Goornong and District All Hazards Workshop 1

Testing the Draft Goornong and District Community Emergency Plan

Report and data collated from activities

Wednesday 5 November 2025

On 5 November 2025, over 20 Goornong and district community members participated in a workshop facilitated by Maree Grenfell and Martina Holland (Once upon tomorrow and Martina Holland Consulting).

Goornong stands out as one of the more advanced communities in the Bendigo district when it comes to community emergency planning. The data shows strong local engagement, detailed knowledge of local hazards, and clear commitment to practical preparedness.

Residents understand their environment: its strengths and vulnerabilities and are motivated to keep improving their community-led Emergency Plan. There's recognition that building resilience requires shared responsibility between households, broader community, the Goornong and District Emergency Planning Group (GDEPG), and agencies.

During the 5 November workshop, elements of the Draft Goornong and District Community Emergency Plan (Draft Plan) were socialised and tested with the participants, extending its existing reach. Additional input was provided that will be included in the Draft Plan and further socialised and tested with the community at a community event.

What (else) do you value about living in Goornong and district?

Using data gathered by City of Greater Bendigo in 2021 as part of the Structural Plan community consultations, workshop participants added additional items they value about living in Goornong and district. Additions (in red) identified during the workshop are summarised in the table below.

2021 data – what do you value?

1. Lifestyle (+3)
2. Affordability (+3)
3. Proximity to Bendigo (+3)
4. The natural environment
5. Peaceful lifestyle (+2)
6. Family and friends

Natural environment	Built environment	Social environment	Economic environment
▪ Native wildlife (2). ▪ Sunshine. ▪ Landscape. ▪ The reserve.	▪ Gateway to the North and North East (2). ▪ Local pool (2). ▪ Leisure facilities.	▪ Sense of community. ▪ Heritage – lots of history. ▪ People.	▪ Family farm. ▪ Pub. ▪ Post office.

	▪ Access to transport (rail, road). ▪ Country town. ▪ Space: not hearing next door's toilet flush. ▪ Train.	▪ Fire brigade and support. ▪ Safe. ▪ Family farm.	

What events might threaten what you love?

Building on the sudden shocks and gradual stresses identified in the Goornong and District Emergency Plan, workshop participants identified additions (in red) below. Several participants mentioned the need to acknowledge the impacts of compounding events and multiple-disaster exposure. Several groups also suggested that hazards could be grouped into categories for ease of reading. Suggested categories included:

- Bushfire / Grassfire / Structure Fire
- Extreme Rainfall / Flash Flooding Rural / Tailings Dam Failure
- Road accidents / Chemical spill / Act of Terror / Tragic Farm Accident
- Extreme wind (Tornado) / Earthquake

Sudden shocks	Gradual stresses
▪ Bushfire ▪ Grassfire ▪ Structure fire ▪ Extreme rainfall ▪ Riverine flooding ▪ Flash flooding ▪ Extreme wind/tornado ▪ Extreme heat or cold ▪ Road accidents or chemical spills ▪ Dam failure ▪ Earthquake ▪ Pandemic ▪ Farm accidents ▪ Camping accidents ▪ Act of terror ▪ Environmental stress: flood, fire ▪ Mines and seismic activity ▪ Lost telecommunication	▪ Drought (+ food supply + lost stock + cost of feed (2) + vets + water supply) ▪ Fire levy (2) ▪ Trauma / isolation / drought → suicide ▪ Crime (+ police presence + theft) ▪ Bullying and harassment ▪ Isolation (+ emergency vehicles; refuge) ▪ Increasing insurance premiums ▪ Uncertainty re: funding of community assets ▪ Limited facilities ▪ Renewables and energy zones ▪ Poverty ▪ Homelessness ▪ Environmental stress: drought ▪ Housing suitability ▪ Loss of infrastructure (feed, fences, sheds, poly pipes ▪ Bureaucracy and bulldust after events ▪ Farmland dominated by developments

▪ Loss of power (affected everyone, not just those flooded)	▪ Weather unpredictability ▪ Uncertainty of community assets and funded repairs ▪ Development in flood plains

Testing actions in the current Emergency Plan

Participants were invited to allocate actions from the current Draft Emergency Plan to community, GDEPG, Households and/or agencies. The tables below indicate how each small group allocated actions. Actions suggested during the workshop (possibly missing from the current draft plan) are shown in red.

Group 1	Community actions	GDEPG actions	Household actions	Agency actions
Before the hazard	▪ Building greater community skills*. ▪ Building stronger relationships. ▪ Building social connection. ▪ Community connection events. ▪ Share info with friends, family and neighbours. ▪ Understand local hazards/where they live. ▪ Stronger emergency preparedness and response.	▪ Know where to go if unsafe at home (e.g., hub, relief centre). ▪ Stronger emergency preparedness and response.	▪ Stronger emergency preparedness and response. ▪ Have Vic emergency app on phone. ▪ Property preparation (gutters, drainage). ▪ Have household emergency kit. ▪ Have enough supplies for 72 hours. ▪ Have emergency plan. ▪ Take action to reduce impact on emergency services (leave early).	▪ Stronger emergency preparedness and response. ▪ Preventative works. ▪ Creating community infrastructure (e.g., social infrastructure). ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power, phones go down.
During the hazard	▪ Check on neighbours, friends and family. ▪ Better logistics, communication.			▪ Community hub. ▪ Cool refuges in heat. ▪ Temporary refuge centre.
After the hazard	▪ Community connection events.	▪ 3 x 3 x 3 rule (some need 3 hours, some 3 weeks, some 3 months).		▪ Clean up creeks. ▪ Road side drains clean up. ▪ Clean up and assistance.

Group 2	Community actions	GDEPG actions	Household actions	Agency actions
Before the hazard	▪ Building greater community skills*. ▪ Temporary refuge centre.	▪ Community connection events. ▪ Community hub. ▪ Know where to go if unsafe at home (hub, relief centre).	▪ Take action to reduce impact on emergency services (leave early). ▪ Understand local hazards (where they live). ▪ Have an emergency plan. ▪ Property preparation (gutters, drainage) ▪ Have Vic Emergency App on phone. ▪ Have enough supplier for first 72 hours. ▪ Check on neighbours, friends and family. ▪ Have household emergency kit. ▪ Know levels in creek in advance. ▪ Different 'prepare and response' actions depending on whether rural or town households. Rural landowners are more likely to stay during an event given the	▪ Stronger emergency preparedness and response. ▪ Better logistics and communication.

			farm assets, animals etc. This needs to be fleshed out in the CERP.	
During the hazard			▪ Comms (phone tree) between properties in creek	
After the hazard				

Group 3	Community actions	GDEPG actions	Household actions	Agency actions
Before the hazard	▪ Have enough supplies for at least 72 hours (food, water, batteries). ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power goes down. ▪ Know where to go if unsafe at home (hub, relief centre). ▪ Understand local hazards where you live. ▪ UHF and VHF resources.	▪ Have enough supplies for at least 72 hours (food, water, batteries). ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power goes down. ▪ Understand local hazards where you live. ▪ New residents' kit or induction session. ▪ Share emergency action plan.	▪ Have enough supplies for at least 72 hours (food, water, batteries). ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power goes down. ▪ Understand local hazards where you live. ▪ Have Vic Emergency App on phone. ▪ Property preparation (gutters, drainage). ▪ Have emergency plan. ▪ Know where you live.	▪ Have enough supplies for at least 72 hours (food, water, batteries). ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power goes down. ▪ Understand local hazards where you live. ▪ Testing incident response scenarios for all hazards – not just fire. ▪ Agencies having key contacts in local community.
During the hazard		▪ Place of last resort. ▪ Central Comms. ▪ UHF and VHF resources.	▪ Share info with friends, family and neighbours. ▪ Know where to go (safe place, hub).	

After the hazard	▪ Good neighbour policy. ▪ Food bank. ▪ Clothing. ▪ Medical.	▪ Revisit community plan.	▪ Check on neighbours, friends and family.	▪ Insurances. ▪ They meet with communities after event to revise and debrief – learn what the community knows. ▪ Funding to send people/teams out on the ground after the event and run recovery.

Group 4	Community actions	GDEPG actions	Household actions	Agency actions
Before the hazard	▪ Building better community skills*. ▪ Building stronger relationships. ▪ Building social connection.	▪ Emergency Management Plan (Develop, revise, update). ▪ Liaise with agencies and services re: community's needs. ▪ Know where to go if unsafe at home (hub, relief centre). ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power/phones go down.	▪ Have emergency plan. ▪ Have enough suppliers for 72 hours. ▪ Understanding local hazards where you live. ▪ Property preparation (gutters, drains). ▪ Creating community infrastructure – including social infrastructure. ▪ Have Vic emergency app on phone. ▪ Take actions to reduce impact on emergency	▪ Resources, water, food etc. ▪ Educate our youth – beyond fire to broader disasters. ▪ Have comms mechanisms if power/phones go down.

			services (e.g., leave early).	
During the hazard	▪ Temporary refuge centre. ▪ Community hub. ▪ Community connection events. ▪ Cool refuges in heat.		▪ Check in on neighbours, friends and family.	▪ Better logistics and communication.
After the hazard	▪ Stronger emergency preparedness and response. ▪ Debriefing as a community			▪ Learn from event. ▪ Fundamental infrastructure: drainage. ▪ Community identification of things needed e.g., drain cleaning. ▪ Provide formal debriefing for all age groups.

** Note: Community skills may include (but not limited to) community leadership, grant writing, emergency kits, first aid, chainsaw operation).*

Unresolved issues

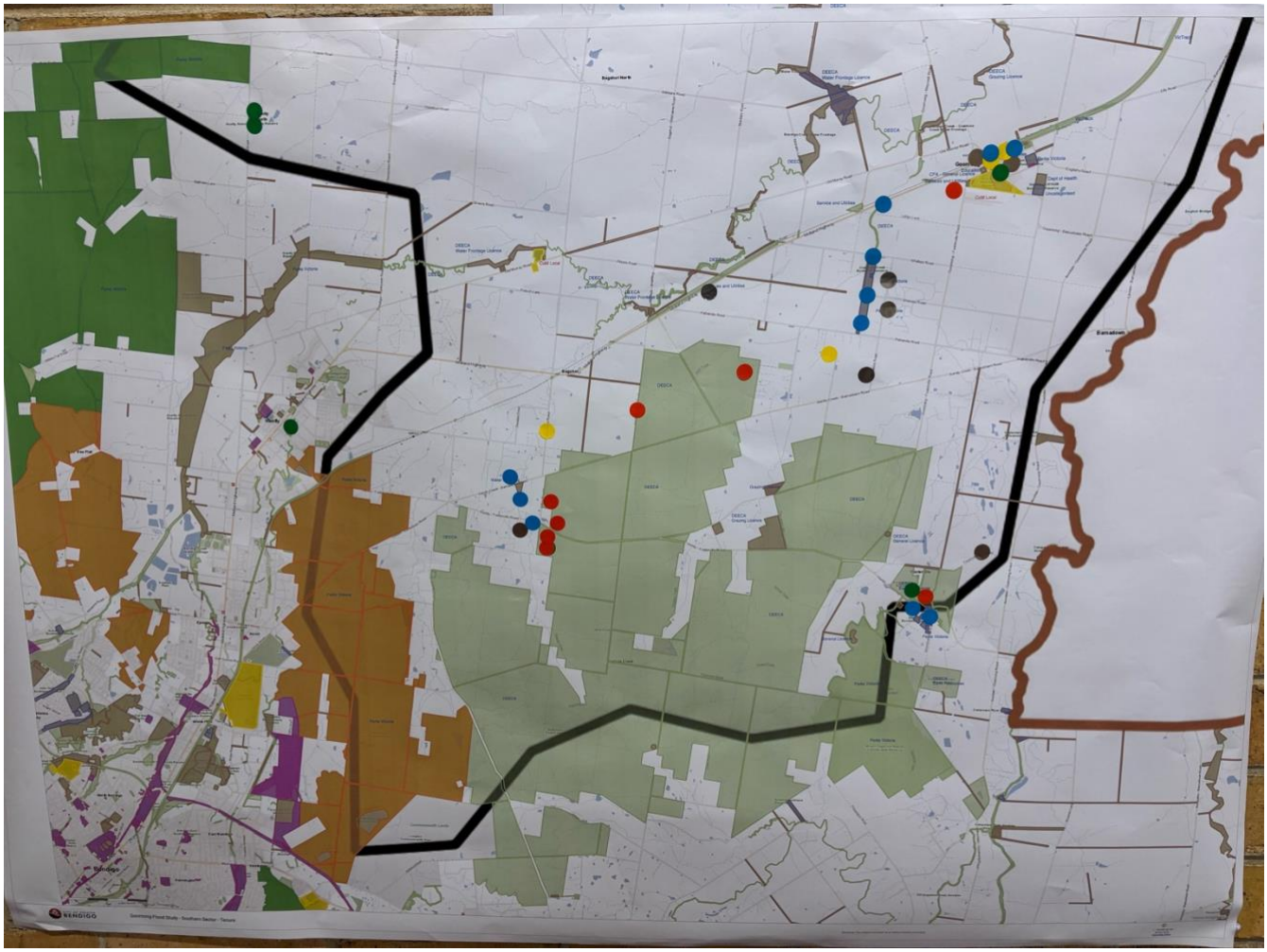
Information/comments requested from community members

- Suggest workshop 2 in Aug / Sept 2026, not early in the year (given the Flood and Waterways topic and timing with likely flooding).
- Disaster recovery: disruption – prioritise workshops for community.
- Keep kids' routines as normal as possible.
- Why is the mine not mentioned at all?
- Can Council have an emergency response officer on call? Need phone numbers of people who can make decisions right now.
- Activate phone trees.
- Disconnection and contradiction between Council departments (i.e. One part of council advising ring levies then not giving approval).
- Flood signs on Epson –Barnadown Road (east of Goornong Fosterville Rd) missing– 2-3 emails to council still no response.
- What is the SES boundary? SES aren't resourced the same as CFA – Much less funding. Unlikely they'll be able to they help Goornong. CFA and SES need to have an agreement to work together when SES can't get there.
- GDEPG operational boundaries are different to Flood Study boundaries – the eastern side of the GDEPG is within Campaspe Shire. In future, CoGB Maps should not be clipped to LGA boundaries. Issues identified outside CoGB boundary should be captured, and GDEPG will take these forward to Campaspe Shire Council as relevant
- Leaving the community (moving away) because you no longer feel safe.
- Council providing approval for development on flood plains (ring levies).
- No more talk fests.
- Vic Track – undersized or inadequate culverts under train tracks – causing flooding.
- Why are houses allowed to be built in flood zones?
- Given insurance premiums are increasing and uninsurability more likely in future, can we get community insurance (e.g., like Lismore)?
- SES website still not updated with broad information about flooding in areas of Goornong.

Maps with identified hazards marked: page 7

Key

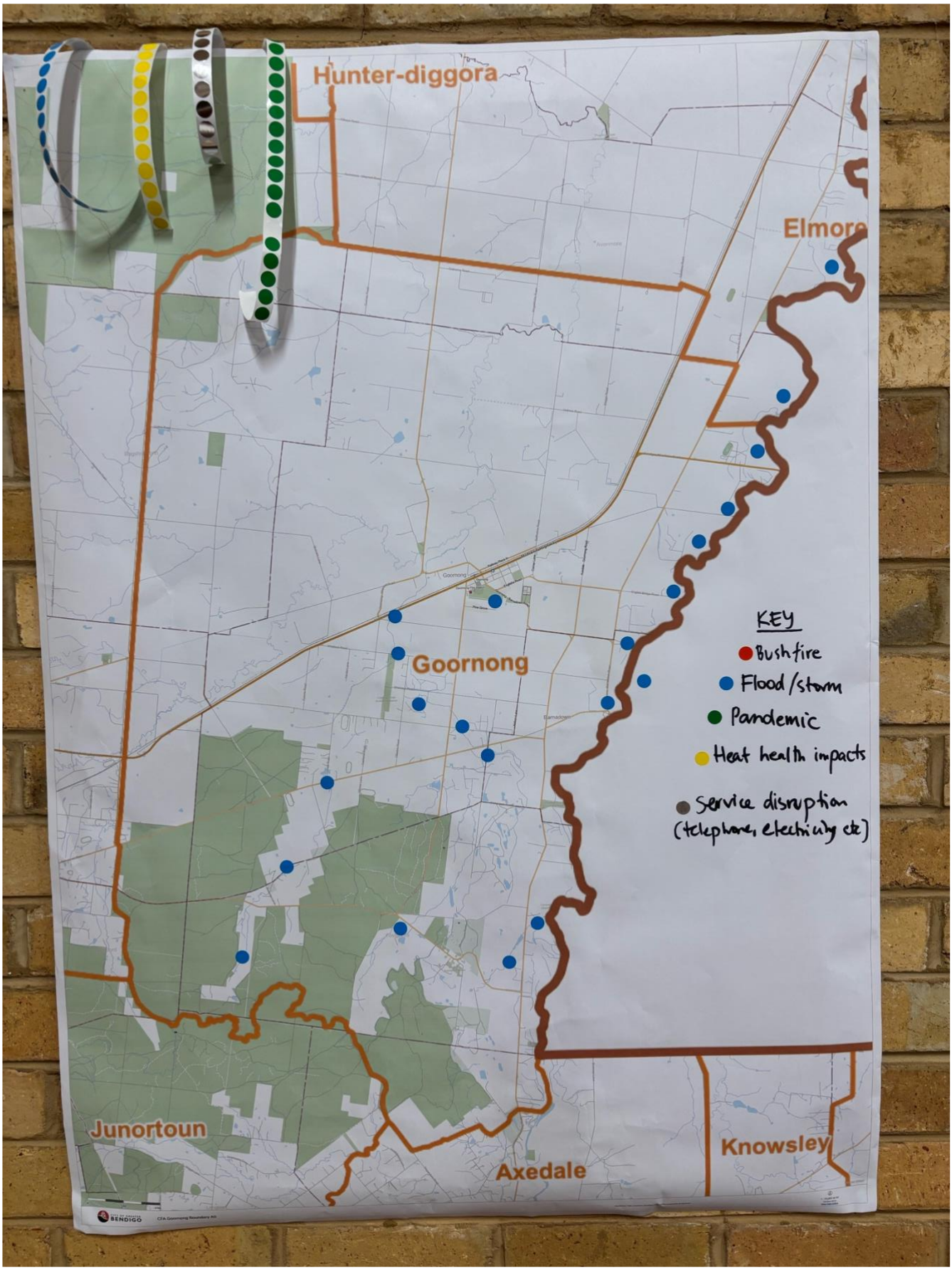
	Bushfire
	Storm / Flood
	Service disruption (e.g., telecommunication)
	Pandemic
	Heat health



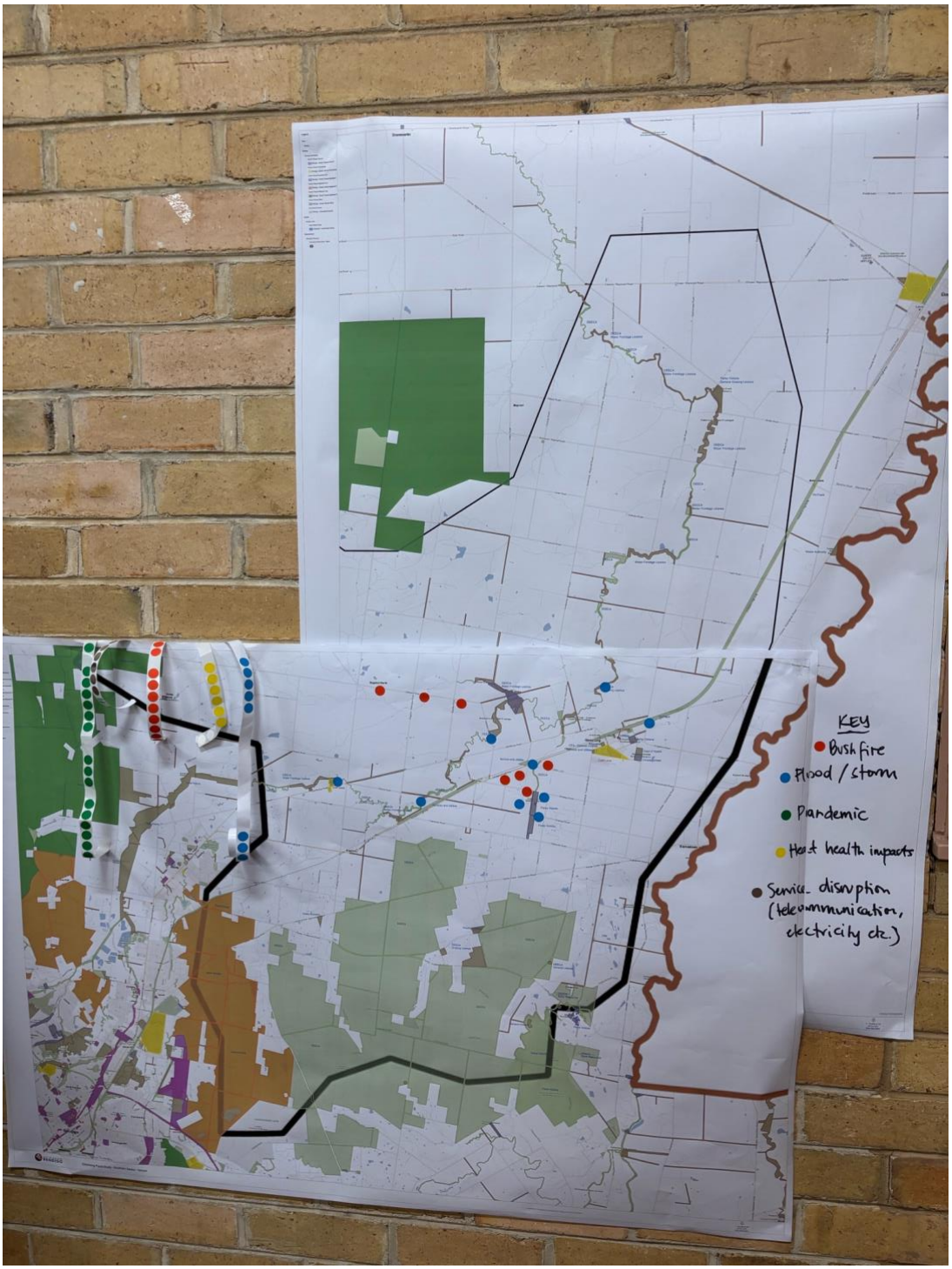
Map 1 Goornong and District VIC Hazards



Map 2 Goornong and District VIC Hazards


Hunter-diggora
Elmore
Goornong
Junortoun
Axedale
Knowsley
KEY
Bushfire
Flood/storm
Pandemic
Heat health impacts
Service disruption
(telephone, electricity etc)

Map 3


KEY
Bushfire
Flood / storm
Pandemic
Heat health impacts
Service disruption (telecommunication, electricity etc.)

What is the data telling us?

What the community values

Participants agreed with the sentiments from the 2021 Structure Plan community engagement and added to and refined what they value.

Community members value Goornong's rural identity, the surrounding bushland, wildlife, and sense of space. They speak with pride about their town's friendliness, safety, and strong community spirit. Local assets such as the pool, post office, pub, reserve, train station, and fire brigade are seen as vital threads in the social and economic fabric. The landscape, sunshine, and peaceful lifestyle all underpin a shared commitment to preserving the area's character while embracing practical preparedness.

Perceived threats

The community agreed with the hazards, shocks and stresses identified in the Goornong and District Draft Community Emergency Plan and provided additional input. The community identifies floods, bushfire, seismic activity, uncontrolled development, floodplain construction, and loss of vegetation as major threats. Concerns also extend to poor drainage, increasing insurance costs, the impacts of drought and isolation in the event of an emergency. There's frustration about bureaucracy and post-disaster "bulldust" that delays recovery. Residents want more decisive action on drainage, planning transparency, and prevention of inappropriate developments in hazard-prone areas.

Community readiness

Goornong's readiness is high. Participants demonstrated practical know-how and initiative, proposing clear roles for households, the GDEPG, and agencies. There's strong interest in tools such as phone trees, new residents' induction packs, UHF/VHF communication systems, and household preparedness for 72 hours. People are ready to take responsibility. What's needed is coordination, agency support, and continued opportunities to test and refine the Goornong and District Draft Community Emergency Plan.

Unresolved issues and requests

Residents want more consistent communication and accountability from agencies and Council. Requests included stronger coordination across departments, access to decision-makers during emergencies, better communication systems during outages, and clarity around SES boundaries and flood signage. Some participants questioned why the mine wasn't mentioned in planning and called for formal debriefs and inclusion of all voices, especially those who feel unheard.

Overall observations

Goornong is leading the way in community-led preparedness across the Bendigo district. The community's energy, structure, and willingness to act, position it as a model for others. The next step in 2026 will be to expand

consultation—seeking out the quieter or less-connected voices to ensure plans reflect the whole district. With continued collaboration, Goornong can strengthen its role as a resilient, proactive community setting its own course.

Feedback about the workshop

Workshop participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback about the workshop via an online anonymous four-question Menti survey. Three community members responded. A summary of results is included below:

Question 1:

- **100%** of respondents **agreed** that the workshop was **useful**.

Question 2:

- **100%** of respondents **agreed** that they would **recommend** the workshop to others.

Question 3:

- **100%** of respondents **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they felt **comfortable** sharing their views at the workshop.

Question 4:

- **100%** of respondents **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they had a clearer sense of **what their community could do** together.

Next steps

The data collated from this workshop along with sentiments expressed by participants will guide the future workshop design in this series. Workshops 2 and 3 will build on information collected to date, offering support to Goornong and district leaders and their community to further strengthen their emergency preparedness.