



Murrindindi
Shire Council

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Bushfire Advocacy priorities

February 2026



Key Advocacy Priorities and Estimated Cost

Item	Estimated Cost
1 Alexandra Relief & Community Centre (new facility)	\$22 million
2 Community Recovery Hubs (Alexandra & Yea + outreach to small communities for 2–3 years)	\$6 million
3 Planning and Rebuilding Support (planners, planning consultant services, assessors, building fees waiver)	\$4.5 million
4 Primary Producer Recovery Package (fencing, pasture, livestock welfare)	\$20 million
5 Business & Tourism Recovery Grants + Local Spend Voucher Program	\$5 million
6 Rebuild Community & Tourism Assets (incl. Great Victorian Rail Trail sections)	\$8 million
7 Critical Infrastructure Betterment (bridges, roads, culverts)	\$30 million
8 Environmental Restoration and land rehabilitation (habitat repair, wildlife care, weed & erosion management)	\$5 million
9 Council costs (staffing, lost revenue)	\$4.5 million
10 Power & Telecommunications Resilience (redundancy, 4G blackspots, ICC backup)	\$10 million
Total	\$115 million



Overview

Murrindindi was the hardest-hit community in Victoria in the January 2026 fires. Our residents, businesses and landscapes have absorbed the greatest impact.

More than 144,000 hectares burned across the Longwood fire and more than 190 homes were destroyed within Murrindindi Shire alone in 2026 - on top of past disasters (2009 fires, 2022 floods).

Consequences span people, economy and infrastructure: 450 km of roads and dozens of bridges/culverts impacted, major tourism assets lost, and significant agricultural and wildlife harm.

While Council is working closely with communities and partner agencies to support recovery and strengthen long-term resilience, the scale, complexity and cumulative nature of these impacts exceed local capacity.

Strong, coordinated and sustained partnerships with State and Federal Governments are essential to meet immediate recovery needs and to build long-term protection against increasing climate-driven risks.

This advocacy agenda outlines key community needs, recovery pathways and policy reforms required to restore critical infrastructure, support local economies, improve emergency management, and secure a resilient future.



Snapshot



Population

15,603 residents and 248 Aboriginal and Torres Strait residents.



Land area

3,879 km² encompassing the rural townships of Alexandra, Eildon, Kinglake, Marysville and Yea and 42 localities.



Agriculture and Economy

Agriculture contributes to over \$413 million in annual output (approx. 22% of the region's total) and employing 900 people. Agriculture and tourism are main economic drivers, with the Shire acting as a nature-based destination for Melbourne visitors.



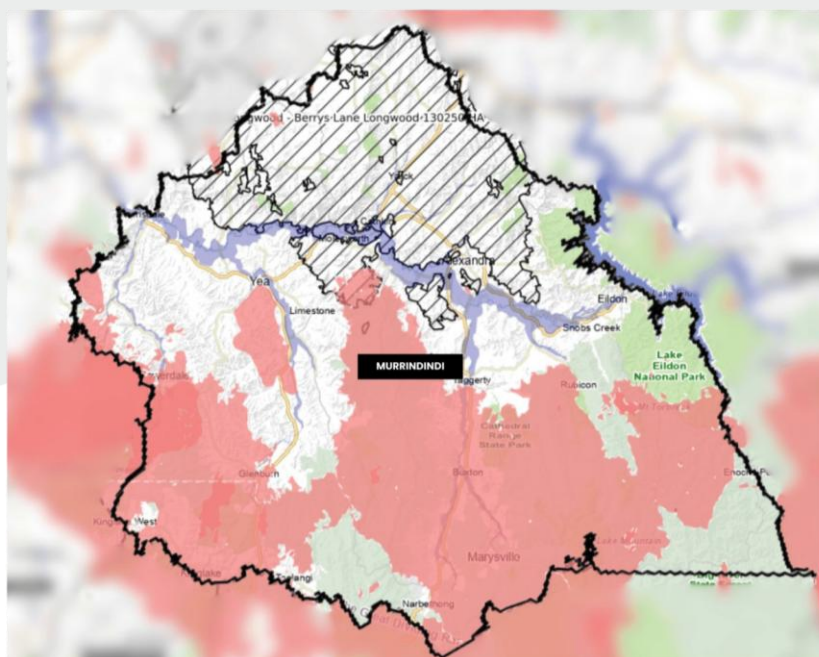
Environment

Significant natural assets not only shape the identity of Murrindindi, but also support livelihoods, tourism, agriculture, and construction.




Tourism

\$154.8 million generated from visitor spend, through tourism attractions such as Great Victorian Rail Trail and Lake Eildon.



Murrindindi

Key:

-  Municipal Boundary
-  2009 Victorian Bushfires
-  2022 Victorian Floods
-  2026 Bushfires

Impact

144,000 hectares impacted across 4 municipalities (330km perimeter), ERV sent 59,625 text messages and 16 Emergency Alerts were issued.

Community and Economic Impact

- Over 190 dwellings destroyed, 519 sheds and other structures.
- Significant livestock loss (thousands).
- Damage to agricultural properties, equipment and vineyards – livelihoods lost.
- Roof catchments and tanks polluted by the fire event.
- Loss of water & feed supplies for stock.
- Damage to tanks and septic systems.

Council Infrastructure impacted

- 450 km roads
- more than 35 culverts damaged
- more than 45 road bridges impacted
- 22 pedestrian bridges damaged or destroyed
- major tourism assets destroyed.

Environment, Flora and Fauna Impact

- significant loss of habitat and native wildlife
- widespread ecosystem destruction
- high risk of landslip and erosion.

Business and Tourism

- Whole-of-region data required to quantify losses and long-term economic impacts.
- Up to 60% loss of revenue for businesses not directly impacted by fire.
- Donations of goods have led to a dramatic reduction in local expenditure.
- Significant agricultural losses, including livestock, equipment and buildings.
- More than 550 businesses within the area impacted.

Key Advocacy Priorities Detailed

	Community Need	Required Action
1	Community and Relief Centre in Alexandra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund the development of a dedicated, multipurpose community and relief centre to support future emergency events.
2	Community Recovery Hubs Access to clear information and support during relief and early recovery – including outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> operate Bushfire Recovery Hubs (Alexandra & Yea) with outreach to small communities provide: multi-agency presence (EPA, DFFH, Red Cross, AgVic) fund 2–3-year community hub provide psychosocial support programs to ensure equitable access for rural residents.
3	Planning and rebuilding support Support for residents rebuilding homes, building to Code and access to consultants and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional planners, assessors and wastewater inspectors; waive planning and building fees; provide planning consultants to help residents navigate overlays and obtain required technical reports; support temporary accommodation solutions (e.g., sheds). rebuilding events with specialist rebuilding expo
4	Primary Producer Recovery Package To support the regions agribusiness which is crucial for broader Victoria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted fencing and infrastructure recovery programs, recognising fencing as critical economic infrastructure extended income-support and business-continuity assistance for primary producers flexible grant programs and reduced administrative burden for disaster-affected primary producers assistance with funding recovery of crops/orchards/fodder etc
5	Business and Tourism Recovery Grants To support returning tourism which is known to be impacted for many years if not addressed now.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish a coordinated and comprehensive grant program with inclusive eligibility criteria that doesn't exclude large swathes of the community conduct comprehensive economic impact analysis; introduce local-spend vouchers; fund tourism recovery campaigns; support population retention strategies.

	Community Need	Required Action
6	Rebuild Community & Tourism Assets (incl. Great Victorian Rail Trail sections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace the significantly damaged rail trail including damage/burnt out bridges and culverts, trees, vegetation.
7	Critical Infrastructure Betterment (bridges, roads, culverts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide clarity and additional funding for Crown land and Council assets not eligible under DRFA; fund rebuild of community and tourism assets rebuild with resilient infrastructure (bridges, roads, culverts).
8	Environmental recovery and land rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fund wildlife shelters and carers; protect significant habitats; deliver weed, erosion and landslip management; support provide nest boxes, salvaged hollow logs and flora reinstatement program; fund programs for private landowners to manage erosion and bushfire resilient landscaping.
9	Council costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loss of rates revenue while properties are rebuilt – this is anticipated to be several years expand the Local Emergency Action Plan project to build future resilience digitise records to assist residents in future emergencies for copies of plans and records provide staff psychosocial supports provide Disaster claims Admin Officers to ensure that claims are correctly lodged Agricultural/Economic Recovery Officer to work with the farming industry GIS data support officer to ensure correct mapping for DFRA claims CrisisWorks integration with Altitude and Assetic for improved claims processing.
10	Resilient power and telecoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address prolonged outages; improve tower resilience and battery backup; deliver redundancy for the single fibre link; fix 4G blackspots; provide emergency backup power and comms for the Alexandra ICC and; strengthen community emergency radio capacity.

