



# A Resilient Millgrove:

the project to help this town become  
Fire and Flood Resilient

**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.

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**A Resilient Millgrove**

The township of Millgrove is a community of almost 1670 people, in a beautiful residential cluster 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, which is located amongst forested hills.

The township, with its welcoming community, is vulnerable to fire and to flood.







**mr ag**  
Millgrove Residents'  
Action Group Inc

### Who are we?

The Millgrove Residents' Action Group Inc. (MRAG) is a volunteer-led organisation and community group open to all residents and supporters of Millgrove.

The group was set up in 2005 to advance the betterment of Millgrove. Members live and work in Millgrove and we work together on projects that contribute to enhancing our town's community spirit.

In 2021 we were approached to develop a Community Resilience Plan, focussed on reducing the risk of flood and fire to our community and building our connection as a community.

We worked with the Minderoo Foundation, ResilientCo and the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR) on how we could help our community to be prepared to manage and reduce the impact of any future flood and fire disasters.

This Plan, developed over 14 months, led to the identification of 6 initial and 3 longer term priorities for our community.

We were asked to dream big. This is how we become more resilient.

### Why is Fire and Flood Resilience a focus ?

Our community can be vulnerable to fire and flood. 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.

Additionally, the Upper Yarra River that makes the township so attractive and runs through our residential clusters, is also prone to flooding.

It is this combination that led the Minderoo Foundation to approach us (MRAG) to take part in its Australia-wide Fire and Flood Resilience program.

### Our Community Resilience Plan

We were one of the first of 50 communities around Australia to be asked to take part in this project and develop a Community Resilience Plan.

We have looked at our risks and challenges as well as our opportunities. Using publicly available data, community surveys and conversations and a deep local knowledge, we have developed priorities that we believe will make our community more resilient.

### What are we asking you to do?

We have nine projects identified. Each project could benefit the community in different ways.

We want to partner with local, state and federal government, individuals, businesses and corporations to make these projects a reality for our community.

We need funding and expertise, and those willing to work with our community to build our resilience.



## RESILIENCE-BASED MILLGROVE PRIORITY PROJECTS

A.1

A.2

A.3

A.4

A.5

A.6

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	<p>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</p> <p>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</p>
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Near term
How we will approach it	<p>Discuss with the school on how best to involve young people</p> <p>Link hazard awareness and preparedness to education programs</p> <p>Consider how we get young people involved in resilience-based activities outside of educational commitments</p>
Who needs to be involved	<p>MRAG</p> <p>School</p> <p>External community programs including the Be Ready Warrandyte and Resilience Inc. Nillumbik</p>
By when will this start?	Timing to be determined

## A.2

## Installing a community defibrillator

Title	Description
<b>Install a community defibrillator</b>	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
<b>Regular, community-led light show</b>	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	<p>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</p> <p>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</p>
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Long term
How we will approach it	<p>An initial project scoping is being developed</p> <p>Grant funding will be investigated</p>
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	<p>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</p>
Near / Medium / Long-term project	Medium term
How we will approach it	<p>Gather information from existing initiatives, such as the work of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Be Ready Warrandyte</p> <p>Identify partners to inform us about the most effective technologies</p> <p>Seek funding</p>
Who needs to be involved	<p>Project lead: Minderoo Foundation</p> <p>Others: Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) [see: Bushfire-ResilientHomesToolkit_Residents_Guide.pdf (nsw.gov.au)]</p>
By when will this start?	2023



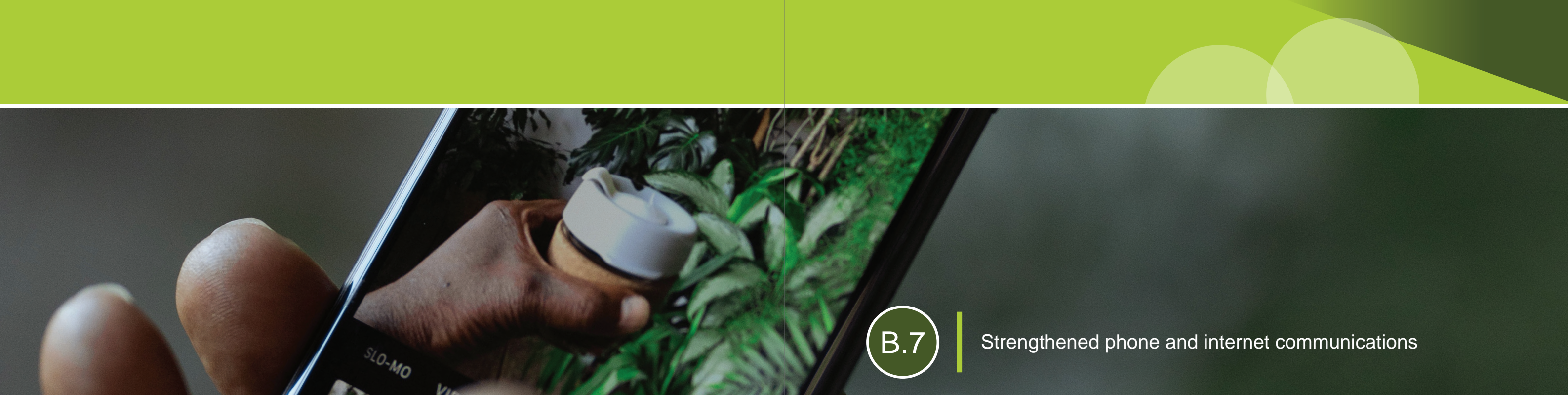


A.6

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	<p>The Mill, in its present state, is very unattractive and presents a significant fire-risk due to the storage of milled wood and mulch</p> <p>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</p>
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	<p>Initial conversations by MRAG</p> <p>Mill owner</p> <p>Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action - DEECA</p> <p>Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)</p> <p>Yarra Ranges Council</p>
By when will this start?	Initial conversations with stakeholders will inform a sensible commencement date





B.7

Strengthened phone and internet communications

OTHER KEY PROJECTS IDENTIFIED

- B.7
- B.8
- B.9

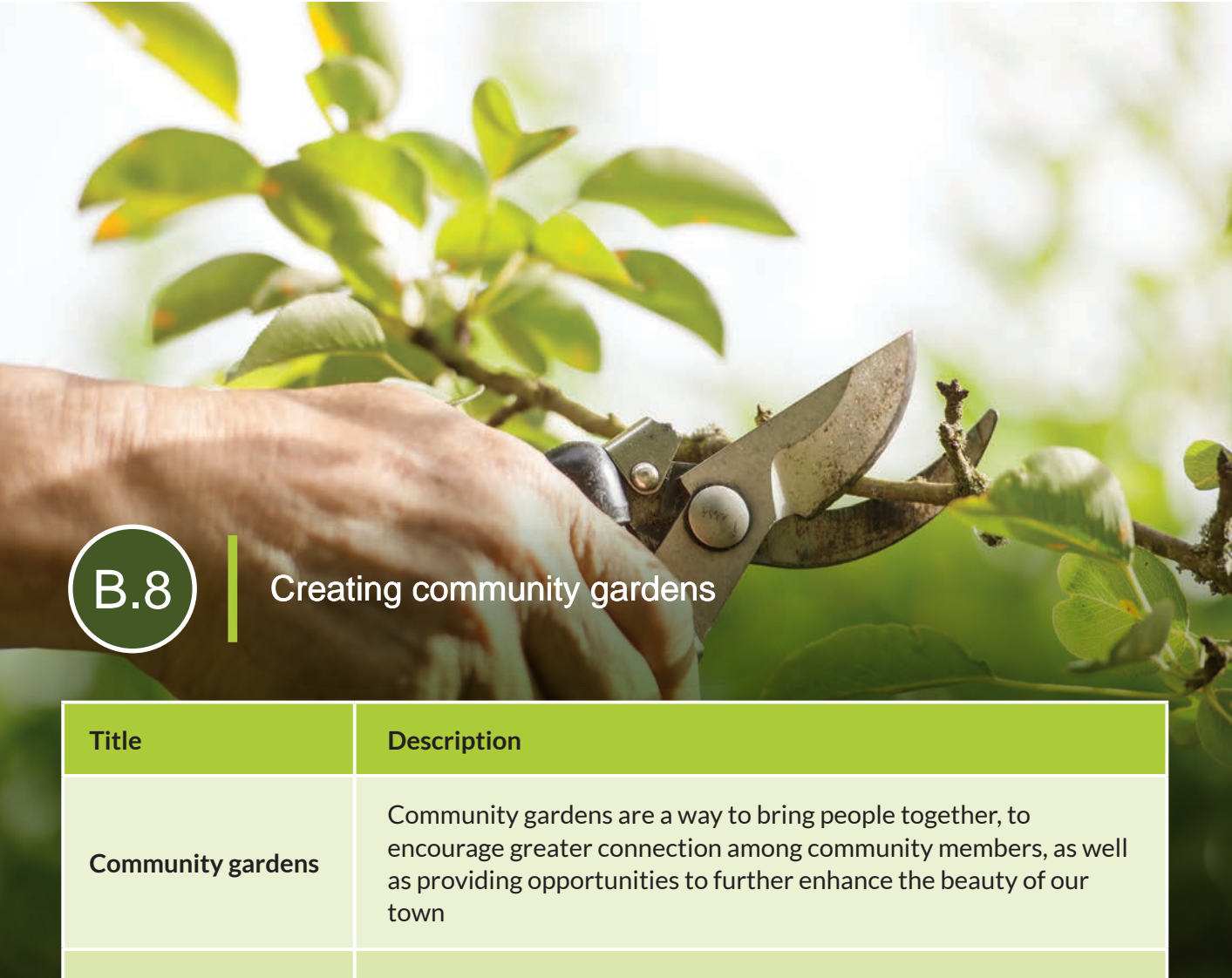
The projects that follow were all listed on the short list of projects.

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.

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





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For more information or  
a meeting contact us on:

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