

Status of the Municipal Recovery Plan

The first version of the Municipal Recovery Plan (MRP) was endorsed by Council in December 2021 and was updated in April 2022. The third version of the MRP was extensively revised and endorsed in December 2022. The revision included updated storm and pandemic impact data, expenditure data, cultural recovery priorities, and detailed the anticipated recovery timeframe going forward and a revised action plan.

This document provides an overview of the status of the MRP and highlights the progress against Recovery Actions as specified in Version 3 with a summary of recovery activities that have been undertaken to June 2024. Actions have concluded as of June 2024 unless otherwise specified. Where required, ongoing support will be provided through core services.

Community Engagement

Recovery Actions delivered to June 2024 have been informed by extensive engagement with the Yarra Ranges community to provide direction on the recovery priorities that would lead to positive outcomes for the community, including (but not limited to):

- Outreach – door knocking and calls to displaced residents, pop up hubs;
- Direct feedback through our recovery partners and impacted residents;
- Surveys and consultation undertaken by four Regional Community Recovery Committees;
- The storm and pandemic recovery survey (conducted 4 times over 2021-23);
- Feedback from Council’s seven advisory groups.

Outcomes

Activity outcomes – listed in third column, are aligned to the Australian Disaster Resilience Monitoring - Recovery Evaluation Framework, or as stated. Examples of related activities are shown in (brackets).

Actions beyond June 2024

People, Culture & Wellbeing			Status
YRERN recommendations	Project officer has been engaged through a third party to strengthen the connections and provision of the Relief network. ¹	Ongoing Community members are aware of each other's potential needs from future disasters through formal and informal networks and plans (Plan for future disasters and build resilience and responsive capability)	Dec 2024 <i>Integration and support through YRC Community Development Team in place.</i>
Mental wellbeing project	The Mental Wellbeing Major Initiative Project Internal Working Group have now drafted eight outcome statements that capture the areas of Council influence. The intention is that these statements will help determine Council's key mental wellbeing priorities as the next Council Plan and Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 are prepared. This will be followed by an evaluation framework that will help Council to measure the success of these efforts and understand if these activities are making the meaningful change to the community they strive to achieve. The Mental Wellbeing	Ongoing Community members can access appropriate services to deal with health needs. Community members have the knowledge, skills, and resources for dealing with health issues related to the disaster experience	June 2025 <i>Embedded with the reshaping of the new Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029</i>

¹ Scheduled to conclude June 2024 as per MRP, however, Project Officer position is funded until March 2025 - Resilient Yarra Ranges

	Project Co-ordinator role will continue for a further 12 months to ensure these deliverables are achieved, funded via the Health & Wellbeing Operational budget. ²		<i>In place to support the progress of work into the Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029</i>
Advocacy			
Activity	Output	Outcome	Status
Better telco & power infrastructure - advocacy	Advocate for improved essential services, notably improved telecommunications, and power infrastructure.	Ongoing Infrastructure is built with regard to local disaster risks (ie. through better planning and building resilience and responsive capability for future disasters).	June 2026
Business recovery -advocacy	Continue to update and work with key areas, and Ministers of the State and Commonwealth Government regarding solutions for the local challenges to business	Ongoing Businesses have secure and stable access to supply chains, and networks (including markets, physical infrastructure and assets as well as telecom networks).	June 2026

² Scheduled to conclude June 2025 as per MRP

Planning and Rebuilding			
Activity	Output	Outcome	Status
Building inspections - storm damaged homes	Municipal Building inspections undertaken for homes destroyed and / or damaged by 9 June storms and the issuing, monitoring and enforcement of emergency and building orders. As of 31 October 2023, the total number of properties damaged has increased by one property every month since Oct 2021. ³	Ongoing Infrastructure is built in accord with current knowledge and practices for mitigating disaster impact (ie through inspection and assessment of damage to private buildings).	June 2026
Damaged private property data	Maintained a centralised list of damaged private property with associated overlays (bushfire, erosion, vegetation, heritage) size, age, connection to sewer and reticulated water supply. ⁴	Ongoing Infrastructure is built in accord with current knowledge and practices for mitigating disaster impact (Regulatory changes - land use planning, building standards, development guidelines, or other requirements)	June 2026

³ Continue through to June 2026

⁴ Bespoke offering beyond June 2024 through to June 2026.

Planning support to impacted residents	Provided advice and support through the Planning and Rebuilding teams for storm impacted residents. Including the assessment of planning applications, coordinating with Country Fire Authority/Fire Services Victoria to provide advice on pre-application queries and coordinating with public health team on septic and related issues. ⁵	Ongoing Community members have access to appropriate and affordable housing in a timely manner (Council advice, including community information sessions) on process for rebuilding, insurance and design issues)	June 2026
Fee waiving for storm impacted landowners	Council has provided some relief options such as fee waiving for storm impacted landowners. ¹⁴	Ongoing Households, families, and individuals have the information needed to make decisions (through adjustments to rates and other charges for affected businesses and households).	June 2026

⁵ Beyond June 2024 through to at least June 2026 as people work through the rebuilding and repairing process.

Storm and Pandemic Recovery Actions delivered to June 2024

Activities are categorised under the five recovery streams consisting of (i) Business, Tourism & the Economy; (ii) People Culture & Wellbeing; (iii) Planning & Rebuilding; (iv) Environment & Biodiversity and (v) Public Infrastructure.⁶

Business, Tourism & the Economy			
Activity	Output	Outcome	Status
Regional Workforce Program	<p>65 businesses in Region of Choice committed to continuous improvement.</p> <p>The program has reached maintenance phase whereby the project includes research into ways to strengthen council's engagement and collaboration with the Region of Choice Partners, encouraging continuous improvement of charter values, and improved accessibility to career paths for potential new jobseekers.</p> <p>Received a national Economic Development Australia (EDA) award for marketing and promotion.</p>	<p>Industries and businesses recover and leverage economic strengths and opportunities.</p> <p>People participate in established and new employment opportunities⁷ (ERV Recovery Outcomes)</p>	<p>Completed June 2024</p> <p><i>BAU within Eco.</i></p> <p><i>Development team continue to promote local investment</i></p>

⁶ This summary does not include Advocacy actions that are specified in the MRP.

⁷ <https://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-framework/recovery-outcomes-framework>

Business Recovery Grants	<p>Delivered two grant rounds. –</p> <p>Round 1: 10 applicants received \$132,000.</p> <p>Round 2: 8 applicants received \$119,000.</p> <p>Six new business groups established, bringing the total number of Business and Trader Groups to 12.</p>	<p>Business models are appropriately adaptive to market conditions and fluctuations (Grants or loans to businesses - to assist with costs of recovery from the impacts of the disaster)</p> <p>Local business networks foster growth</p>	Completed Dec 2023
Business Support Initiatives	<p>Communication to local business community has included the eNewsletter with 6,493 subscribers and over 106,000 emails sent.</p> <p>In Feb 2024 a “Small Business Branding: Set yourself Apart and Create Customers for Life” workshop was held – How small business Owners can take control of their business (and Life) in partnership with Australian Industry Group and funded by Business Vic Business Recovery Advisory Service.</p> <p>In cooperation with the Eastern Melbourne Public Health Network grant three wellbeing and resilience workshops are being held. “The Unbreakable Farmer” Warren Davies covered topics of Resilience and Determination, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Developing Capacity and Connection, with the focus was on Authentic Leadership, Building Strong Communities and Recovery. The</p>	<p>Businesses and not-for-profits have business continuity plans and dynamic organisational resilience practices that address relevant risks and threats (Businesses and organisations plan for future disasters and build disaster resilience)</p>	Ongoing <i>BAU with Eco Dev team continuing to connect with new actions in Health & Wellbeing Plan</i>

	workshop was well attended with a further two to be held using BAU resources.		
Marketing Information Sheets	<p>Buy Employ Enjoy campaign encourages local and visitor support for local businesses.</p> <p>Your Reason Your Season 2022 Christmas campaign</p> <p>Celebrated choosing local during festive and summer seasons.</p> <p>Collateral: stickers, window decals, posters, signage, bags, banners. - Supported by digital portals: Enjoy Local Calendar, Buy Local Directory, Yarra Ranges JobLink.</p> <p>Increased local spending by 5% in December (total 16% over pre-pandemic).</p> <p>Choose Yarra Ranges this Season - Christmas 2023</p> <p>Buy Local and a Movie</p>	<p>Consumer and business confidence levels support business operations (both within and outside of the community) ("Buy local" campaign and Tourism marketing)</p> <p>Local business networks foster growth</p>	<p>Completed Dec 2023</p> <p><i>Pandemic supports have shifted to ongoing opportunities with Eco Development team to connect business voice to advocacy efforts for greater disaster resilience measures.</i></p>

Facilitate Business Forums	<p>Facilitated a series of forums or workshops via partnerships relating to economic recovery, resilience, employment and disaster management open to local businesses and industry groups.</p>	<p>Businesses and not-for-profits have business continuity plans and dynamic organisational resilience practices that address relevant risks and threats (Businesses and organisations plan for future disasters and build disaster resilience)</p>	<p>Completed Dec 2023</p> <p><i>YRC Economic Development Team continue to engage with local business networks and provide linkages to disaster resilient work</i></p>
	<p>These programs included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Hills Small Business Expo</i> provided a platform for 40 local businesses to showcase their products and services, network with potential customers and partners. • <i>Elevate: A Yarra Ranges Business Incubator Lab</i> was launched in April but commenced in July 2023 and provided 38 businesses the opportunity to advance their enterprises. • <i>Building Skills for the future - Young Entrepreneurs program</i> provided 25 young people support to develop their ideas from concept to sales for 6 months until Dec 2023. 	<p>Early-stage and small businesses have the capacity to continue operation (Events for specific groups affected by the disaster)</p>	

Evidence Gathering from Businesses	<p>Over 204 businesses were directly contacted following the flood event in October 2022 to obtain their feedback and understand their priorities.</p>	<p>Business insurance is accessible where viable</p> <p>The community can express its changing disaster recovery needs. (Advice and support to businesses on technical and business aspects of recovery)</p>	<p>Completed June 2023</p> <p><i>Current: Eco Dev. the team continues to leverage recovery lessons with current business networks and provide connection to local disaster disruptions by proactively providing a voice on business impacts</i></p>
Using Business Evidence for Planning and Advocacy	<p>Taking themes from 204 businesses and Trader Groups contacted via phone and in person, for flood Oct 2022.</p>	<p>The community can express its changing disaster recovery needs (Advice and support to businesses on technical and business aspects of recovery)</p>	<p>Complete June 2023</p> <p><i>Current: Eco Dev. the team continues to leverage recovery lessons with current business networks and provide connection to local disaster disruptions by proactively providing a voice on business impacts</i></p>

People, Culture & Wellbeing			
Activity	Output	Outcome	Status
Promote recovery support to community	<p>Information relating to recovery support was widely publicised through newsletters (eNews with hard copies left at selected Post Offices), direct mailouts for specified events such as storm branch collection and at the one- and two-year anniversary mark.</p> <p>Council had a specific Recovery website which provided a repository of all public recovery information. This information has been dissolved into the main council website where appropriate.</p>	<p>Community members receive appropriate social services</p> <p>(Communication to the community about recovery activities - in writing (newsletters, fact sheets, websites, social media, etc))</p>	<p>Completed June 2024</p> <p><i>Including recovery lessons into Health & Wellbeing Plan actions, along with the Emergency Management Team proactive engagement community resilience activities and connections.</i></p>
Community cleanup program	<p>Partnership with Cardinia Council. Funding received from ERV for the project to be delivered with Habitat for Humanity Victoria undertaking clean-up works on 51 private properties with Treasuring our Trees completing 5 school projects using repurposed timber.</p> <p>Community Group Training on disasters, emergency preparedness, safety, chainsaw training and Mental Health First Aid was delivered to 30 groups for approximately 130 individuals whilst Small Equipment Grants were distributed to 9 community groups.³</p>	<p>The needs of vulnerable groups are addressed in disaster recovery</p> <p>Provide infrastructure that delivers essential services to the community (Volunteer programs for clean-up, fence-building and repairs)</p> <p>The community's exposure to environmental health risks and</p>	<p>Completed December 2024</p> <p><i>Emergency Management team continue to offer reduced community capability activities for improved disaster resilience.</i></p>

	The remaining Storm Branch Clean Up Grant was varied to offer a Phase 3 program which extended the existing arrangements with Habitat for Humanity Vic. A further 62 private properties were supported to remove storm debris to reduce bushfire risk, hardship, and trauma.	public health risks is minimized (Clean-up, hazard inspection, and waste removal)	<i>Continue connection with Habitat for Humanity with Emergency Management team.</i>
Transition residents to ongoing recovery services as required	Support was provided by Community Recovery Officers to residents to ensure they were linked with appropriate generalist community wellbeing service support upon the withdrawal of specific psychosocial recovery services.	Community members receive appropriate social services (Case management service that assesses the needs of households and individuals and assists them to obtain services, advice and support)	Completed June 2024
Healing in our gardens program	<p>Healing in our Gardens Program encouraged more than 200 residents / families to register with the program and participate in 70 events.</p> <p>62 community group partners</p> <p>Over 1,900 resident connections at program events. Noting some residents attended multiple events.</p> <p>Gardening Australia promoted the program with a dedicated segment.</p>	<p>Mutual assistance systems, social networks and support mechanisms are capable of adapting to emergencies when these occur (Volunteer programs for community connection and social networks)</p> <p>Community members have social networks to support each other</p>	<p>Completed June 2024</p> <p><i>Transitioned to local community gardening groups across the Hills.</i></p>

Deliver a support referral service	Support was provided by Community Recovery Officers to impacted residents to ensure they were linked with appropriate psychosocial recovery services such as Windermere and Anglicare. ⁶	Community members can access appropriate services to deal with health needs (Referral networks for case management established)	Completed Dec 2023
Insurance information sessions	Council conducted several insurance events with residents providing free advice on insurance matters. These sessions were well attended including those whose homes were damaged by the June storms.	The community has access to insurance (covering lives, homes, and other property) through insurance markets or micro-finance institutions, where appropriate and viable	Completed Jan. 2024 <i>Emergency Management team offer community preparedness sessions with local community services</i>
Community connection programs	<p>Worked with community groups and other relevant stakeholders to develop and deliver recovery programs and activities that promoted community connection and wellbeing across the Storm Impacted area.</p> <p>Examples of some of the programs included:</p> <p><i><u>Parenting Support</u> programs such as Rewilding for Mums in the Hills and Dad's Bush Playgroups helped impacted families in their recovery. Dads bush playgroup has successfully transitioned to Mountain Men.</i></p> <p><i><u>Wildings Playground Children's Book</u>: Community-led codedesigned, development and publication of a children's book, written, illustrated, and designed by 80 children aged 8-12 impacted by the June 2021 storm event. The</i></p>	<p>Community members are aware of each other's potential needs from future disasters through formal and informal networks and plans (i.e. social connectedness) (Events to build community connection)</p> <p>Community members have social networks to support each other</p>	Completed June 2024

	<p><i>book is now available in Yarra Ranges regional libraries as well as storm impacted primary, preschools and childcare centres.</i></p> <p><i><u>Hard Place/Good Place:</u> Yarra Ranges was a virtual reality program for youth to share their stories of the severe storm event on their own terms. The program was named the winner of the 2023 Victorian Museums and Galleries Award for Small Project of the Year. It was also presented at the AIDR/AFAC National Conference 2023.</i></p> <p><i><u>Art Attack</u> Program supported local artists to deliver 35 arts and cultural experiences in impacted communities.</i></p> <p><i><u>Mental Health First Aid Courses:</u> In 2023/24 12 courses were delivered, bringing the cumulative total of over 400 community members upskilled with mental health knowledge and understanding.</i></p>	<p>Leisure, sport, and artistic activities are part of the fabric of the community (Arts and culture programs and activities)</p> <p>Community members have the knowledge, skills, and resources for dealing with health issues related to the disaster experience</p>	
Cultural recovery program development	<p>Developed a Cultural Recovery Program informed by consultation with relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owner and Community stakeholders. Priorities included resourcing initiatives to enable Aboriginal community to develop a range of culture-based recovery programs and ensuring Aboriginal organisations are appropriately resourced to meet Aboriginal community needs during disaster relief and recovery processes.</p> <p>This program culminated in the 'Our Country, Our Way' National Symposium. It brought together experts both</p>	<p>Systems and structures support self-determination⁸ (ERV Recovery Outcomes)</p> <p>Recovery and resilience of the whole community are strengthened through Aboriginal culture, knowledge, traditions, and connection to country.</p>	<p>Completed June 2024</p> <p>Integrated with Indigenous Development Team to support Cultural Recovery planning.</p>

⁸ <https://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-framework/recovery-outcomes-framework>

	locally and from across the country to share their ways of knowing, being and doing.	(ERV Recovery Outcomes)	
RCRC implementation	In partnership with the Community Enterprise Foundation, four Regional Community Recovery Committees (RCRC) engaged with community and delivered over \$1million in grant funding for community-led recovery projects. ⁹	<p>Community members have social networks to support each other (Grants to community organisations - to support community recovery activities (e.g. community building, social networks, arts activities))</p> <p>Infrastructure is built in accord with changing recovery needs (Grants to community organisations - to assist with costs of recovery from the impacts of the disaster)</p>	<p>Completed June 2024</p> <p><i>Added to Municipal Recovery planning cycle 2025-2026</i></p>
Community events	Grant funding was provided to community groups to host commemorative events in recognition of 12 and 24 months on from the June storm.	Community members have social networks to support each other	Completed June 2023

⁹ RCRCs ceased operation in June 2023, however community groups are still delivering their projects which are due to be completed by June 2024

			<i>Added to Municipal Recovery planning cycle 2025-2026</i>
Community of practice	The Community of Practice was hosted by Anglicare and Yarra Ranges Council staff actively participated. The Community of Practice ceased operation once the support agencies were no longer funded to provide service for recovery	Community members can access appropriate services to deal with health needs	Completed June 2023
Youth recovery plan development	This action was not progressed.		No action
Prevention of violence against women	This action was not progressed.		No action
Environment & Biodiversity			
Activity	Output	Outcome	Status

<p>Habitat & Hollows program</p>	<p>From June 2022 till May 2024 artificial hollows were installed across the Yarra Ranges. The program will have ongoing monitoring to determine if the introduced habitat is utilised and whether the intended species is the occupant. Many of the habitat hollows and nest boxes are designed with a specific species in mind. Yarra Ranges Council is collaborating with Deakin University to host placement students to assist with the monitoring of the hollows and nest boxes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 Bushland reserves • 252 artificial hollows and nest boxes <p>Artificial Hollows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hollow Hog Hollows – 22 hollows • Chainsaw Hollows – 56 hollows <p>Nest Boxes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La Trobe Nest boxes – 62 boxes • Habitech Nest Boxes – 63 boxes • Log Hollows – 25 boxes • WWF Greater Glider – 10 boxes • Thermal Haven Nest Boxes – 14 boxes <p>Ongoing monitoring conducted using...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • installed motion sensor, infra-red cameras above some of the boxes 	<p>The natural environment operates to maintain healthy biodiversity and ecosystems (Environmental monitoring to track recovery and identify further issues for attention)</p> <p>The impact of future disasters on biodiversity and ecosystem is minimized (Plan for environmental recovery and resilience)</p>	<p>Completed Dec 2023</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nest box pole camera • on-ground observations • spotlighting. <p>Species seen interacting with the provided habitat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bees • Wasps • Common Ringtail Possums • Kreft's Glider • Crimson Rosella • Laughing Kookaburra • Sulfur-crested Cockatoo • Eastern Rosella • Agile Antechinus • White-throated Treecreeper • King Parrot • Greater Gliders • Feathertail Glider 		
Biodiversity restoration	<p>Delivered programs that contributed to the restoration of biodiversity in areas impacted by the storm.</p> <p>These programs included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gardens for Wildlife</i> program has seen the number of volunteer garden guides grow from 4 to 22. The program has expanded from a 	The natural environment operates to maintain healthy biodiversity and ecosystems (Volunteer programs for environmental clean-up and remediation)	<p>Completed Dec 2023</p> <p><i>Added to Municipal Recovery planning cycle 2025-2026</i></p>

	<p>Southern Dandenong's focus to incorporate the whole municipality and incorporates a new interactive webpage which streamlines matching registrations with garden guides. There has been 160 public registrations to be part of the program, 85 completed garden visits, 5 talks on habitat gardening to Garden Groups and libraries and a frog workshop with 30 attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Dandenong Ranges sister project</i> grant saw a Bushland contractor complete works on all 15 storm affected/Cool Temperate rainforest related properties focusing on strategic weed control and land management advice. Each property received a report and simple plan for managing vegetation in proximity to threatened cool temperate rainforest. • Drone surveys were completed above 4 creek headwaters containing cool temperate rainforest in the Dandenong's. The aim is to use thermal imaging to collect data on the distribution and abundance of deer un the CTR corridors. The data was analysed by the Vertebrate Pest Research Unit (NSW DPI). • Two Weed blitz events for community to dispose of environmental weeds and receive indigenous plants to replace. 	<p>The impact of future disasters on biodiversity and ecosystem is minimized (Plan for environmental recovery and resilience)</p> <p>The natural environment operates to maintain healthy biodiversity and ecosystems (Environmental monitoring to track recovery and identify further issues for attention)</p>	
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Landslip reporting	Oversee the research and reporting on the Landslip Risk Assessment.	Ongoing The natural environment operates to maintain healthy biodiversity and ecosystems (Inspect and assess environmental damage and options for remediation)	BAU <i>Emergency Management team creating Landslip - community factsheets</i>
Storm branch collection	Round 1 and 2 of the storm branch collections were very successful with over 45,000m ² of material collected and returned to the community as mulch or biochar. Phase 3 provided an opportunity for additional cleanup of tree debris.	Provide infrastructure that delivers essential services to the community (Volunteer programs for clean-up, fence-building and repairs) The needs of vulnerable groups are addressed in disaster recovery	Completed Dec 2023

Public Infrastructure			
Activity	Output	Outcome	Status
Road Reconstruction Program	Coordinated the delivery of the Road Reconstruction Program funded through DRFA category B works for 12 projects.	Provide infrastructure that delivers essential services to the community (Repair and rebuild - roads and bridges)	Completed June 2023
Council assets - advocacy	<p>Advocate for State recognition that assets such as drainage systems, that experience compounding events that erode and stress these assets.</p> <p>Public hearing, Wodonga - 17 July 2023 - House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport - Inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national road network. YRC successful in gaining LCRI Funding to help with stabilisation and erosion management to 6-7 sites</p>	Infrastructure is built in accord with current knowledge and practices for mitigating disaster impact (Grants to local government - to restore and improve infrastructure)	Completed June 2024