

## Grants and Hall Improvements

Over the years, the Towong Soldiers Memorial Hall has benefited from multiple grants, donations, and community initiatives, all of which have contributed substantially to its continual refurbishment and enhancement.

### 2003 Refurbishment

In 2003, the Hall received funding from the Regional Development Victoria Bushfire Recovery Fund. This grant facilitated notable improvements, including the installation of an accessible toilet, upgraded kitchen benches, and comprehensive restumping of the building. Additional enhancements comprised a new rainwater tank, removal of the original stage steps, replacement of deteriorated fencing, and clearance of invasive trees.

### Post-2019–2020 Bushfire Support

In response to the extensive bushfires that affected the Upper Murray region in 2019–2020, significant donations were made. As a result, the hall was equipped with a stove, refrigerator, and reverse cycle air conditioners.

### Local Economic Recovery Initiatives

In 2020, the hall was awarded the “Our Place” grant under the Local Economic Recovery – Bushfire Recovery Local Community program. Project commencement was delayed by the pandemic and other factors, but work began in 2023 and concluded in 2024. The scope included exterior recladding, roof replacement and reinforcement, reinstatement of original air vents, stage restumping, drainage improvements, and relocating the rainwater tank. Internally, the toilet area was redesigned to incorporate a shower in the accessible toilet, a new kitchen was installed, storage spaces were reorganized, and the original timber floors were restored. Interior and exterior painting introduced a refreshed colour scheme, and solar panels with batteries were installed to bolster resilience during power outages.

### Community Recovery and Resilience

Through the Bushfire Recovery Victoria – Community Recovery and Resilience grant program, the “Deck Project” initiated in 2023 funded the construction of a new rear deck at the hall.

### Facility Fit-Outs and Furnishings

A Border Trust grant, “Fit Out,” awarded in 2024, supported the procurement of new tables, chairs, deck furniture, and kitchen equipment (appliances, crockery, and cutlery). Significant volunteer hours were contributed by the three-member steering committee and additional support ensured successful project delivery.

### Further Upgrades in 2025

The hall received a subsequent Border Trust grant, “Final Touches,” in 2025, facilitating installation of a security system around the hall’s exterior, internal window

blinds, protective canvas covers for outdoor tables, landscaping features, and AV equipment including a projector, screen, amplifier, and microphones.

### Towong Shire Council Contributions

Towong Shire Council remains committed to reinforcing community halls for future emergency preparedness. Their support has included provision and installation of a second water tank, UHF radio base station, and funding for continuous instant gas hot water, vacuum, and steam cleaners.

### Energy Resilience Initiatives

In 2025, the AusNet Energy Resilience Community Fund awarded the hall the “Power of Independence” grant, enabling installation of an automatic generator capable of supplying power to the entire facility during outages.

### Additional Community Amenities

Lastly, a grant secured by the Community Recovery Committee from Border Trust will allow the construction of a BBQ area, further enhancing amenities within the hall precinct.