

GIPPSLAND COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE (GCLS) COVERS GROUND TO SUPPORT 18 MONTHS ON FROM SUMMER BUSHFIRES

“The roads used to access some of these communities are narrow and can be very dangerous, and there is often ice on them too during the winter months. These tracks are predominantly used by logging trucks and, as there is no phone reception, UHF radios and numbered markers are used to communicate your location if you end up in trouble.” – Simone Elias, Community Lawyer, GCLS

During the Gippsland bushfires at the start of 2020, some of the hardest hit communities were extremely remote and near impossible to access without a reliable off-road vehicle and Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio walkie talkies.

Before affected communities could receive the legal support and education they needed to get back on their feet, the safety of GCLS lawyers working in the region had to be prioritised. Additional funding from the Department of Justice Community and Safety (DJCS) made a real difference for GCLS staff to complete the work they were still undertaking many months after the bushfires stopped burning.

“I broke down recently on my way out to Errinundra and the Snowy communities. It gives me peace of mind that I can now travel in the SUV that we have been able to lease with the funding from DJCS. It can easily manage off-road driving and has a larger carrying capacity, which is great for when I am doing outreach – I can easily transport a gazebo, a table, chairs, pamphlets and the paperwork I need.”

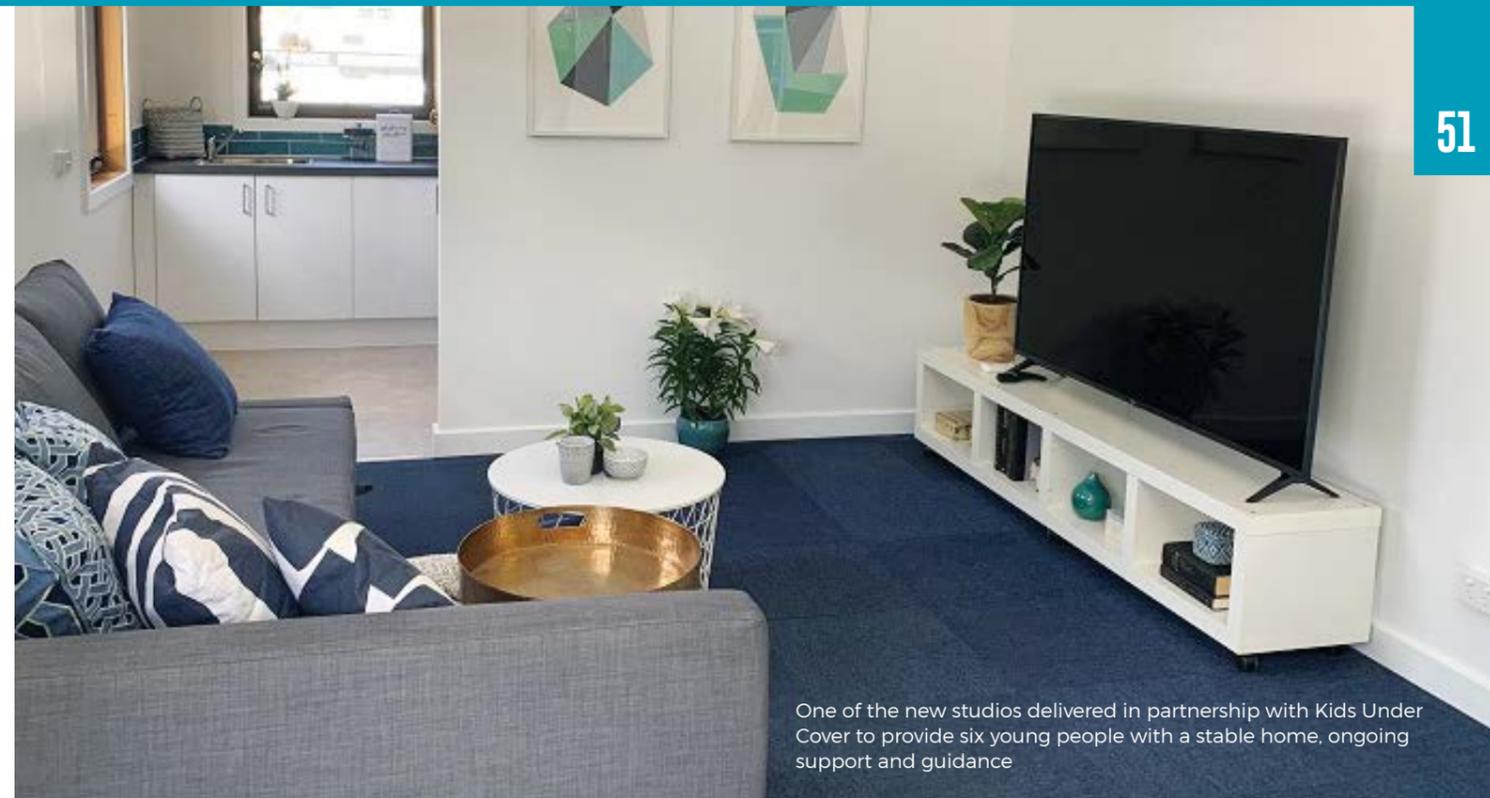


Alongside the bushfire financial counselling team and Bushfire Recovery Victoria, GCLS continued to visit communities within the East Gippsland Shire Council during the 2020/21 financial year that still needed support to continue rebuilding. The team will provide educational sessions about insurance, wills, power of attorneys, intervention orders and advance care directives. There will also be information available about fencing, planning law and tenancy.

GCLS wants to extend a special thanks to community lawyers Simone Elias and Taylah Alanis who have worked tirelessly with the communities in East Gippsland since the summer bushfires of 2019/20. Simone and Taylah have gone above and beyond to support Gippslanders to rebuild their lives over the past 18 months, and are funded to continue this work until mid-2022.



OVER THE LAST YEAR 1,181 CLIENTS IN NEED OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH THE GIPPSLAND COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE.



One of the new studios delivered in partnership with Kids Under Cover to provide six young people with a stable home, ongoing support and guidance

VILLAGE 21



“Places like Village 21 give people like me a place to stay and study and learn and go out into the future – to get back on your feet over the next few years. It’s a really great place for young people to come, learn and live life.” – Kiren, Village 21 resident

18-year-old Kiren spent the majority of his life bouncing between different foster care homes. When Village 21 launched, Kiren was one of the first young people to move in. For the month before that, he had been sleeping on a friend’s couch.

Village 21 is a \$1.2 million partnership between Anglicare Victoria and Kids Under Cover which provides housing and support to young people leaving state care, giving them a positive start to their adult lives.

Situated in Melbourne’s north, Village 21 provides accommodation for six young people aged 18 to 21 and two mentors who share a communal kitchen, living, dining and laundry areas.

Safe and secure housing allows the young people to grow and reach a level of maturity where they are able to comfortably move out into independent living.

“I’m really looking forward to seeing the impact Village 21 will have on these young and important lives. These types of models provide the feel of a small community to help young people flourish,” said Anglicare Victoria CEO Paul McDonald.

“This wonderful partnership between Anglicare Victoria and Kids Under Cover is not just about housing. We understand the fundamental importance of housing, but it’s also about the access to many services to support young people through their transition from out-of-home care (OoHC) to independent living.”

Village 21 was officially launched in December 2020 by Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne. The City of Darebin helped to find a suitable location for the project.



SCAN HERE
To watch the 2020 Village 21 launch, in partnership with Kids Under Cover