliant on tourism and therefore more resilient
- Investing in the existing economy including tourism
- Addressing accommodation and employment logistics in tourist towns
- Addressing insurance challenges and helping people navigate these challenges
- Focusing on sustainable recovery
- Advocating for services and initiatives that foster mental health and community wellbeing.

The messages that the CRC heard and will seek to promote and advocate for are:

1. Community cohesiveness is a foundation of strengthening resilience. There are a number of activities/events that communities already undertake and these opportunities for connection have been interrupted by the fires and also COVID-19. These events require and garner a lot of community volunteer effort and local business sponsorship. Supporting existing programs or events that are struggling due to the economic hit on local businesses and therefore traditional funding supports, will builds local community strength. Further, supporting event infrastructure in its widest interpretation e.g. accommodation, event places, local services will support both the return to existing long held traditions and creation of new events.
2. Building and diversifying the local economy is about enabling businesses operating locally to make a profit and remain viable and resilient to future economic disruptions. The Alpine CRC feel that successful profitable local businesses are an important driver of the economic recovery. Programs and activities that enable businesses to become self-reliant and attract new business to the region will increase local employment and build local capacity and adaptability.

The Alpine CRC priority will be to advocate for and promote activities that reinforce community cohesiveness and connectedness and build economic strength and diversity to strengthen the resilience of the region.

A list of known local-scale community and region-wide projects (mostly suggested by the Alpine CRC) relevant to each Program and identified needs and priorities is provided in Appendix 4. These projects are at various scales of refinement and implementation and as such, this list is not complete and will evolve over time.

Implementing the Plan

The needs and priorities and the proposed projects identified in this plan reflect the community's voice. Community groups, agencies, local government and other organisations will implementation the project as funding and resources allow. The Alpine CRC will use this plan and the projects listed within it to advocate for the community's needs, to support our communities to seek funding and resources and to hold governments and organisations accountable to their commitments to the community.

Figure 3 provides an example of the thinking behind our implementation pathways approach. As illustrated, the pathways to action starts with our goal and relevant program, describes the primary issue and flagship initiatives, clarifies the ACRC role and alignment with existing plans or programs.
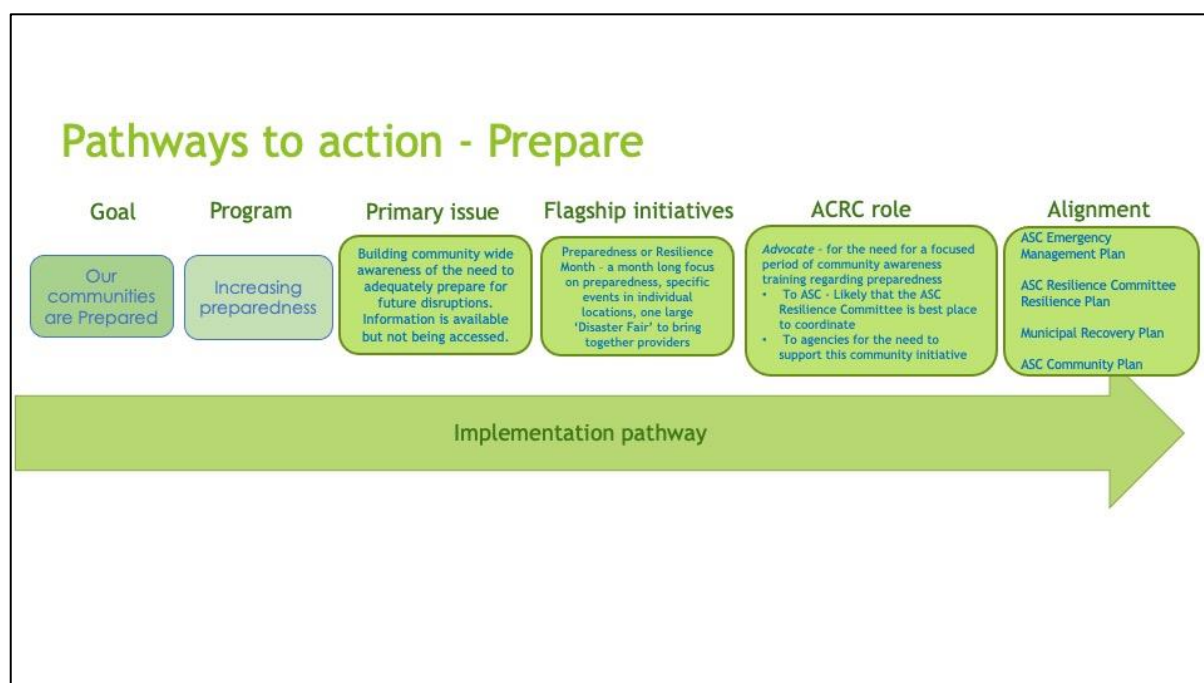
Figure 3. Example of implementation pathways approach (Prepare)

Pathways to Implementation

Tables 2–5 sets out implementation 'pathways' for a subset of flagship projects identified by the Alpine CRC. These flagship projects are designed to address critical underlying issues that require a coordinated, region-wide response. The flagship projects are intended to be catalytic, helping to create the capacity and conditions for the many smaller-scale, localised projects identified by local communities.

For each major issue of concern and proposed flagship projects (drawn from the wide set of projects already identified by the community and documented in the ACRC Community Recovery Plan Appendices 3 and 4), we have identified who is best placed to lead the

project, the Alpine CRC's immediate role in helping to kick start or progress the project as well as linkages to existing processes and projects.

Progressing these flagship projects in the near term will help move more rapidly towards regional communities that are prepared, that have the capacity to respond and recover and have the internal capacity and resilience to cope with adversities when required.

Table 2. Implementation pathway: Goal: Our communities are <u>Prepared</u>
Program: Increasing preparedness

What is the underlying issue we are trying to address?	Flagship initiatives	ACRC role		Alignment with other plans, processes or initiatives.
		Who should lead?	ACRC Action	
Improved environmental protection and management (including hazard reduction and initiatives such as free or reduced green waste disposal at tips)	Developing a coordinated, tenure blind, integrated environmental protection and hazard management approach, including incorporation of traditional knowledge and practices.	FFM DELWP Alpine Shire Council	*Advocate – reflect community concerns regarding the need for improved environmental management (including hazard reduction, weed management)*	ASC Emergency Management Plan FFM/CFA Planning processes
Building community wide awareness of the need to adequately prepare for future disruptions	Preparedness or Resilience Month – a month long focus on preparedness, specific events in individual locations, one large 'Disaster Fair' to bring together providers	Alpine Shire Council With support from EMV CFA/SES BRV NBRA	*Advocate* – for the need for a focused period of community awareness raising regarding preparedness - To ASC - Likely that the ASC Resilience Committee is best place to lead this, working with community groups	ASC Emergency Management Plan ASC Resilience Committee Resilience Plan Municipal Recovery Plan

			- To agencies for the need to support this community initiative	ASC Community Plan
Need for localised preparedness planning	Community led resilience planning, with emphasis on emergency planning	Local communities – Neighbourhood Houses or equivalent community organisations	*Advocate* – for locally led planning to agencies and ASC *Connect* – communities undertaking planning - Key message is that community are best placed to drive this type of local planning and decide on most appropriate approach for their community	Some communities have already undertaken various forms of community led planning. Red Cross process for local scale planning

Table 3: Implementation pathway: Goal: Our communities can <u>Respond</u>

Program: Improving response capacity

What is the underlying issue we are trying to address?	Flagship initiatives	ACRC role		Alignment with other plans, processes or initiatives.
		Who should lead?	ACRC Action	
Improving communication – there is a need for information during events that is timely, accurate and localised	Developing fewer but more accurate, trusted sources of information during an event. Build awareness about hierarchy of information sources and what they provide during events	Incident Control Centre should be the primary sources of information during an event. Responsibility for improving information flow sits with the agencies that form the ICC	- *Advocate* – for timely, accurate and localised information - *Communicate* – with communities the need to understand the communication hierarchy - *Advice – to ASC and Resilience Committee* - preparedness month offer a chance to build community awareness about the information hierarchy.	Incident Control procedures Municipal Emergency Plan
Adequate communication infrastructure is required to support communication during	Building understanding of communication options for communities	ASC – the current communications audit and options process provides the key	*Advocate* – to ASC for a human-needs centred approach, not a market centred approach.	ASC Strategic Plan BRV have a 'black spots' project underway –

events and in the recovery phase.		opportunity to progress communication infrastructure issues across the region	- *Inform/Advocate* – with local politicians of the need to address the long-standing communication challenges in the NE using a human-needs centred approach.	ensure they connect with this ASC project.
Small/remote communities need adequate fire fighting resources.	Understanding the current provision and distribution and future plans for fire fighting resources across the region	ACRC to request information from CFA and FFM	Advocate – for fairness and strategic placement of fire fighting resources within the region	

Table 4: Implementation pathway: Goal: Our communities can <u>Recover</u>

Program: Improving recovery capacity

What is the underlying issue we are trying to address?	Flagship initiatives	ACRC role		Alignment with other plans, processes or initiatives.
		Who should lead?	**ACRC Action**	
Social connection and cohesiveness are the foundation of recovery	Community cohesion and empowerment

Investigate an 'incident control room' style approach to supporting community cohesiveness and recovery | ASC – this is core business for Local Government as the interface between communities, individuals and institutions.

There are numerous other relevant organisations in each community (eg Victorian Council of Churches played an important role following the Black Saturday and Black Summer fires) | *Advocate* – the importance of community cohesiveness and connection as a valuable 'asset' that should be invested in via ASC planning and activities.

Learn – document the most effective recovery actions/activities and support those becoming standard best practice. | *All* Council planning and functions influence cohesiveness and connectedness |
| Mental health support is crucial both in the short | Increased coordination of services | BRV

Health Services | *Advocate* – to BRV for increased coordination. | DHHA regional mental health planning provides |

and long term following events	Increased communication of availability of services in the short and long term Learning from the recent events – what should we do next time?		*Endorse and Support –* the important work done by the health service provides and the need for ongoing support and funding	important context for event-based support.
Capacity to recover is partially determined by the degree to which individuals and communities are insured against losses. Lack or under insurance prevents people re-establishing businesses and could lead to population decreases and subsequent rate income loss for local government	Awareness raising about insurance coverage. Advocacy to decision makers and industry of the need for affordable insurance to drive regional investment and recovery	BRV	*Advocacy* – building awareness of the link between insurance, recovery and resilience	

Table 5: Implementation pathway: Goal: Our communities are <u>Resilient</u>

Program: Strengthening resilience

What is the underlying issue we are trying to address?	Flagship initiatives	ACRC role		Alignment with other plans, processes or initiatives.
		Who should lead?	**ACRC Action**	
Resilient communities have diverse economies, resilient infrastructure and cohesive communities	Regional Resilience Master Plan to bring together economic, infrastructure and community resilience thinking and initiatives. Develop a set of regional resilience principles to embed in all planning, particularly the ASC Vision	ASC Regional Development Victoria Ovens and Murray Regional Partnership	*Advocate* – to ASC for the need for a wholistic, integrated approach to resilience building across all areas of our community	ASC Community Plan Land use planning Infrastructure planning EMP MEMP
Resilient businesses recover quicker, support the community to recover and can capture opportunities in the recovery phase	Resilient business initiative to ensure businesses are 'disruption ready'	ASC Oven and Murray Regional Partnership	*Advocate* – to ASC, OMRP and BRV for a 'Disruption Ready' approach to business planning	ASC Economic Development Plan

Businesses play a key role in community cohesiveness through community inclusive spaces and events	'Inclusive' business and communities support and planning guide – to provide advice on how to be inclusive to increase business opportunities and provide community cohesiveness spaces and events.	ASC economic development	*Advocate* – for the role of inclusive businesses in economic development and building resilience *Suggest* – models or approaches that have proven successful	ASC Community Plan

Reporting back

The Alpine CRC will publish an annual summary of activities and efforts against this plan and update the community needs and priorities and the list of projects contained within the plan as necessary.

What the CRC will do next

The Alpine CRC will:
- Engage with the community about the community recovery plan
- Advocate for the implementation of projects and actions identified in the plan
- Continue to liaise with agencies to ensure the community's needs and priorities are addressed through planning and recovery work.
- Focus on the implementation of a series of region-scale flagship projects (Tables 2–5).

Appendix 1. Aligning the Community Recovery Plan with the Alpine Community Recovery Committee Terms of Reference

Aligning the Community Recovery Plan with the Alpine Community Recovery Committee Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference set out how the ACRC should operate. By aligning the Plan to these terms, it ensures the Plan is based on a solid foundation.

Terms of Reference	Relevance to the CRP
Engage and consult with affected local communities to better understand their recovery needs and listen to their ideas. This includes providing 'hard to reach' groups with opportunities to express their views	Ensure the Plan is based on the priorities and actions identified by the community through existing projects and through the Community Survey results.
Lead development and implementation of a Community Recovery Plan that will result in sustainable social and economic benefits	Ensure emphasis on social and economic benefits
Update the Community Recovery Plan regularly and keep communities informed of the Committee's work	Ensure governance process for regular updating of the plan is in place
Develop and implement an Alpine CRC Communications Plan that facilitates clear and effective communications and engagement between the Committee, the communities of the Alpine region and other key stakeholders and which defines communication protocols, key messaging and preferred communication methods and channels.	Include actions from the plan into the Communication Plan
Make recommendations to Alpine Shire Council and other funding bodies on the allocation and prioritisation of funds for community projects and initiatives	Ensure the CRP is in a format that can easily be used to make recommendations to ASC and other funding bodies including identifying responsible agencies and pulling out a summary for each agency.
Advocate for community recovery needs with relevant government agencies and interested parties	Ensure CRP clearly communicates community recovery needs by linking directly to the community survey. Ensure responsible

	agencies/interested parties are identified for community needs. Feed CRC actions into Municipal Recovery Plan
Assist with proposals to attract project funding and resources to invest in the Alpine Shire	Ensure the CRP provides, where possible, a clear justification and estimated costing for funding
Monitor community recovery activities	Ensure the CRP establishes simple, low cost but effect monitoring processes.
Facilitate events and activities which contribute to community recovery and celebrate recovery successes	Ensure there is a priority and action relating to facilitation of community events and celebrating success.
Maintain effective two-way communication on the community recovery process with Alpine Shire Council and Council's Municipal Recovery Committee, Bushfire Recovery Victoria and other stakeholders	Reporting on the Plans implementation is part of two-way communication with other stakeholders.
Share experiences and learning with other Community Recovery Committees around Victoria	
Contribute to evaluation processes that will improve future disaster recovery efforts.	Monitoring of the Plans actions will contribute to understanding of how community recovery capacity can be developed

The following criteria may also be used for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Plan:

What success looks like (taken directly from Sept 9th notes)
For the Community successful recovery looks like: Recovery and resilience projects support people in getting back to their 'normal' life and feeling better prepared for the next event.

Success for the CRC looks like: The community feel the CRC have engaged the community and have been successful in obtaining needed outcomes for the community.

Success for governments from the 'community led' process looks like: Confirmation that their actions are delivering successful community outcomes and the identification of priorities that they were not previously aware.

Appendix 2. Key findings from the 2020 Alpine CRC Community Survey

Key findings from the 2020 community survey (source Alpine Community Recovery Committee 2020 Community Survey Report, Working Draft V2, January 2021.

Regional overview
Bushfire impact and recovery progress

- Nearly 4 in 10 people that were impacted by bushfire are making only some or no progress in recovery.
- Equally, another 4 in 10 people who were impacted are progressing well.

Bushfire impact and recovery by locality

- There are impacted people in every community not making progress.
- Recovery is variable across the community and across locations.
- Higher elevation communities have a higher proportion of people not progressing well (approx. 1 in 4, compared to 1 in 10 for lower elevations).
- Lower elevation communities in the Alpine CRC are progressing well, comparative to higher elevations communities.

Recovery support

- Around 1 in 3 people are unaware of the supports on offer; only business grants have high awareness
- Further promotion and advertisement of available grants and supports may be useful across some sectors including farming advice, rebuilding resources, business advice, grants for individuals, mental health support and grants for farming/agriculture.
- People accessed a range of other supports to assist their recovery, including support from the government and not-for-profit sector, as well as social networks highlighting the importance of social capital, self-organisation and other forms of recovery support in some communities.

Impact of Covid-19 on bushfire recovery

- Covid-19 restrictions have impacted individual and community recovery in multiple interacting ways
- Economic impact through loss or reduction of business and employment is a key impediment to recovery
- Mental health strain and social isolation associated with Covid-19 have also impacted people's ability to recover from the bushfires
- Travel restrictions have disrupted business operations and personal lives, including access to services
- Restrictions have provided unexpected time to direct to other tasks for some, but for others the ability to prepare for the upcoming fire season was hampered.

Preparation for future bushfires supports, program and information needs and priorities.
A range of needs and priorities were identified, including the need for:

- Information on home and property preparation as well as on-site assessment and guidance.
- Community level education and awareness.
- Community resilience building and attention to the needs of vulnerable residents.
- Accurate, localised information.
- Reliable communication infrastructure.
- Clear evacuation procedures and locations including guidance/support for directing tourists in high risk situations
- Increased fire-fighting resources and better co-ordination of services
- Financial assistance, insurance support and clarity.

What does your community need to help it prepare for future bushfires?

- Environmental protection and management, better coordination between response services and improved internet and telecommunications were the highest ranked priorities, followed by information about evacuation and safe places, a provision/improvement of evacuation facilities.
- Ranked priorities were fairly consistent between localities.
- Respondents also nominated other important needs for community bushfire preparation. These include: building community cohesiveness, concern and support for vulnerable community members; community-scale education; free or reduced-cost green waste disposal opportunities, improved fire-fighting resources, information – online and hard copy, site visits and site preparation, mental health support, government assistance and support, climate change action, reliable information and communication services

Our Community: ideas for building our social and economic strength
A diverse range of ideas were suggested for building community strength, including:

- access to mental health services
- continued government support and assistance
- fire preparation assistance
- the importance of accurate information including clear evacuation procedures and locations
- community hubs and other community building initiatives
- identification of the need to diversify income potential.

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Appendix 3. List of regional scale projects by program and community needs and priorities (current: February 2021)

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A Our Communities are Prepared

A.1. Improved environmental protection and management (including hazard reduction and initiatives such as free or reduced green waste disposal at tips)

Project	Locality
Vouchers for hard rubbish and green waste removal	Region-wide

A.2. Fire preparation assistance (practical help for people who need it)

Project	Locality
Natural Disaster Recovery & Climate adaptation Leadership program (Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Inc)	Region-wide

A.3. Information on community and home and property preparation as well as on-site assessment and guidance

Project	Locality
Emergency Storage Crates for Pets	Region-wide
Alpine Visitor Information Centre	Region-wide
Advice on vegetation management and what and where to plant	Region-wide
Community-led fire plan and individual/property scale fire plan.	Region-wide
Annual bushfire preparedness month	Region-wide
Bushfire/Disaster Fair	Region-wide
Encourage people to have a plan they can/will follow.	Region-wide
Encourage people to take personal responsibility	Region-wide

B. Our communities can respond

B.1. Improved local safe places and/or evacuation facilities/capacities

Project	Locality
Blackspot workarounds	Region-wide

B.2. Increased firefighting resources (including subsidies for/knowledge of firefighting resources

Project	Locality
Enable access via private property where relevant.	Region-wide

B.3. Better coordination of services

Project	Locality
CFA Cluster Youth	Region-wide
Activate and authorise a volunteer register	Region-wide

B.4. Information about evacuation procedures and places

Project	Locality
Encourage and support people to be ready to evacuate	Region-wide
Process to inform and manage tourists	Region-wide
Identify places of last resort	Region-wide

B.5. Accurate, localised information (clear reliable info pre, during and post fire)

Project	Locality
Emergency messaging from local towers	Region-wide
Advocate for transparent communication	Region-wide
Request changes to emergency app.	Region-wide

B.6. Improved communication during a bushfire event

Project	Locality
Encourage people to listen to and comply with advice (don't be a hero or complacent)	Region-wide
Help assist with emergency communication between agencies and the committee	Region-wide
Develop register of 'who is there' (Mount Hotham, Dinner Plain)	Region-wide

C. Our Communities can Recover
C.1. Assisting vulnerable people

Project	Locality
Arrange for check on vulnerable people	Region-wide
Identify and support vulnerable people in the community	Region-wide

C.2. Providing/continuing post fire recovery support

Project	Locality
Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship	Region-wide
SBE & Agri Business Recovery & Resilience (Shine at Business)	Region-wide
Project Connectivity (Agbizz Assist)	Region-wide
Ensure recovery information for community is accurate and informative	Region-wide
Provide training for community leaders (that has a defined purpose)	Region-wide
Prepare a progressive adaptable response plan	Region-wide
Support pivoting businesses	Region-wide
Identify key community groups and community connectors	Region-wide
Facilitate or enable community communication and consultation	Region-wide
Supply financial, mental and health support	Region-wide
Organise/encourage community social get together	Region-wide
Advocate for Community facilities	Region-wide
Robust telecommunications including portable infrastructure	Region-wide
Foster community empowerment, strong community leadership and development of community leaders	Region-wide
Undertake community succession planning around community leadership and leadership of community groups and clubs to ensure they are ongoing and sustainable	Region-wide
Develop response communication targeted at tourists	Region-wide

D. Our communities are resilient

D.1. Community cohesiveness, participation and community building initiatives to build shared resilience

Project	Locality
Foster development or designation of multi-use facilities to improve provision of safer places and last resort evacuation centres	Region-wide
Advocate for improvements in services and facilities	Region-wide
Develop an overarching masterplan for regional resilience (Alpine & Resorts)	Region-wide

D.2. Identification of the need to diversify income potential.

Project	Locality
Murray to Mountain Rail Trail	Region-wide
Dargo High Plains Road Upgrade	Region-wide
Tourism North East Demand Stimulus Strategy	Region-wide
Foster the potential of the 'Great Alpine Road' to create and expand multiple forms of tourism (including nature-based, recreation, food and wine) along the Great Alpine to better diffuse the tourism benefits and promote the region's diverse attractions ('what's your journey?') and stimulate economic activity	Region-wide

D.3. Improved internet, telecommunications, electricity and water supply

Project	Locality
Backups for water, sewerage and power	Region wide

D.4 Mental health support

Project	Locality
Build awareness of mental health supports	Region-wide

Appendix 4. Full list of known local-scale projects by goal and need/priority (current: February 2021)

Please note, known **local-scale** projects are organised by the main organising goals (prepare, respond, recover, resilient) that they contribute to or build towards and then by the relevant needs and priorities. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and many projects overlap, including with some region-scale projects. However, categorising the projects by their 'best fit' provides a framework for thinking about and organising these relevant to the overall plan aspiration.

Our Communities are Prepared
Improved environmental protection and management

Project	Locality
Vegetation Management Hazard reduction FCSC village area	Falls Creek
Fuel load reduction (private land)	Dinner Plain
Fuel load reduction (public land)	Dinner Plain

Fire preparation assistance (practical help for people who need it)

Project	Locality
Community-led fire planning with CFA/Neighbourhood Centre	Kiewa Valley

Information on community and home and property preparation as well as on-site assessment and guidance

Project	Locality
Bright SES Facility Upgrade	Bright
NE Victoria Vineyard Smoke Sensor Network	NE Wine Zone

Our communities can respond
Improved local safe places and/or evacuation facilities/capacities

Project	Locality
Bright Alternative Route	Bright
Myrtleford Relief Centre Upgrade/McNamara Park, etc.	Myrtleford
Richardson Pavilion (Myrtleford Showgrounds-recreation reserve) upgrades including seal building, toilets/amenities.	Myrtleford

Project	Locality
Pioneer Park Criterion Circuit, Road Upgrade	Bright
Tawonga Hall Upgrade to facilities	Kiewa Valley, Tawonga
Dargo High Plains Road upgrade	Alpine Shire

Increased firefighting resources

Project	Locality
Mt Higginbotham Water Supply	Mount Hotham
CFA Firefighting Equipment	Mount Hotham/Dinner Plain
Mount Beauty Airport Upgrade	Kiewa Valley
Tree removal and safety barriers	Dinner Plain
Protection of water assets and implementation of the fire protection plan	Dinner Plain
Fire defence system feasibility study	Dinner Plain
Relocation of CFA station – design/costings	Dinner Plain

Better coordination of services

Project	Locality
Improved fire management	Dinner Plain
CFA Cluster Youth	Alpine Region

Information about evacuation procedures and places

Project	Locality

Accurate, localised information (clear reliable info pre, during and post fire)

Project	Locality

Improved communication during a bushfire event

Project	Locality

Our Communities can Recover

Assisting vulnerable people

Project	Locality
Community Volunteer Emergency Response Template Proposal	Kiewa Valley

Providing/continuing post fire recovery support

Project	Locality

Our communities are resilient

Community cohesiveness, participation and community building initiatives to build shared resilience (including community hubs, fostering co-operation, and action on climate change).

Project	Locality
Great Valley Trail Extension	Bright/ Harrietville
Porepunkah Ovens River Trail	Porepunkah/ Bright
Main Street Christmas decorations	Porepunkah/ Bright
Fitness Stations for Walking Tracks	Bright
Bright skate park upgrade	Bright
Bright Pool Quest	Bright
SES facility upgrade	Bright
Freeburgh Community Centre Upgrades	Freeburgh
Shared trail extension in Wandiligong	Wandiligong
East Ovens Pedestrian Bridge	Harrietville
Bright Courthouse Murals	Bright
Harrietville walking track fitness equipment tables	Harrietville
Picnic table upgrades Lions Park	?
Buffalo River CFA Station Upgrade/Community place at CFA	Buffalo River Myrtleford
Myrtleford Splash Park	Myrtleford
Lake Buffalo Facility Upgrade	Lake Buffalo
Walking Trails/Reform Hills Walk	Myrtleford

Project	Locality
Mountain Bike Trails	Myrtleford
Alpine Active Outdoor equipment	Alpine region: Myrtleford, Mount Beauty, Bright
Pebble Beach Walking Track	Kiewa Valley
STAR Program *(sustainable tenancies at risk)	Alpine Region
FAIR Feed Program	Alpine Region
Murals Mount Beauty	Mt Beauty/Kiewa Valley
Strengthening our Community Foundations (Communities that care)	
Harrietville skatepark (Harrietville Board riders)	Harrietville
Tawonga Hall upgrade (Tawonga and District Community Association)	Tawonga
Mongans Bridge Caravan Park Inc	Kiewa Valley
Mount Hotham Shared Trail Network - Alpine Nature Experience	Mount Hotham
Myrtleford Men's Shed roofing of open area	Myrtleford
Upgrading iconic walks	Dinner Plain
Recreation projects (funded)	Dinner Plain

Identification of the need to diversify income potential.

Project	Locality
Multi use trail from Mount Hotham to Harrietville	Mount Hotham
Tawonga Caravan Park Upgrade	Kiewa Valley
Rocky Valley Dam Foreshore	Falls Creek
Gateway to Alpine Adventure	Dinner Plain
Tennis Court Upgrade	Dinner Plain
Snow play hub	Mount Hotham
Public Safety access and amenity upgrade	Mount Hotham
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing	Mount Hotham

Improved internet, telecommunications, electricity supply

Project	Locality
Harrietville television, radio, telecommunication and Internet services	Harrietville
Solar Panels & Batteries for Alpine Radio/ Auditorium/ Information Centre	Mt Beauty/Kiewa Valley
Strengthen telecommunication links	Dinner Plain
Strengthen electricity supply	Dinner Plain

Greater access to local water resources

Project	Locality
Dinner Plain Snowmaking	Dinner Plain

Mental health support

Project	Locality