

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN ACTION

DRIVING BUSHFIRE RECOVERY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

CASE STUDY | STRENGTH IN COMMUNITY ENDEAVOURS



THE BUCHAN RODEO

The Buchan Rodeo has been the highlight of the local event calendar for over fifty years. Community leadership and strength over-rode the challenging conditions and ensured this event proceeded in April 2021, considerably lifting local spirits and pride.

Traditionally held on Easter Sunday, the event was postponed in 2020 due to impacts of the bushfire crisis six months prior. The bushfires began near Buchan in October 2019, well before the media began reporting on the crisis. Residents endured the threat for over 4 months, often losing communication with the outside world.

Given their isolation and the lack of communication and media coverage, the remote community of Buchan have felt largely overlooked in their recovery phase. Buchan is a strong and resilient community however, with sharpened skills in recovery-post disaster.

In the lead-up to the 2021 Buchan Rodeo, there was much to consider in staging a COVID safe event. Despite

this, the local volunteer committee was determined to proceed for the benefit of their community.

The Buchan Rodeo Committee reached out to their local council, Destination Gippsland and associated agencies for support. With only a ten-week production timeline, much needed funding and support came from the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) under their Strengthening Rural Communities Program. These partnerships not only allowed the committee to meet their safety guidelines and ramp up their offering, they also enabled them to proceed with confidence.

The 2021 Buchan Rodeo was an electric event and though it saw many changes, it was heralded as one of the best-ever. It gave smiles back to those who worked so hard on the project and to the greater community who had endured so much.

The learnings from the 2021 event, will be adopted in coming events for the community.

This case study series demonstrates the central role of community organisations as champions of place-based community led bushfire recovery.

“Whilst the entire planet is enduring the COVID19 crisis and looks to methods of recovery, we are still repairing our community in the aftermath of bushfires. A strong rural community is key and the staging of community building initiatives is of vital importance to us”

Buchan community member

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Buchan Rodeo Committee
- The Greater Buchan Community
- The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR)
- Bushfire Recovery Victoria
- East Gippsland Shire Council
- Destination Gippsland
- East Gippsland Marketing Inc.
- The Australian Performing Rodeo Association

GOAL

The staging of a volunteer and community led event to strengthen recovery and encourage people to come together in the district of Buchan and far East Gippsland



BENEFIT

A focus upon a project which diverts from the crisis endured locally

BENEFIT

Community achievement and an opportunity to share in a local success story

BENEFIT

Increased economic benefit for the community and the region

The Buchan Rodeo showcases a return to the simple things in life, not relying upon new technologies or celebrity endorsements to succeed.

It promises an annual celebration of life in regional Australia and a snapshot of a community who persevere together.

Staging this event gave Buchan a focal point which deviated from all they have endured. The event gave them a moment in the sun they very much deserved and restored pride in their small community.

Key Emerging Outcomes

- An increased confidence in the community which has a knock-on effect for the overall recovery process.
- The ability for community to re-connect via a shared interest and passion.
- A chance to show event attendees and the greater media that Buchan is made of “the right stuff” and will do all they can to repair and rebuild.
- A step in the right direction for recovery and re-building community pride and confidence.



Key Emerging Learnings

- Recovery for regional communities begins at home. People who live in these communities traditionally deal with adversity, they are skilled and talented, and need to be entrusted to lead their own recovery process.
- It is key for these communities to be “heard” within the recovery process. The staging of events such as the Buchan Rodeo are integral to this process.

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For further resources visit [VCOSS Bushfire Recovery webpage](#)



FRRR

Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal