

Millgrove Community Resilience Plan

Acknowledgment of Country

The Millgrove Residents' Action Group recognises and values the Wurundjeri peoples as the original inhabitants of the land upon which we work, live and learn. The Committee acknowledges and pays respect to the Elders, past and present.

Acknowledgements

The Millgrove Residents' Action Group acknowledges all those involved for the work and commitment in developing this Plan, along with the use of the photographs in this publication.

This Plan was developed with the support of:

ResilientCo Consulting

MINDEROO FOUNDATION

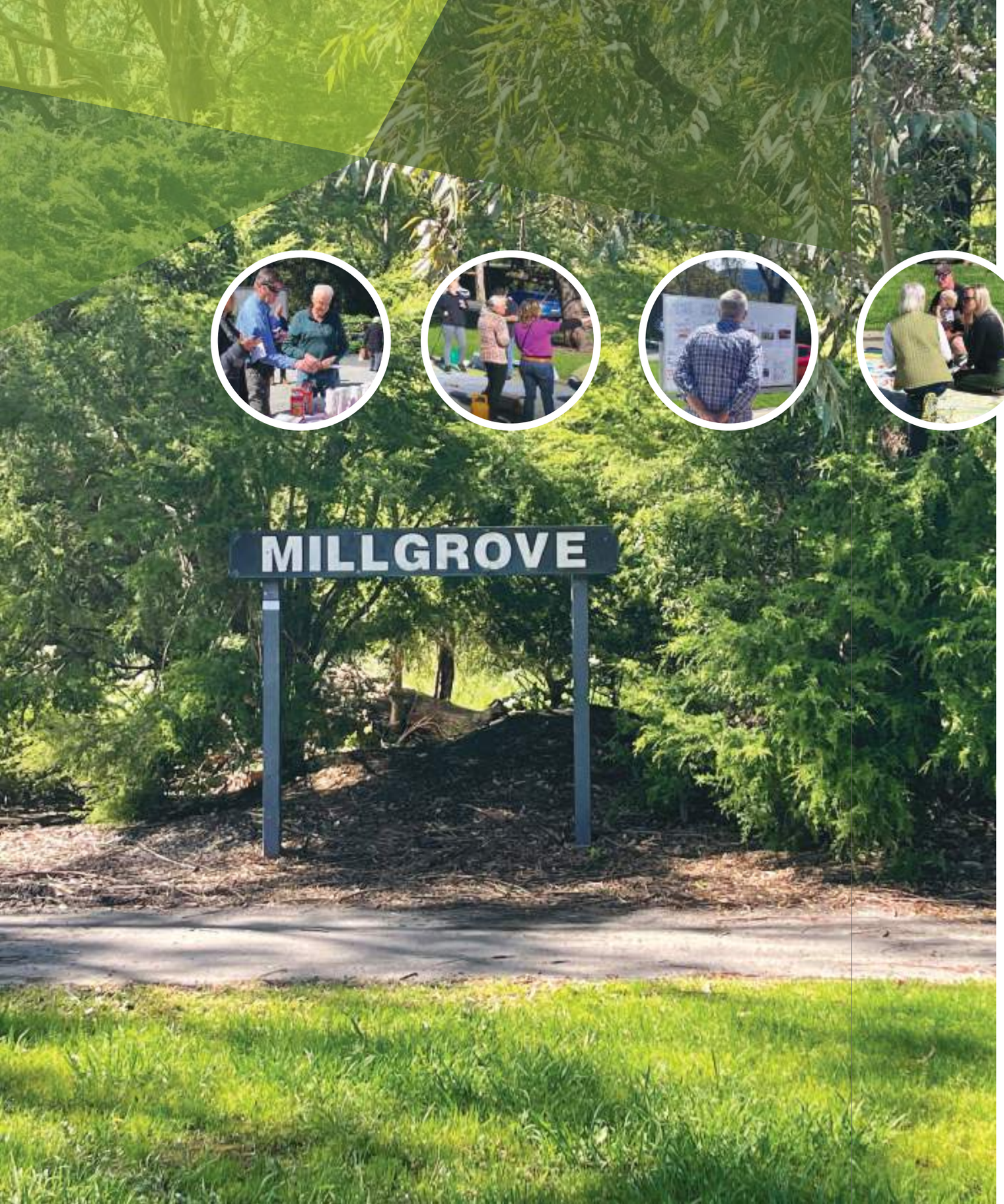
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

© Millgrove Residents' Action Group Published 2023

Contents

1. Introduction 5
2. Our Priorities 6
3. About Millgrove 7
4. Millgrove Residents' Action Group (MRAG) 9
5. Fire and Flood Risk in Millgrove 10
   Fire 10
   Flood 12
6. Our Approach 14
7. Minderoo's Resilient Communities Framework 16
8. The ResilientCo Six-Step Future Ready Communities Model 18
9. Our Community Connections 20
10. Our Key Priority Actions 22
    A.1 - Increase community awareness and emergency preparedness 23
    A.2 - Install a community defibrillator 24
    A.3 - A regular community light show 25
    A.4 - Local renewable power 26
    A.5 - Climate resilient properties 27
    A.6 - Reduce fire risk in the sawmill 29
    B.7 - Strengthened phone and internet communications 31
    B.8 - Creating community gardens 32
    B.9 - Enhance roads and trails 33

Appendix 1: Timeline for Millgrove's History 34



1 Introduction

This document, Millgrove's Community Resilience plan, complements the Millgrove Community Plan (2021). It builds on excellent work done by many over a number of years and focuses on how we as the Millgrove community can best prepare ourselves to meet the natural hazards that we face, particularly fires and floods.

This Plan represents a starting point. The Millgrove Residents' Action Group (MRAG) has been working with the support of the Minderoo Foundation and ResilientCo, to identify how we can best help Millgrove to be prepared, so we can manage – and hopefully reduce the impact of – any future flood and fire disasters. In addition to our own discussions within MRAG, we have had conversations with our friends, family and neighbours as well as the wider Millgrove community to get suggestions about where our efforts should focus.

This Plan is the culmination of many years of community engagement and community planning, led by MRAG. Over a 14 month period, we captured the essential ingredients, lessons and aspirations, and took them further. We designed nine key projects we think will make the most difference to our community, and which we want to pursue. Some projects are relatively straight forward and easy to implement. Others are more ambitious, complex and expensive but will have big benefits for our community, in good times and bad, for generations to come.

mrag
Millgrove Residents' Action Group inc

2 Our Priorities

Informed by guidance from the Minderoo's Resilient Communities Framework, we have organised our projects around six 'environments': Social, Cultural, Economic, Built, Natural, and Health & Safety.

Our 'big six' projects involve building community awareness of our risks and how we respond, activities to encourage us to come together, and more specific actions to invest in life-saving infrastructure. In total we have identified nine projects.

Initiative/project	Resilient Communities Framework Environments	
	Benefit	Secondary benefit
A: TOP PRIORITIES		
1. Increase community awareness and emergency preparedness	Health & safety	Built
2. Install a community defibrillator	Health & safety	
3. A regular light show	Cultural	Social
4. Local renewable power	Economic	Health & safety
5. Climate resilient properties	Built	Health & safety
6. Reduce fire risk in the sawmill	Health & safety	Built
B: PROJECTS TO PURSUE LATER ON		
7. Community gardens	Social	Natural
8. Strengthen phone and Internet communications	Built	Health & safety
9. Enhance roads and trails	Built	Health & safety

3 About Millgrove

The township of Millgrove is 73 kilometres east of central Melbourne, along the Warburton Highway, in the Upper Yarra Valley of Victoria. It is nestled between Mt Victoria, Mt Donna Buang, Ben Cairn and Mt Little Joe in Victoria's Great Diving Range. The Yarra River (Birrarung) runs through the several residential clusters that make up the Town, located amongst forested hills.

Millgrove is part of the Aboriginal cultural landscape in the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri People, who continue to have a deep and continuing connection to the lands and waters.

Millgrove's modern history is galvanised by timber-milling and agriculture, along with tourism and recreational fishing. Contrary to popular belief, the town was named after Millgrove in County Tipperary, Ireland, rather than for the numerous sawmills which once operated here. The timber and forestry industry continues to change and only one mill remains in the town. The mill focuses on reclaimed timber and away from native forestry.

The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail passes through the heart of Millgrove, the former railway station is now a public park with barbeque facilities and public toilets. As the Highway winds through Millgrove, you will notice large eucalypts beside the road: these represent the Avenue of Honour dedicated to those who served in World War I.

Millgrove is a picturesque location that is popular for tourists.

...continued over the page



According to the 2021 Census, the population of Millgrove in 2021 was 1,666 people, including 413 families. The median age of the community is 40 years old.

The population increased dramatically between 1961 (273) and 1991 (1,715), as new residential land was released on relatively inexpensive land. Comparing the 2016 and 2021 Census, the population has stabilised.

Millgrove is within tolerable commuting distances of several larger towns, as well as Melbourne, and many residents commute ‘down the line’ for work, education and recreation.

Millgrove has a public reserve, a small shopping area (small general store, bakery, fish and chips shop, cookies and home-made ice cream cafe, small homewares shop, local produce store and small nursery/discount store), a sawmill, a pre-school and a primary school (Millwarra PS, which shares campuses with Warburton East). There are three churches, Millgrove Baptist Church and River Valley Church of Christ and Pallotti College. River Valley has a weekly mobile drop-in spot at Millgrove Memorial Park – The River Valley Van – and manages the Millwarra Community Building located at the school. The Community Building is a 300-seat auditorium and has a half-court basketball stadium. Pallotti College supports weekly community lunches and offers a community Christmas lunch. Millgrove Baptist Church hosts a weekly foodbank outlet for anyone in the community in need.

A community market brings plenty of buzz to the region on the third Saturday of every month and fifth Sunday, where a 30+ stall market adjacent to the CFA building features local arts and crafts.

A timeline of Millgrove’s history is attached in Appendix 1

4 Millgrove Residents Action Group (MRAG)

The Millgrove Residents’ Action Group Inc. (MRAG) was established in 2005 to advance the betterment of Millgrove. We are a volunteer-led organisation and community group open to all residents and supporters of Millgrove.

Our mission:

To contribute towards and foster the community spirit within Millgrove.

Our objectives:

Highlight and promote the many positives within our community

Encourage and nurture partnership in community initiatives

Contribute to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns

Raise awareness of services and opportunities within our community

To mark the 10th anniversary of MRAG, MRAG initiated a community planning process to identify a shared community vision of the future, and the priorities and actions that they can undertake to improve their wellbeing.

This plan was revised in 2021 and acknowledged by the Yarra Ranges Council.

The plan is available at:
mrag.net.au/community-plan



5 Fire and Flood Risk in Millgrove

Despite such attractive qualities and successes, Millgrove is highly vulnerable to fires and floods. According to modelling by the Victorian Government's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), under the right conditions, Millgrove is one of the most fire-exposed communities in the state.

Given Victoria's generally high fire risk, this makes the case that Millgrove has one of the greatest fire needs in Australia as shown in the images below.

Additionally, the Upper Yarra Valley, with the Yarra River that helps to make the township so attractive, is prone to flooding.

While Millgrove is not at great risk of catastrophic flooding, this combination of factors led to MRAG being approached by the Minderoo Foundation to participate in their Fire and Flood Resilience program.

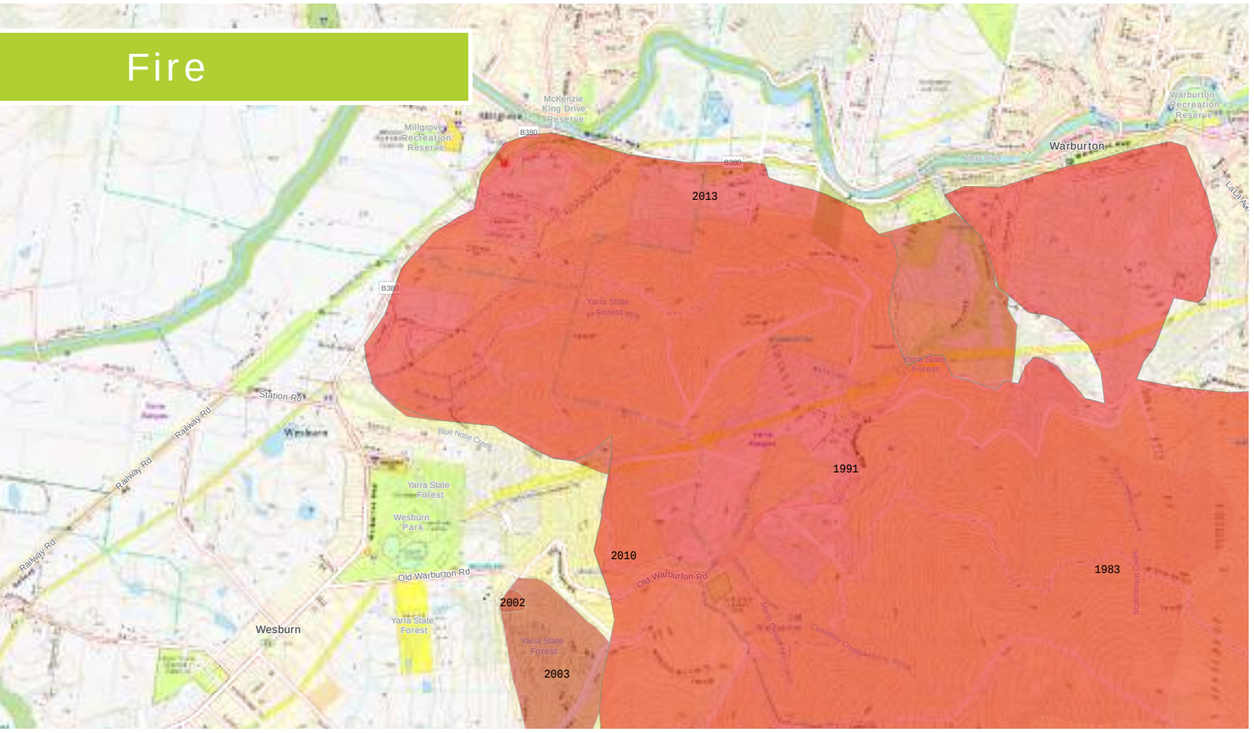


Figure 1



Figure 2

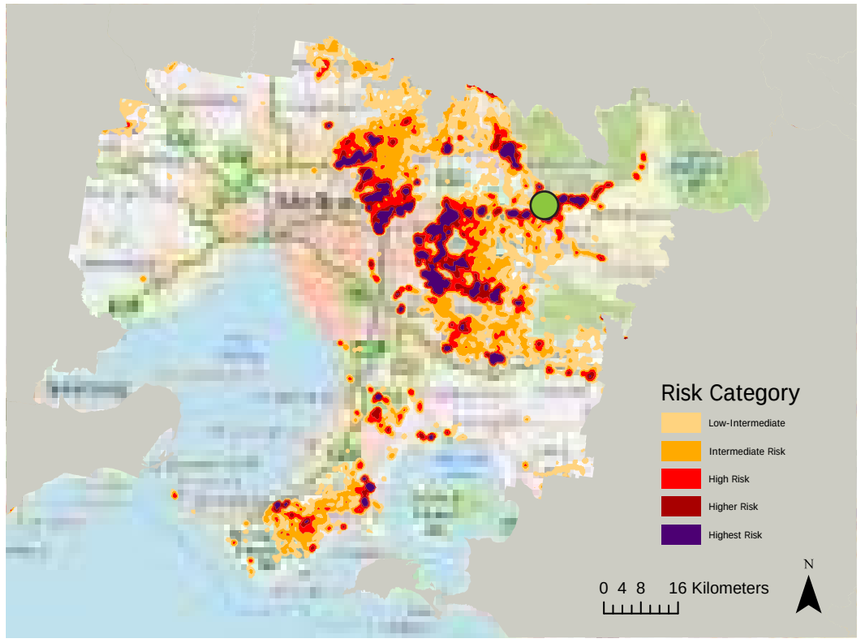


Figure 3

Millgrove has a long history of living with bushfires as shown in figure 1. Figure 2 shows Millgove's proximity to State Forest and National Parks and Reserves and figure 3 indicates that Millgrove is categorised in the highest risk of bushfire.

Flood



Figure 4: 1 in 100 year flood (waterways) (source: from EMCOP)

The image above highlights the 1 in 100 flood modelling for Millgrove township. Significant flood events are likely to result in major flood damage to homes, businesses and farms.

6 Our Approach

As part of this journey, we explored how knowledge, combined with investment and resources will reduce our community's vulnerability to disasters.

We learned from mentors, from people who are experienced in community planning, emergency management and community resilience about the importance of strength-based planning. We leveraged the knowledge, investment, and resources as part of this program to prepare (socially and physically) to manage the impacts of a disaster in or near our community.

We discovered that a shared understanding of community hazards, vulnerabilities, challenges, assets, strengths, aspirations, leads to active communities who are ready for future challenges and emergencies.

We brought together the brightest minds to help us

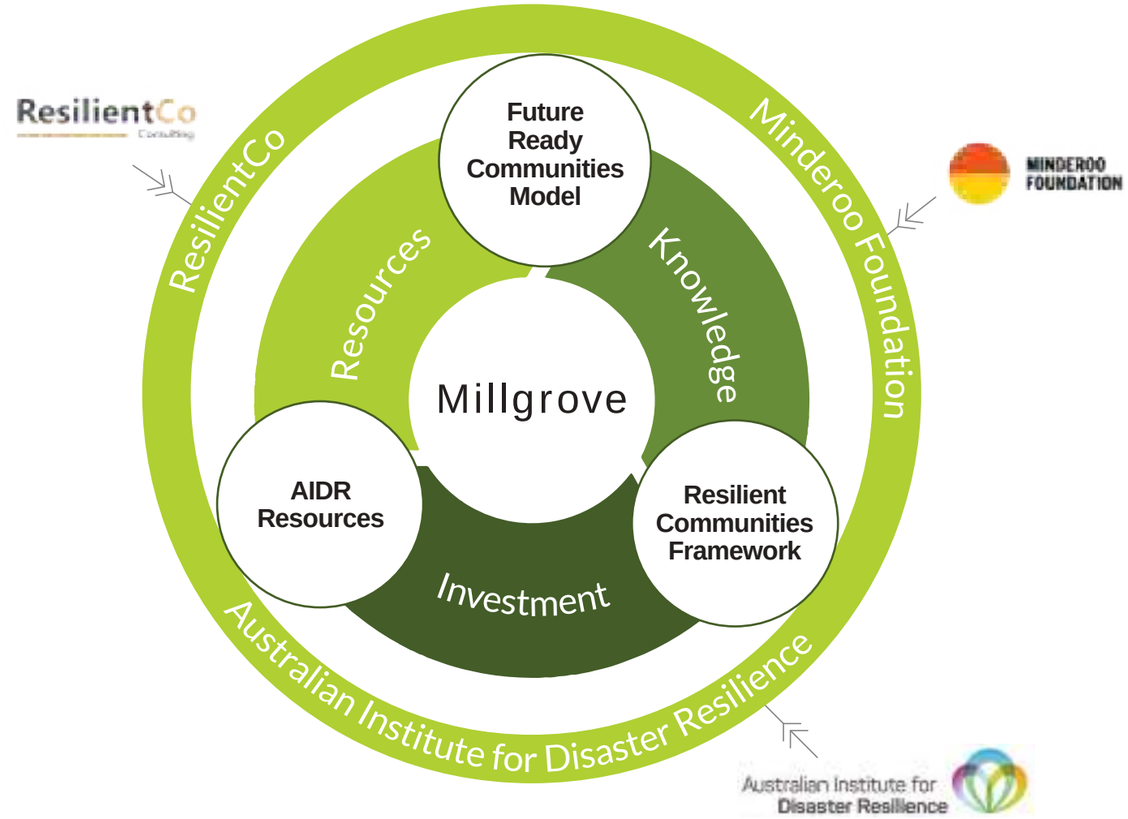


Image: Dr Margaret Moreton (Minderoo Foundation), Michael Berkowitz (Resilient Cities Catalyst) and MRAG representatives in Millgrove, June 2021

The Resilient Communities Framework, in conjunction with the six-step Future Ready Communities Model, and AIDR resources, were used to guide our decisions and actions to build resilience in our community.

The framework and the model provided us with the structure and approach to explore our resilience challenges and develop potential solutions.

Resilient Communities Framework

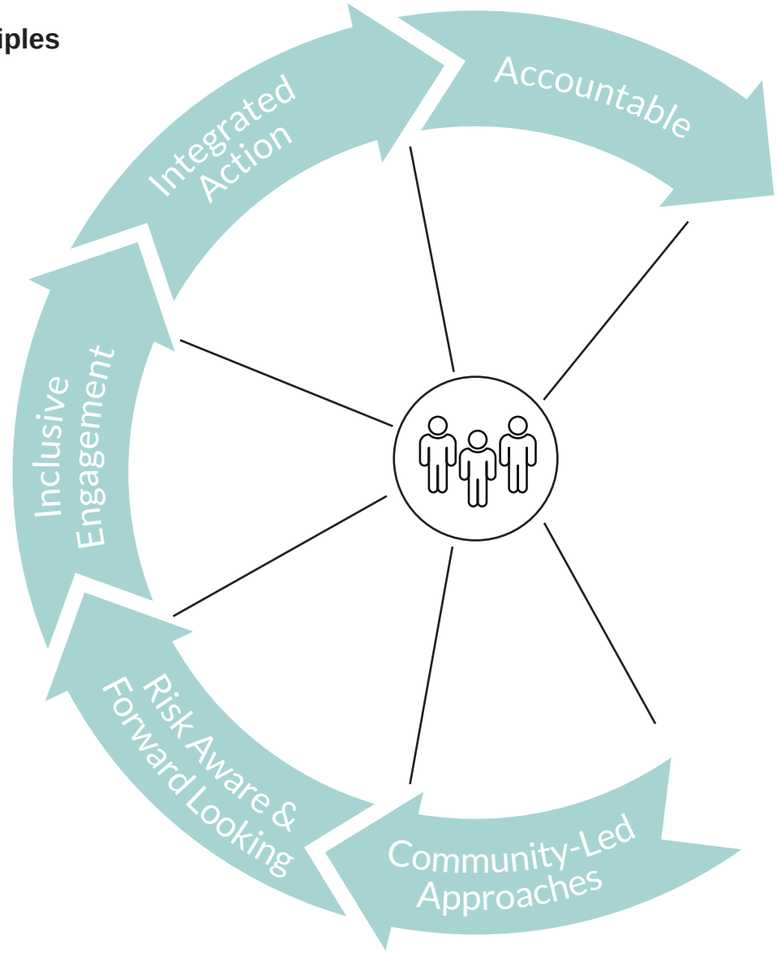


7

Minderoo's Resilient Communities Framework

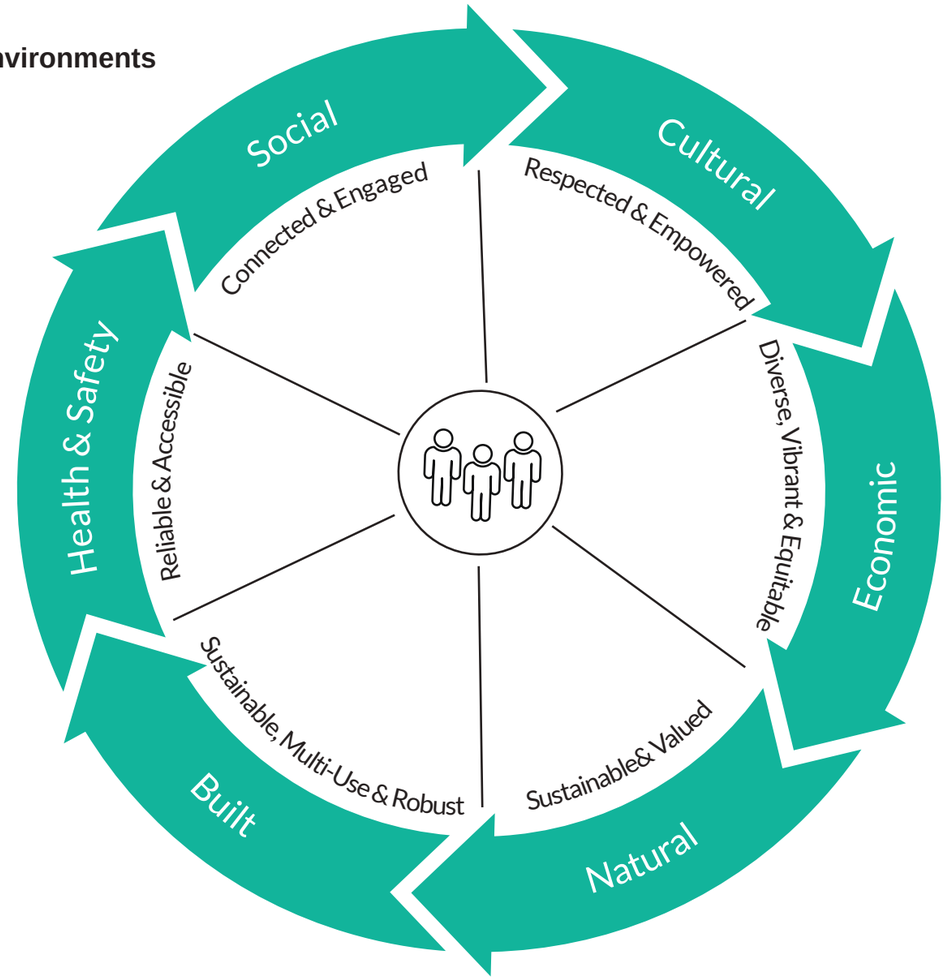
The Resilient Communities Framework is comprised of two components - theprinciples and the environments – which are designed to holistically guide practitioners, community leaders, government officials and funders in their work within communities.

Principles



The principles serve as a guide for how we should approach our work within a community, throughout all stages of a collaboration. The sole act of infusing these principles into how we plan, resource and implement our work, regardless of the level or scope of intervention, will contribute to a more resilient community.

Environments



The environments provide a holistic view of the interconnected systems and assets that make up a community and the key qualities that we should foster as a result of our work. The state of these overlapping environments can either enhance or diminish a community's resilience.



8 The ResilientCo Six-Step Future Ready Communities Model

This model functioned as the engagement approach to support us in developing this Plan. The environments and principles as outlined in the Resilient Communities Framework guided our actions and decisions as we moved through each step.

In line with the Future Ready Communities Model, we undertook the following key steps:

Foundations

We came together as a community to look at our risks and be the leaders in planning our own resilience

Deep-dive

We identified the challenges we faced, and the strengths within our own community. We listened to each other interests and concerns, and built our knowledge through listening to the experience of others. We mapped our strengths, and our worries. We highlighted our knowledge gaps and what we wanted to learn more about. Some of our young residents even ran a community survey to help better inform us on what our community needs

Field of Opportunities

Having gathered information from community and MRAG's own views, we brainstormed nine key projects that we thought should be undertaken to help make Millgrove more fire and flood resilient. We grouped possible projects and mapped them to show potential postive impact in reducing risk. We took our key priorties direct to community who were able to vote on their top 3 projects they wanted to see happen in Millgrove

Partner

We explored who we know in our community that would be able to support us in our goals, and built connections to put our ideas into actions. A list of our community connections is shown over the page

Implement

We prioritised our nine projects and put them into action, taking steps forward at the pace that works for our community

Review

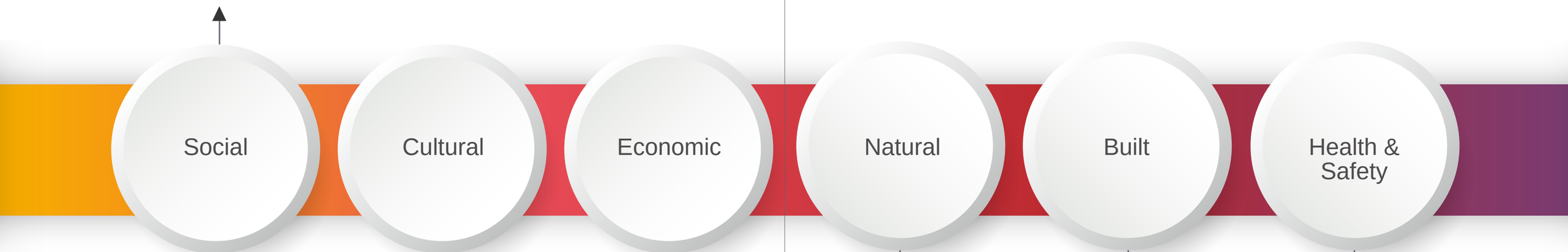
We celebrated our progress and reflected on what we learned, to build upon what we have achieved and share our journey with others

Adapted from Millgrove Community-led Resilience Journey Map (AIDR 2023):
https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/community-led-resilience-program/#Millgrove

9

Our Community Connections

We explored current and potential connections to Millgrove that could support us with our resilience initiatives. Each section below shows either the individual or group within each of the Resilient Communities Framework environments, who could help bring this Plan to life. *(Refer to the diagram on page 17)*



- Pre-School
- Primary School
- Rail Trail Users
- Warby Day Visitors
- U3A
- Council Staff
- Yarra Valley FM
- Star News
- Pallotti College
- Local Councillor
- Local MPs
- Soccer Club
- Church Leaders

- Pre-School
- Primary School
- Recreation
- Pallotti
- Local Church
- Indigenous Officer
- Traditional Owners
- Photographer
- Artists

- Millgrove Shops
- RACV
- Postie
- Home Small Business
- Real Estate
- Business Incubator
- Tradies
- Wesburn Industry
- Wesburn Business
- Mill Owner
- EACH
- Visitors

- Local Environment Leaders
- Melbourne Water
- CSIRO
- Council
- Parks Victoria
- DEECA

- Melbourne Water
- VicRoads
- Local MP
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Ausnet (power)
- DEECA
- IT Specialist
- Solar Co
- Radio Comms
- Telstra
- Bus Service

- NDIS
- 2nd Bite
- LinC
- VicSES
- Good Listener
- Nurse
- Victoria Police
- CFA Millgrove
- CFA Warburton
- Ambulance
- Doctor
- Local Council

10 Our Key Priority Actions

The following nine projects represent Millgrove's guide to increasing our resilience to future shocks and stresses, and making Millgrove a better, safer and more vibrant place to live.

Some of our projects are more ambitious than others, and while some will take more effort, they will all benefit the community.

Each of the projects have been discussed with residents, businesses and visitors. Through this engagement, it is clear that we have strong support from our community.



A.1 Increase Community Awareness and Emergency Preparedness

Title	Description
Increase community awareness and emergency preparedness	Develop an awareness raising campaign that encourages greater action by our community to plan and prepare for emergencies, and to highlight ways to reduce the risks we have in our community
Why we should do it	Millgrove is exposed to a number of significant risks. Under the right conditions fire is the largest risk. Increasing preparedness across our community is important to reduce the risk of fires, floods, and other emergencies Our community survey showed us that people tend to think that they are fairly well prepared for an emergency or fire but think that the rest of the community is less ready
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Near term
How we will approach it	Discuss with the school on how best to involve young people Link hazard awareness and preparedness to education programs Consider how we get young people involved in resilience-based activities outside of educational commitments
Who needs to be involved	MRAG School External community programs including the Be Ready Warrandyte and Resilience Inc. Nillumbik
By when will this start?	Timing to be determined

A.2 Install a community defibrillator

Title	Description
Install a community defibrillator	Install a community defibrillator that is easily accessible and can be used by community members
Why we should do it	Despite being close to major towns/cities, Millgrove is relatively isolated and people suffering cardiac arrest may not be reached in time by medical services. Especially in times of fire and flood, people are more vulnerable because of increased levels of stress. At the same time, emergency services resources are more thinly spread
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Near term
How we will approach it	We will seek funding to buy the defibrillator. If we install it outside the CFA refuge it will be easily identifiable. It can also be monitored by the CFA's closed-circuit camera system
Who needs to be involved	Project lead: CFA Emergency Management Victoria Yarra Ranges Council Bendigo Bank
By when will this start?	Underway

A.3 A regular light show

Title	Description
Regular, community-led light show	Organise a light show that is community-led and run
Why we should do it	A light show is a way to bring people in Millgrove together, to build connection and pride in where we live and to showcase the creativity of our community. If it becomes a regular event, it is something that our community can become known for. It is after an idea of the Art Attack Light Show 2022, funded by Yarra Ranges Council and delivered by Suzanne Phoenix. It is also an opportunity to share other important community safety messages.
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Near term
How we will approach it	Explore how to secure funding and promote it
Who needs to be involved	MRAG
By when will this start?	Conversations to start soon. Commencement of project to be determined by conversations

A.4 Local renewable power

Title	Description
Local renewable power	Create an energy independent Millgrove by developing local renewable power capacity and a micro-grid in the community
Why we should do it	A lack of power presents multiple risks to the safety and security of Millgrove residents and businesses, particularly given the increasing reliance on Internet communications before, during and after emergencies, which requires electricity supply This can be life saving but it also has the potential to reduce everyday power costs to key assets/ organisations in Millgrove. This will contribute to the resilience of our community directly and more broadly through supporting more local economic opportunities
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Long term
How we will approach it	An initial project scoping is being developed Grant funding will be investigated
Who needs to be involved	Project lead: MRAG for discussions
By when will this start?	Underway. Actual commencement to be determined by success of grants and what scoping study report directs

A.5 Climate resilient properties

Title	Description
Climate resilient properties	Identify the most effective and affordable equipment and projects to increase the resilience of Millgrove's properties
Why we should do it	Our properties are where we live, shelter and work from. In times of crisis, they can provide critical refuge. However, they can also pose significant risks including people sheltering in buildings that are not safe and people staying to defend properties when they should evacuate. Losing property and belongings in a fire or flood makes it harder for community to recover from disaster. "Hardening up" properties across Millgrove is an opportunity to increase the resilience of our community
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Medium term
How we will approach it	Gather information from existing initiatives, such as the work of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Be Ready Warrandyte Identify partners to inform us about the most effective technologies Seek funding
Who needs to be involved	Project lead: Minderoo Foundation Others: Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) [see: Bushfire-ResilientHomesToolkit_Residents_ Guide.pdf (nsw.gov.au)]
By when will this start?	2023



A.6 Reduce fire risk in the sawmill

Title	Description
Reduce fire risk in the sawmill	Explore ways to reduce fire risk in the Mill by cleaning the milled wood and mulch around the site to reduce fuel risk. This involves leading community efforts to clean-up the site.
Why we should do it	The Mill, in its present state, is very unattractive and presents a significant fire-risk due to the storage of milled wood and mulch Longer term, if the opportunity came up, the site could be repurposed and the Mill site could become a significant attraction to Millgrove, offering a range of economic and educational opportunities
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Near term and long term
How we will approach it	Begin with informal conversations to determine possibilities
Who needs to be involved	Initial conversations by MRAG Mill owner Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) Yarra Ranges Council
By when will this start?	Initial conversations with stakeholders will inform a sensible commencement date

OTHER KEY PROJECTS IDENTIFIED

B.7 B.8 B.9

The projects that follow were all listed on the short list of projects.

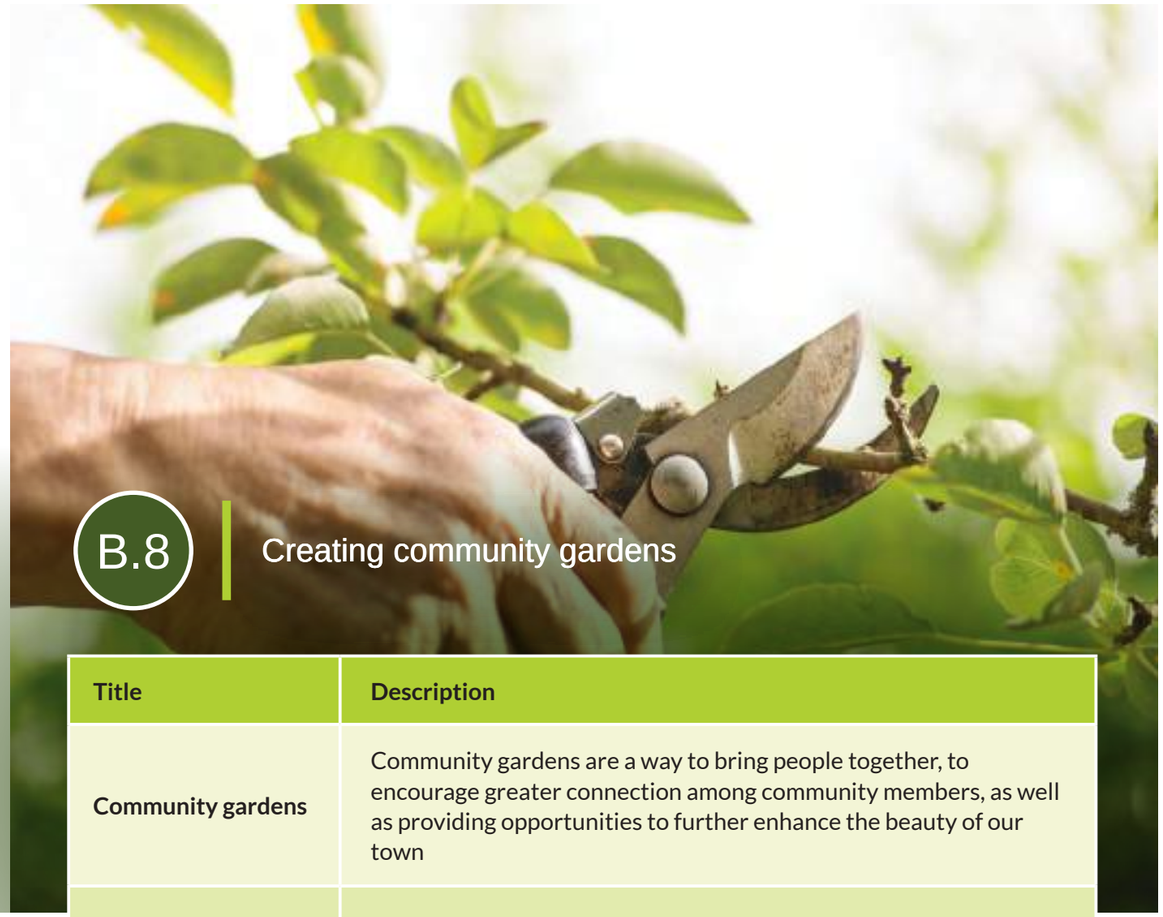
However, in a world of limited resources and having to make hard choices about where to focus our efforts, we propose to concentrate on the six listed above.

For awareness and ongoing consideration, the additional short-listed projects are shown over the next 3 pages.



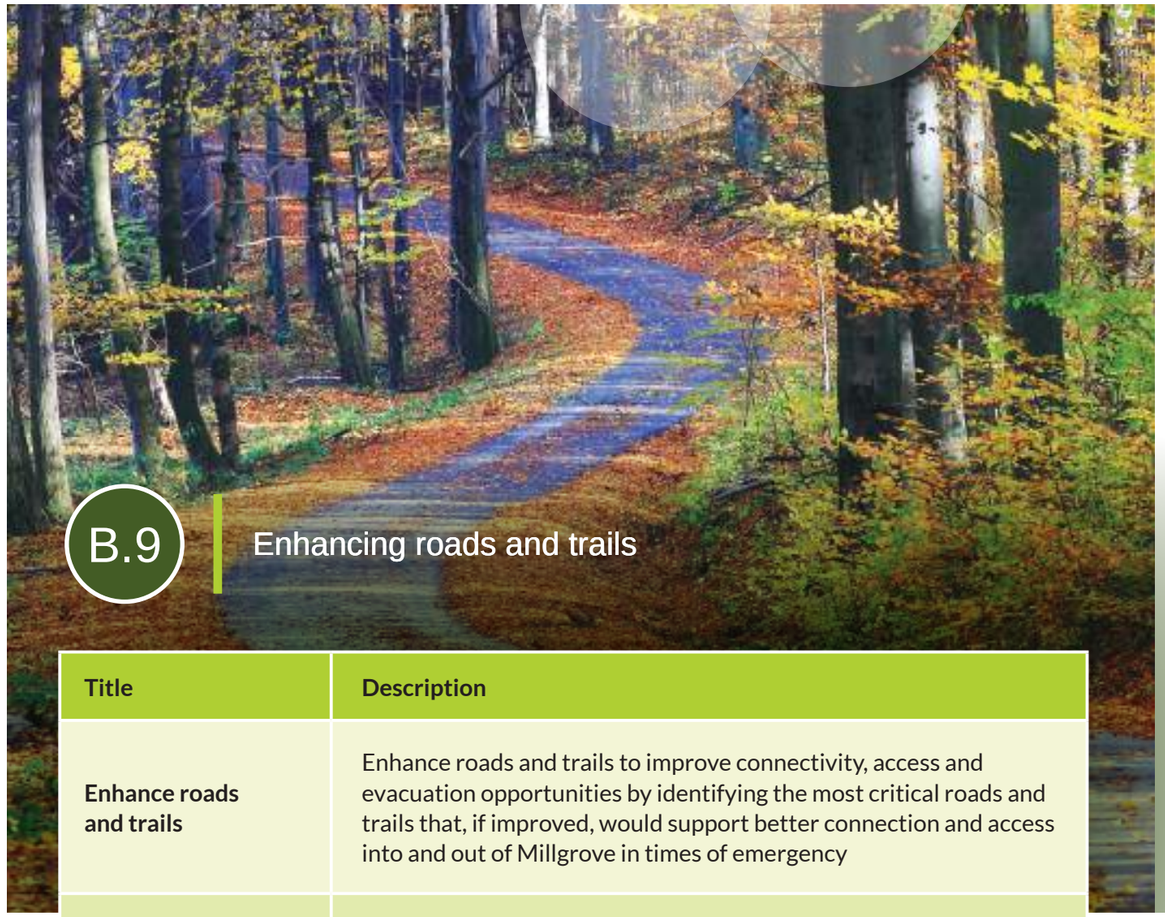
B.7 Strengthened phone and internet communications

Title	Description
Strengthened phone and internet communications	Boost and strengthen phone reception and internet connectivity in Millgrove
Why we should do it	Limited phone reception and patchy levels of internet connectivity undermine the preparedness and resilience of our community Emergency warnings increasingly rely on SMS phone messaging and information on websites, apps and on radio during emergencies Boosting that means more opportunities to get safety information
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Long term
How we will approach it	Investigate possibilities to boost reception Similar work has been undertaken in Warrandyte and other communities in Victoria
Who needs to be involved	Telcos DEECA Yarra Ranges Council
By when will this start?	To be determined by progress of other priority projects



B.8 Creating community gardens

Title	Description
Community gardens	Community gardens are a way to bring people together, to encourage greater connection among community members, as well as providing opportunities to further enhance the beauty of our town
Why we should do it	Community gardens have proved successful in townships and communities around the world in fostering a sense of place and belonging Done right, the gardens could help connect people and be valuable places of informal education, to help people understand our changing climate, and what plants are likely to be flood and heat resistant
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Medium term
How we will approach it	
Who needs to be involved	MRAG Community groups Yarra Ranges Council
By when will this start?	To be determined by progress of other priority projects



B.9 Enhancing roads and trails

Title	Description
Enhance roads and trails	Enhance roads and trails to improve connectivity, access and evacuation opportunities by identifying the most critical roads and trails that, if improved, would support better connection and access into and out of Millgrove in times of emergency
Why we should do it	On an everyday basis, access to Millgrove is limited because of bridges and one road in and out, and this presents economic, emergency and health challenges. Should residents need to evacuate in the face of natural hazards, particularly extreme heat and potential fire, the single entry/exit points into the township and limited alternative routes presents a significant risk to the lives of Millgrove residents and road users
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Long term
How we will approach it	Investigate options on public and private land
Who needs to be involved	MRAG, Yarra Ranges Council, Department of Transport, CFA, DEECA
By when will this start?	To be determined by progress of other priority projects

Appendix 1:

Timeline for Millgrove's History

Date	Event
Approx. 1859	Gold found in the Upper Yarra Valley, starts gold rush to the area
1870's	Upper Yarra Valley land subdivided, and area opens up to some farming
1880's	Sawmills start operating
1880's	Local businesses start to open up to support local workers and travellers
Approx. 1884	Warburton State School built near Yarra Gap (opposite Dee Rd)
1889	First Shire of Upper Yarra meeting held at Warburton State School
1890	Warburton's first Arbor Day, pine & oak tree planting at the state school
Approx. 1890	First Shire of Upper Yarra Hall/Office built opposite the School (Cnr Dee Rd/Hwy)
Approx. 1890's	Gravel Pit opens to supply railway ballast (current site of the sawmill)
1901	Railway line opens from Lilydale to Warburton and cuts through school ground
1903	School closes due to poor health conditions and moves to Warburton
1903	Shire of Upper Yarra Hall in Millgrove accidently burns down and eventually re-built in Yarra Junction
1905	Railway Station built and called "Millgrove", after Local Residents lobbied and contributed 20 pounds to Victorian Railways – Closed in 1965 Township then becomes known as Millgrove after being previously identified as part of Warburton, Yarra Gap and the Gravel Pits.
Approx. 1905	Main Road realignment to the current Warburton Hwy, previously went behind the Railway Station and School
1906	Post Office (with telephone) opens in Millgrove, closed in 1995
1909	Residents operate and fund a primary school in Millgrove
1914	Residents fund and build a Community Hall, demolished in late 1970's
1915	First Church building (Methodist)
1919	WW1 Avenue of Honour trees planted along main road
1934, 1950's	Major floods wash away bridges across the Yarra River & isolate residents
1970's	Major residential subdivision in McKenzie King property, resulted in significant population growth
Many dates	Major Fires around Millgrove, Black Sunday 1926, Red Tuesday 1932, Black Friday 1939, Black Sunday 1962, Ash Wednesday 1983, Mt Little Joe 1991, Black Saturday 2009.
2005	Millgrove Resident's Action Group established
2006	Millwarra Community Centre built
2015	Wesburn - Millgrove Fire Station and Refuge built
2022	New Sports Pavilion Facility built

mrag
Millgrove Residents' Action Group inc

For more information or
a meeting contact us on:

info@mrag.net.au
www.mrag.net.au