

» Clifton Creek Community Recovery Survey Report

“Our aim is to operate in an inclusive and positive manner, with the best interest of the whole community considered.”

The Clifton Creek community is located 20 minutes north of Bairnsdale in East Gippsland. With a population of approximately 400 people, it's more of an area than a town, taking in Clifton Creek, Waterholes, Deptford, and parts of Granite Rock. In our quiet rural setting residents are often defined by the road we live on. We are a diverse group of people with diverse interests, yet we are closely connected to each other and the environment we live in. Our relationships with each other and agency partners are informal, personal and inclusive. Our people are frank, open and honest; a sense of belonging holds us together. We have a strong community spirit; volunteering is the key currency and the institution of family matters to us most.



Black Summer

In 2019, the bushfire danger period started early with persistently hot and dry conditions occurring across the State. East Gippsland was severely impacted by drought as the region was experiencing its third failed season.

By late November, dry lightning ignited a series of fires across East Gippsland, including in State Forest north of Clifton Creek. Classified as remote, control work was being undertaken as authorities and locals continued planning. Conditions were being closely monitored.

The week before Christmas it was evident that the Marthavale Spur fire complex was posing a significant threat to local communities. Forest Fire Management (FFM) and the CFA introduced control measures to protect assets along the private and public land interface and communities were being alerted to enact their fire plans.

On December 30th, extreme temperatures, low relative humidity and strong winds created conditions that saw containment lines broken in the early afternoon with flames 30-40 meters above the canopy emerging from public land.

Faced with erratic and unstable conditions, resources were stretched across the district. Over twenty private vehicles supported the five CFA appliances that were responding in the district while many more landholders chose to stay and defend their own properties.

The looming threat remained with hot temperatures and winds keeping communities on high alert. Firefighters continued blacking out and controlling flare ups for 4-5 days and all fires in East Gippsland were declared 'contained' on the 27 February 2020.

The volunteer efforts that occurred in the Clifton Creek district black summer have been remarkable; people helping as much as they can, a true sense of community spirit. The workload to clean up, recover and rebuild has been exhausting but despite the hardship the community has banded together and is working through the steps of recovery.

The Clifton Creek Community Recovery Team was established in May with residents surveyed shortly afterward to determine what the most urgent recovery priorities were.

>> Our Survey

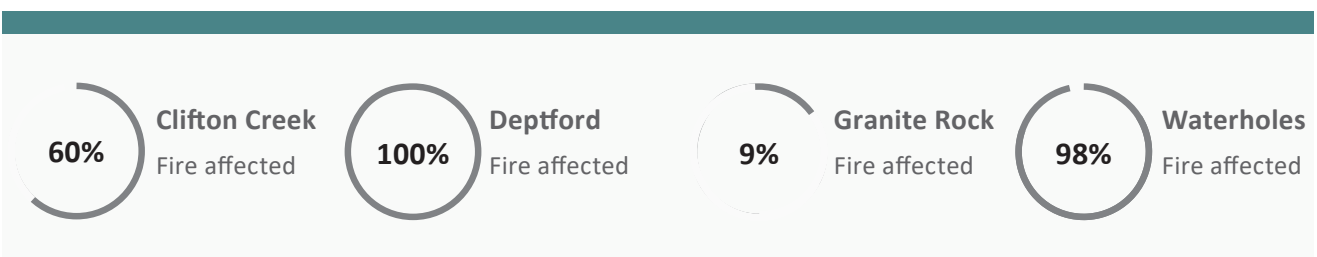
We asked what you value most about living in the Clifton Creek area...



We asked if you would like to be involved in the recovery process...

The Recovery Team includes

Members	12	Affiliates Members	8	Agency Support	5	Not For Profit Support	3
---------	----	--------------------	---	----------------	---	------------------------	---



DWELLINGS

13

out of 94 lost

FENCING

329km

needed replacing

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

1

Clifton Creek PS lost

PROPERTY CLEAN-UP

26

required Grocon

»» Our Priorities

We asked you what your recovery priorities were...

- » *Facilitate meaningful community engagement to support mental and emotional recovery*
- » *Restore, improve and build community infrastructure*
- » *Support improvements in individual and community firefighting capacity*
- » *Protect, nurture and facilitate the rehabilitation and recovery of local biodiversity*
- » *Improved consultation and advocacy for future fire management on public land*
- » *Advocate for improved community safety through enhanced mobile network and internet coverage*

Community members identified the most urgent things to be addressed over the next few months and years:



“Opportunities for the community to come together in a range of ways that appeal to diverse preferences. The community has grown enormously and it was only the post fire events that made us aware of the new community members.”

“Mutual support and pride in our whole community needs addressing with urgency. An off-road bike/walk path re-established for local kids to get to school/bus stop. Updating community facilities at hall reserve are important: modernising & retrofitting hall for fire safety, improving existing recreational facilities to be relevant to current needs and in line with modern leisure trends, providing welcoming and user friendly outdoor use public facilities (picnic,bbq, toilets).”

“To work as a community, be ready mentally and physically for the next fire season. Do it in a way that it becomes easier each time fire season comes around.”



>> Our Future

We are a resilient, inclusive, connected rural neighbourhood thriving in a safe and healthy environment.

To achieve this vision, the Recovery Team is working closely with community members, the local school, existing volunteer groups, Bushfire Recovery Victoria and the East Gippsland Shire to plan, find funding for and deliver projects in line with our priorities. Several priority projects are currently underway, others are still in the planning phase.

Our Current Projects

- Outreach hub
- Playground
- Hall kitchen facilities
- Community catch ups and conversations
- Establishment a regular community newsletter

Our Planned Projects

- Creating a modern hub
- Resurfacing the tennis courts
- Building a community events stage
- Constructing family bike track
- Fire management advocacy
- Rehabilitating biodiversity
- Community safety and telecommunications



Our Recovery Action Plan: *A community-driven Bushfire Recovery Action Plan will be collaboratively prepared with all relevant agencies to ensure all projects align to Clifton Creek Community's vision, are outcome focused and are implanted in a transparent manner with high levels of governance and accountability.*

Get Involved:

All Clifton Creek community members throughout the district are welcome and encouraged to become involved. If you would like to discuss the survey results, recovery ideas or ways you would like to be involved, please contact: Jen Smith – 0409 436 133 or Gretel West – 0427 819 426