

SARSFIELD 2030

OUR COMMUNITY

Our community of Sarsfield is a small rural district in the East Gippsland Shire of Victoria with its centre located approximately a 15-minute drive (14km) northeast from Bairnsdale along the Great Alpine Road.

Following the fires, some people have moved away from the area (either temporarily or permanently), and new people have arrived who didn't experience the fires.

Our community has a long and deep history with a rich indigenous culture and a pioneering past that saw droving along well-worn stock routes and paddle steamers on the Nicholson River. Dispossession of traditional Aboriginal communities led to the establishment of colonial era broadacre landholdings, many of which have since been divided into smaller commuter and lifestyle blocks.

Over more recent decades we've seen other significant changes. Many parents who started their education in Sarsfield now see most of the 100-odd young people in the area travel to school in Bairnsdale, Bruthen, or Tambo Upper. Key community infrastructure such as a school, tavern and store have all closed. At the same time, new people are moving into the area and thankfully, the Community Hall and the Recreation Reserve (owing to a long series of band-aid repairs and upgrades) has continued to serve as a central gathering space for locals.

As a community, we're faced with uncertain times. We've chosen to take the future into our own hands. Not just to put things right after the fires but to actively shape where we're going and how we're going to get there.

WHAT IS SARSFIELD 2030?

As a result of recovering from the 2019-2020 bushfires, the Sarsfield community has become more active. As one community member put it, 'there have probably been more community decisions made in the past 6 months than there were in the previous 100 years'.

This momentum has been created, in part, by the Sarsfield Community Association (SCA), which was formed by community members following the bushfires. The SCA initiated a planning process as a way of capturing the voice and vision of our community and consciously shaping our future.

Sarsfield 2030 is designed to give the whole community an opportunity to contribute to a vision for our community and determine the things we need to do to bring about the future we want for our families and those who come after us.

Sarsfield 2030 is our starting point. As new information becomes available and community needs and aspirations change over time, so will Sarsfield 2030. In the meantime, it provides us with agreed goals which can help our community focus our efforts. It also helps us to share our priorities with partners like the East Gippsland Shire Council, key Victorian Government agencies, Australian Government departments and other benefactors to attract the resources needed to bring our vision to life.



SARSFIELD 2030 IS DESIGNED TO GIVE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

HOW DID WE DECIDE ON OUR PRIORITIES?

Seeking community input has been the 'bedrock' of our recovery journey. We started asking the community for recovery priorities on about day five following the fires, using a number of informal opportunities at get togethers.

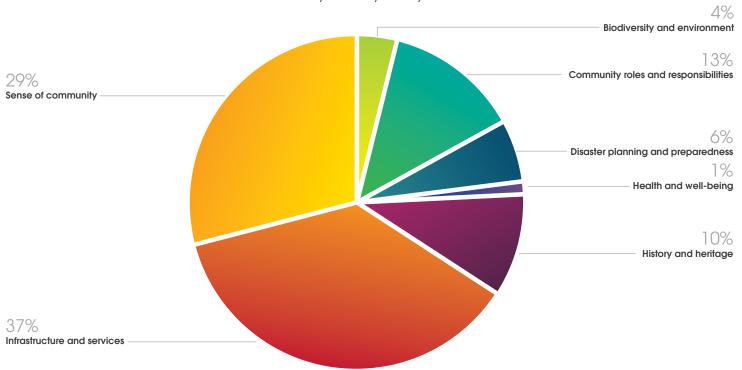
From that moment, community members have been detailing their needs and aspirations and providing suggestions. Information gathering and engagement has included:

- running six different surveys and polls
- featuring articles and advertisements in the Bairnsdale Advertiser
- posting information and seeking feedback via social media
- contacting community members directly using e-mail distribution lists
- inviting contributions via the Sarsfield Community Association web page
- using posters incorporating QR codes to invite community participation

- conducting multiple discussions and meetings with 25 individual Government agencies, professional advisors, community organisations and service providers
- undertaking 16 individual interviews with community members
- running monthly community gatherings with a meal and update
- listening to young people through the Sarsfield Snaps group
- visiting the Krowathunkooloong Keeping Place in Bairnsdale
- and many other less formal discussions and engagement conversations

SHAPING SARSFIELD

Community Survey - July 2021





42
INTERVIEWS



38
MEETINGS/



254



334 INDIVIDUAL &

These activities combined to attract responses from over 250 individuals and/or couples to our surveys and gained significant input into the development of the Sarsfield Hall and Recreation Reserve Master Plan and the Sarsfield Riverside Park (formerly Camping Ground and Reserve).

The development of Sarsfield 2030 has been led by the Sarsfield Community Association on behalf of the whole community.

The Association welcome and want as many community members as possible involved in implementing Sarsfield 2030 and fulfilling this vision.

Sarsfield 2030 will continue to be shaped with the combined views of our community.

OUR VISION

In Sarsfield we value each other, our beautiful and peaceful surroundings, our lifestyles and our diverse heritage.

We will be a strong, cohesive and welcoming community where everyone belongs.













WE WILL STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY AND GROW OUR LEADERSHIP CAPACITY.

Our priorities

Engaging community members in planning and decision-making processes



Getting the right people in the right roles

What we will do

- Increase community participation into future planning
- Co-design projects and initiatives with the community
- Develop structures that enable support and recognition for local 'communities of interest' once identified
- Celebrate community achievements and milestones
- Embed the intent of Sarsfield 2030 into the Bairnsdale District Place Plan (when developed).

 Set up and support strategic committees and working groups

Combine the Sarsfield Community
 Association and Sarsfield Community
 Recreational Reserve Committee into one Association.

"Local groups that have a clear focus.

Like a landcare group or local sports club, or other group.

Leaders don't emerge in a vacuum and bushfire recovery

Building skills and fostering leadership, including among our young people



- Develop the skills and capacity of the community members to contribute to future planning and action, for example through training or the use of mentors
- Encourage and support people to step up into a variety of formal roles
- Provide opportunities for people to be involved without being on a committee or working group (for example, volunteering at a function)
- Increase volunteerism and foster an inclusive 'culture of doers'
- Include young people in the co-design and implementation of Sarsfield 2030 and the Master Plans for the Recreation Reserve, and the Sarsfield Riverside Park
- Identify, nurture and mentor community leaders who will keep Sarsfield strong and provide effective succession.

Securing funding and resources

- Stage and match the implementation of Sarsfield 2030 with availability of funding and resources
- Advocate and apply for funding and resources to meet future community needs and aspirations
- Assist and/or partner with other community groups in the area to source funding for shared resources, for example, PA system, smart TV

"Friendship, open and collaborative



WE WILL UNDERSTAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE VALUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PEOPLE WHO CAME BEFORE US.

What we will do Our priorities Acknowledging, understanding, • Work with local Aboriginal Elders and the Aboriginal community to: and building awareness of Sarsfield's - document and display stories and information about areas of cultural significance to Aboriginal heritage the local Aboriginal community - develop shared ways to care for Country, including controlled burning techniques, and bush tucker conservation. Honouring and preserving Sarsfield's • Capture and share the stories of Sarsfield's past in an updated Sarsfield History non-Aboriginal history and heritage Book, including: HERITAGE SHARING - the old township - Aboriginal history and stories - the river - droving - fires AW ARENESS • Other experiences that have shaped Sarsfield: - Restore or upgrade key historical or heritage sites around Sarsfield - Install interpretive signage on tracks and trails and at key sites that celebrate our heritage, incorporating innovative technologies such as QR codes - Install local history displays and honour boards in the Community Hall - Conduct an annual or biennial Sarsfield celebration day.

"Increase awareness,



WE WILL BE AN INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY.

Our priorities

Organising community events





Working with the local Aboriginal community

Developing a community

communication plan



to connect through art."

What we will do

- Organise community events, activities and experiences that enable the community to gather and connect
- Build relationships and collaborative arrangements with other communities
- Introduce people to new and interesting experiences
- Welcome and involve people when they move to Sarsfield, including a 'welcome pack' for new residents (including a possible partnership with East Gippsland Shire Council)
- Adopt a community building approach to the changing demographics/ratios of new residents (post-fires), residents at the time of the fires who were not in the area at the time, and residents who experienced the fires
- Work with young people such as the Sarsfield Snaps Group, to provide activities and events that are relevant and engaging for them
- Install a visitor information/what's on billboard or electronic notice board.
- Work with local Aboriginal Elders and the Aboriginal community to:
- build cultural awareness and understanding
- celebrate significant cultural and community events
- showcase local Aboriginal arts and craft.
- Develop effective two-way communication with the whole community, including those who might be hard to reach
- Maintain communication options for people affected by the bushfires who have moved away from Sarsfield
- Continue activities that enable people to 'come back' even if they have left the area and don't want to rebuild both recent and previous residents.



INCLUSION



WE WILL BUILD FACILITIES AND DEVELOP AREAS THAT SERVE THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS AND PRESERVE OUR NATURAL SURROUNDINGS.

Our priorities

Developing a central place to get together

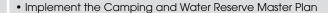


MPROVEMENTS

What we will do

- Build a new Community Hall
- Work with Rotary on the inclusion of a commercial kitchen in the Community Hall
- Implement the Sarsfield Recreation Reserve Master Plan.

Improving access to our natural assets for recreation and leisure



- Develop the Nicholson River crossing as an attractive open parkland and quiet space
- Improve safe access to the Nicholson River for recreation activities such as boating, kayaking, and fishing
- Develop tracks and trails around Sarsfield that connect its features, including
 - a walking, cycling and horse-riding bridge over the Nicholson River
 - a link with the Bataluk Cultural Trail that follows significant traditional routes used by the Gunaikurnai
 - signage that provides information on direction, distance and degree of difficulty
 - interpretative signage detailing heritage, history, flora, fauna and other natural features
 - internet coverage to support web applications, links and QR codes.

Caring for the natural environment of Sarsfield

- Co-operate with Landcare efforts of surrounding areas such as Clifton Creek such as 'working on nesting box project together'
- Create a local Landcare group that can undertake tasks such as:
- managing weeds and invasive trees taking over reserves and swamps
- undertaking re-vegetation, biodiversity and regrowth tasks
- Clean up and develop parks and public open spaces.

"Make it a space with our future community in mind Create opportunities for Community connection."

FUTURE

appropriate for the community it serves and what they need.



WE WILL SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITY.

Our priorities

Improving physical and mental health and aiding recovery from the bushfires



CONFOR

Developing a Road Safety Action Plan



What we will do

- Consider the health and wellbeing impacts of all our actions
- Lobby for the current bushfire support to continue, including ongoing support by the Sarsfield Hub
- Advocate for psychological support to individuals and groups of community members to assist people to continue to process their bushfire experience
- Arrange visits by specialist disaster recovery psychologists to facilitate community sessions to address longer term mental health needs and community dynamics issues, such as understanding and responding to internal community divisions that may emerge over time
- Advocate for health visits to isolated individuals who may experience barriers accessing services they need
- Monitor and respond to the emerging and ongoing needs of people affected by the bushfires
- Prepare for experiences that might trigger distress for people affected by the bushfires, such as anniversaries and other natural disasters
- Lobby for streamlined re-building approval processes
- Assist community members to access grants, funding and resources
- Organise yoga, meditation and other physical exercise classes geared to the needs of various age and ability groups
- Facilitate a 'Get to know your neighbour campaign'
- Arrange a mental health and wellbeing program for men
- Promote and support the Lucas Mill Project
- Provide a tool library
- Partner with Bairnsdale and/or Bruthen Neighbourhood Houses to enable skill sharing and development.
- Improve Highway and road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users including:
- reduced speed limits
- bicycle paths and bridle tracks on road reserves
- signage to address near misses of children getting off buses (including school buses)
- multiple safe crossings (underpasses) on Great Alpine Road
- turning lanes on the Great Alpine Road
- Seal gravel roads to reduce the impact of dust
- Lobby for improved public transport services.

Building our readiness for disasters and our capacity for recovery

"Develop a community disaster plan and keep it up to date, test it now and then so we know we are ready."



SUPPORT

- Develop a Community Disaster Plan that:
- informs the community about natural disaster risks
- maps relevant community assets and what can be done to protect them in the event of a disaster
- identifies central firesafe evacuation muster points
- is practiced, reviewed and updated annually
- Build the capacity of the community to be ready for future fires, natural disasters, and traumatic community events by:
- conducting an annual emergency services day with key speakers talking about predisaster preparation
- visiting households to make sure everyone understands what is needed when facing a fire
- identifying vulnerable households for targeted support before or in the event of a natural disaster
- creating a volunteer register of people who can help with basic maintenance for vulnerable households, for example, assisting with gutter cleaning
- Manage vegetation and reduce fire hazards, including:
 - advocating for land management and hazard reduction policy and protocol changes, and the use of Aboriginal traditional burning techniques
 - construct a permanent fire break to the north of Sarsfield
- Increase the capability, functionality and reliability of utilities such as:
 - a sustainable water supply
 - connectivity of power
 - communications and wireless operability
- Develop the functionality of Sarsfield Community Hall as a Relief and Recovery Centre.

Relocating the Country Fire Brigade and Fire Station

- Advocate for the Sarsfield Country Fire Brigade to be centralised so it can cover all of Sarsfield with other Brigades to serve East Bairnsdale, Clifton Creek and Nicholson. This might include merging the Mossi-Tambo and Sarsfield CFA Brigades and building a new fire station on the top of the Sandhill.
- Install an emergency water tank supply for use when the reticulated water system goes down in a bushfire situation.





WE WILL DEVELOP SARSFIELD AS A DISTINCT AND BEAUTIFUL PLACE WHERE PEOPLE FEEL THEY BELONG.

Our priorities Making Sarsfield a distinct and identifiable place • Mark the entry and exit points of Sarsfield on the highway, including installing a 'Welcome to Sarsfield' sign including the area's Aboriginal name • Create a streetscape that defines and beautifies Sarsfield's geographic location • Incorporate art/sculpture in Sarsfield to strengthen and interpret the sense of place • Assess, clean up, restore and protect the Sarsfield School Plantation and Reserve • Advocate for a separate post code for Sarsfield (currently the same as Bairnsdale) and seek an Australia Post post-box in Sarsfield. Establishing Sarsfield sporting teams and interest groups





GROUPS

"I feel like all of the events the committee have been running that bring the community together create a sense of belonging. And that this will continue to grow with time."



WE WILL SUPPORT OUR LOCAL PRODUCERS, TRADERS AND MAKERS AND GROW THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

	Our priorities	What we will do
	Building the business and marketing skills of local makers, producers and traders	Explore opportunities to employ local people and/or businesses in implementing our projects and activities
A III	"Simple. ocal market." PROSPERITY	Co-design projects and initiatives with the community
		Build online connections and promotion
		Create a space at the Community Hall that displays local makers, producers and traders what they do and the products and services they provide (same as below)
		Facilitate training and access to resources that support micro- or small-business people, including home-based businesses that are run by carers or people with special needs
		Work with the East Gippsland Shire Council's Economic Development Unit to elevate Sarsfield businesses.
	Establishing a local makers, producers, and traders network	Establish a network of local businesses and home-based enterprises that:
		- develops a Sarsfield brand and marketing campaign
		- supports an online platform for member businesses to connect with each other
		- develops training or other professional development opportunities locally
		- links with other relevant networks for example, the Gippsland Food and Fibre Network.
	Showcasing the products of local	Create an outlet to connect the local community and visitors to Sarsfield produce and
	makers, producers, and traders CONNECT	services, for example, a gallery at the Community Hall to exhibit and sell artworks
		 Organise a regular community market that promotes local business, produce, art and crafts
		• Conduct a Makers Festival or an exhibition of local produce and art that reflects the local seasons – this could be held in association with the Bruthen Blues Festival
		• Include a business section in a local community newsletter, and profile a 'business for the month'
		Promote local makers, producers and traders on the Community Association web page.
	Developing the economy and our prosperity	Attract new services and businesses to Sarsfield, for example:
		- facilitate a 'Pop-up Café'
		- offer shared office and/or work areas
		- re-purpose the Hub buildings when Bushfire Recovery Victoria no longer require them
		Lobby for reliable internet and phone coverage
		Establish a Sarsfield Energy Hub using largely renewable sources, in order to lower power costs for residents and enterprises. This could be linked with the Gippsland Climate

Change Network.

IMPLEMENTING OUR PRIORITIES

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

As we go forward, Sarsfield 2030 will provide us with a blueprint to make sure we keep an eye on important priorities for our community. We'll pursue our current priorities and projects and draw on the bank of ideas from our community (see below) to respond to other needs and opportunities as they emerge.

We understand that our vision is expansive, and our goals are large. We'll need time, resources and the help of project partners like federal, state and local government, and other benefactors, to get things done.

We've already sought funding for some of our priorities and as time and opportunities allow, we imagine that small and large contributions from a mix of sources will combine to make Sarsfield 2030 a reality.

We also need the help of our community.

If you have ideas or time to help achieve the Sarsfield 2030 vision, we'd love to hear from you. This could be anything from sharing an idea, volunteering to help on the day of a function, or becoming a member of an interest group or committee.

New faces are always welcome and needed to refresh and reinvigorate our community effort!



THANKS

The SCA would like to say 'thanks' to all those who have contributed to the development of Sarsfield 2030 and created this legacy that began with the 2019-2020 bushfires.

The bushfires caused great loss and distress.

The fires also started a movement that will shape a new future for Sarsfield.

OUR BANK OF IDEAS

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The suggestions below include events and activities derived from the community feedback. These ideas will be drawn on over time as resources and opportunities are available. Community members expressed views that any activities should be relevant to Sarsfield residents and build our sense of community.

People tend to live in environments like Sarsfield because it provides a high degree of privacy, but the value of knowing people here became evident through the fires and afterwards.

Gathering needs to add value to the reasons why people live here. (Community member)

Need to continue activities that enable people to 'come back' even if they have left the area and don't want to rebuild - both recent and previous residents. (Community member)

Ensure community activities are inclusive and avoid hidden biases during planning and decisions (gender, race, age, ability, socio-economic) and try to avoid promotion of the things that ultimately make people feel worse - like alcohol, soft drink, junk food. (Community member)

Classes and activities

Scheduled at night-times and daytimes:

- Connect through art and art therapy classes
- Crafts of all kinds
- Gardening
- Yoga

- Tai chi
- Pilates
- Meditation/Mindfulness
- Dog obedience courses

Events

Events might be run at the Recreation Reserve of at street or precinct level:

- Friday Night Feeds
- 'Coffee catch-ups' with guest speakers like Red Cross and AgVic
- Family community days of all kinds
- Community events with a focus on the younger generation
- Fun runs on the walking tracks
- Sports days cricket, football, tennis, including inter-community challenges like the Clifton Creek vs Sarsfield Cricket Match
- Outdoor movies
- Concerts or events (like they do in Bundalaguah have a look at https://bundyhall.org.au/)
- Strzelecki String Busters
- Regular local food swap veggies/fruit in excess
- Other special interest swap meets
- Trivia nights

Special interests

Events for interest groups:

- Landcare
- Men's Shed
- Youth Group
- Senior Citizens
- Mum's group

- Dad's group
- Small business group
- Car Club
- Home schooling group
- Playgroup

Disaster Readiness

- Bushfire and flood mitigation information days
- Pre-fire season briefings
- Preparation days, in streets or precincts tailored to community needs with a focus on building community capacity and resilience

COMMUNICATION

Feedback from the community suggested that many residents want to be kept informed about what is happening and what is planned for Sarsfield. The need for multilayered two-way communication was highlighted. These ideas will guide the way in which communication about Sarsfield 2030 occurs into the future.

Hard copy information

- Regular newsletters or communiques from the Sarsfield Community Association
- •Direct mail-outs and/or direct property drops
- Handouts and invitations at workshops and other events
- 'What's On Next' board and other notices displayed at the Community Hall
- •Using existing publications, such as the Tambo Rambler or Bairnsdale Advertiser
- •Display of information at the Recovery Hub.

Electronic media

- Sarsfield Community Association web page with key links to further relevant information
- QR Code linked to web pages
- Email broadcasts from Sarsfield Community Association
- Social media- Facebook, Instagram and so on
- Virtual meetings Zoom, Teams and online chat groups for specific projects
- Online surveys

Face-to-face

- Street group meetings ensuring those who are displaced are included or invited
- Small special interest or project groups
- Provide information where the audience is, for example:
- jump on the school bus and talk with students
- -approach young parents at their children's sport
- -give cards and information to water tanker drivers to distribute to their customers
- Meetings with key individuals
- Provide opportunities for informal or formal chats

Other organisations

- Ask other trusted organisations to distribute information, for example:
- through case managers and service providers to clients
- through East Gippsland Shire Council to ratepayers
- through Bushfire Recovery Victoria to recovering community members.

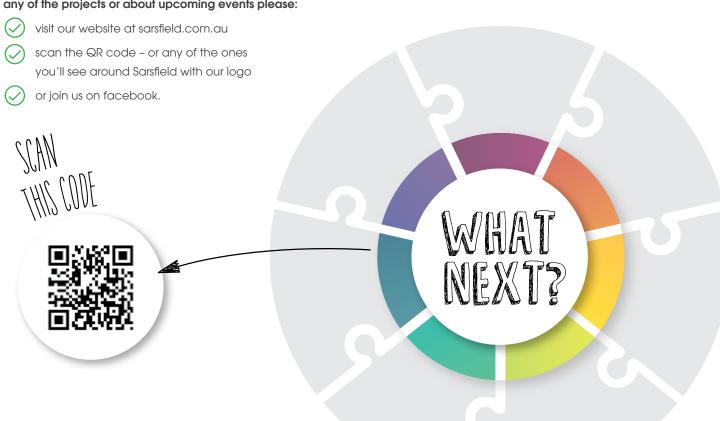
Principles

- Keep communication open and up-to-date with advance warning of activities and events
- Offer a diverse range of people to contact or talk to
- Respect privacy some people don't want their details or their photo in the public arena
- Ensure new residents are included provide welcome kits, welcome events or profile people in a community newsletter if they're interested
- Continue to include people who have moved out of Sarsfield who may or may not be considering returning

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Sarsfield 2030 provides opportunities for the community to participate in events and activities. Every effort will be made to let you know the details about what is on and hopefully you can come along and bring your family and friends.

If you want to know more about Sarsfield 2030, any of the projects or about upcoming events please:



GET INVOLVED IN SARSFIELD 2030!

Come to events and bring your friends.

If you are interested in contributing to any of the Sarsfield 2030 projects with ideas or time to help make them happen, we would love to hear from you.

Your support, energy and expertise will always be welcome and appreciated.

CONTACT

Simon Hof

president@sarsfield.com.au 0472 838 149

Cath McLellan

committee3@sarsfield.com.au 0488 051 936



www.sarsfield.com.au info@sarsfield.com.au