

As the threat of fires subsides our focus turns to recovery and comeback. Whilst recognising that many communities are still dealing with the immediate aftermath of the fires, other areas are ready and willing to embrace the return of visitors to the region. Tourism North East continues to balance the need for sensitivity and support with a forward facing marketing and industry development outlook.

### Appointment of new CEO

The Board of Tourism North East has appointed a new CEO, Bess Nolan-Cook. Ms Nolan-Cook has a strong background in brand, marketing and communications and a successful history in complex stakeholder engagement.

On behalf of the Board, Chair Mr Ross Passalacqua said, "The Board is delighted to welcome Bess to TNE. She has the skills, experience, and passion for the High Country to continue growing tourism as a key economic driver in the region."

Ms Nolan-Cook takes up the new role on 16 March 2020.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BUSHFIRE IMPACTED BUSINESSES

#### Regional Events Fund Bushfire Recovery Round / Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grants

Two new funding streams have been announced by state and Federal government this month.

- The Regional Events Fund - Bushfire Recovery is open now for events in bushfire impacted regions.
- The Bushfire Recovery Tourism Grants will support events, concerts, festivals and visitor attractions.

In the first instance contact TNE for information on criteria and eligibility on 03 5728 2773 or [info@tourismnortheast.com.au](mailto:info@tourismnortheast.com.au).

#### Small business concessional loan support

Applications are now open for concessional loans of up to \$500,000 to support small business, primary producers and non-profit organisations impacted by the Victorian bushfires.

[Rural Finance](https://www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/victorian-bushfires-2019-2020-concessional-loans) will administer these loans. Affected entities can now apply through their website: <https://www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/victorian-bushfires-2019-2020-concessional-loans>.

These loans are for entities which have suffered significant damage to their assets and/or a significant loss of income as a direct result of the fires.



### TOURISM NORTH EAST RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

#### State and local government advocacy

Senior staff have been meeting regularly with State and local government representatives to advocate for support and financial assistance for the tourism industry in the region. The impacts of the fires on the High Country economy has been widely acknowledged. Meetings have included:

- Regional Tourism Manager and CEO, Visit Victoria
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Regional Development Victoria
- Ken Lay, Bushfire Risk Victoria
- Chief of Staff for Minister for Tourism, Martin Pakula
- Minister for Tourism, Martin Pakula
- Member for Benambra, Bill Tilley
- The Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, Adem Somayurek
- State Member for Eildon, Cindy McLeish
- Federal Member for Indi, Helen Haines
- Department of Jobs, Innovation and Trade

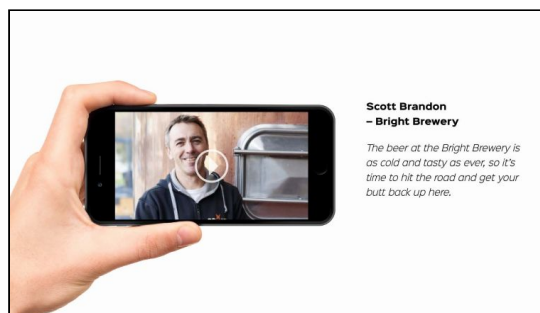
#### Tourism North East regional marketing campaign - Get Your Butt Back Up Here!

Tourism North East will shortly launch a new marketing campaign, with the cheeky (get it?!) title, 'Get Your Butt Back Up Here'. The campaign will feature a series of North East personalities encouraging the audience to get their butt back to the High Country. Filming will commence next week across the region, and the campaign will be executed across digital and social media channels.



## Get Your Butt Back Up Here!

The campaign is highly tactical, designed to drive immediate visitation. The cheeky tagline is intended to grab attention and create cut-through in a cluttered market.



## Visit Victoria

TNE continues to work closely with Visit Victoria on a number of initiatives and opportunities to promote the High Country within their activities, which includes their 'A short stay goes a long way' marketing campaign.



### Key activity:

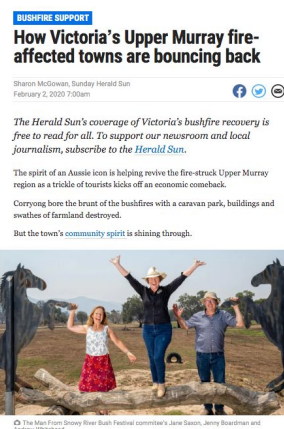
- Visit Victoria's social media team visited the region for two days w/c 3 Feb, posting a series of Instagram stories to the @visitmelbourne page (744K+ followers) of food and wine venues in King Valley, Milawa, Beechworth and Rutherglen.
- The High Country continues to benefit from Visit Victoria's marketing activity, with inclusions across paid social media, television, a range of digital channels plus support to promote upcoming events, and a number of media opportunities as outlined previously in this document.



## Public relations / confirmed media activities

TNE has been maximising opportunities presented by regional, state and national media in response to the bushfire crisis. We have had staff members working closely with a number of media outlets and have secured significant exposure as a result. High-profile media includes:

- Channel 9's 'Today Show' doing live crosses from Bright and Beechworth, Mansfield and Corryong/Towong
- Channel 9's 'Postcards' running two special segments coming from Beechworth & Bright, highlighting local businesses & experiences
- News Ltd publications of stories featuring High Country businesses, events, experiences
- The Age Good Food in region with a number of pieces planned including a Mansfield, King Valley, Milawa, Myrtleford, Bright, Mt Beauty faml with Dani Valent in March
- Roadtrip for Good adding a full High Country itinerary to their site, as well as a King Valley Guide.
- Famil itinerary for Walk writer, Craig Sheather for post-bushfire/recovery stories for Australian Geographic, Great Walks, Out There magazine, House of Wellness. His itinerary covered Yackandandah, Myrtleford, Harrietville, Bright, Milawa, King Valley, Mansfield.
- PR campaign support provided for High Country Comeback in Melbourne on 2 February
- Media release devised & distributed for the #RollOnBack Ride High Country Campaign, with subsequent coverage across cycling and general news media including WIN TV news interview with Eddie Wilson
- Ongoing PR support provided to Visit Victoria requests for information/images/itinerary support for in-region media visits, including upcoming Nine Weather crosses and 3AW Breakfast team live broadcasts from locations around the region
- Distributed a media release to national/metro media contacts on behalf of the Bright Adventure Co to assist with their bushfire recovery messaging. A p.9 pic & story appeared in Herald Sun Friday 21 Feb as a result in print and online



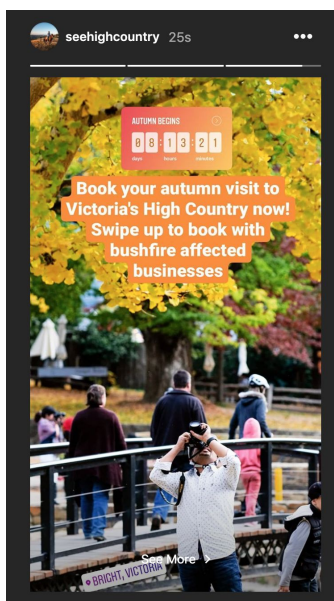


## TNE DESTINATION AND PILLAR MARKETING

### Tourism North East social media channels

TNE is running an autumn social media campaign, highlighting the unique and beautiful seasonal colours in the region as a great reason to come and visit now.

To benefit from this campaign and subsequent web traffic TNE recommends operators have their ATDW listings renewed and updated. If you need a hand with this contact [info@tourismnortheast.com.au](mailto:info@tourismnortheast.com.au)



### Feast High Country

TNE will have two key campaign streams in market during autumn for the food and drink pillar under the Feast High Country brand. This includes key content partnerships highlighting the food offering across the region, which will be live on Broadsheet, Delicious Magazine (digital) and social media. In addition, a campaign targeting the wine enthusiast market will be live from May through to July across a range of channels.



### Ride High Country

The Ride High Country marketing campaign was placed on hold following the fires and where possible all media activity stopped.

A new campaign, launching in early March under the banner #RollOnBack, will be placed across out of home, digital and print. The new TVC has been running via YouTube and social media channels.



The new campaign encourages visitors to return to the High Country across the cooler autumn months.

We also produced in-broadcast content for international and national broadcasts featuring #rollonback messaging, aired during the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Race Race and the Jayco Herald Sun Tour, featuring RHC ambassador Paul van der Ploeg and the international voice of cycling Matt Keenan.

### Message from Acting CEO, Sarah Pilgrim

The past few weeks have been a whirlwind for all in the region. I have spent time with a number of business operators and community members and am constantly amazed by the sense of positivity and optimism our region generates.

Whilst there is no attempt to hide the long-term impact the fires have had not only physically and economically but emotionally as well, the overwhelming spirit is of looking forward to the future.

Recovery will be a long road. There are no easy fixes, and support networks can be hard to negotiate. At Tourism North East we are endeavouring to share this journey with industry, and where possible help provide support and assistance in recovery.

I thank everyone for their support of our activities over this time and look forward to watching our region once again grow and prosper.

Best wishes,

**Sarah Pilgrim**  
**Acting CEO**