

# Wye River Mini Forum 2 Nov 2014

---

Over 30 people attended the first Wye River Separation Creek Progress Association (PA) mini forum at the local CFA building.

## **The purpose was to address the question - 'Is Wye River ready for summer?'**

### **Local CFA**

The CFA captain Roy Moriarty declared the local CFA is in good shape with an active local group, 4 new volunteers in training for the fire season, and approval for a new truck later next year. Burn-off restrictions are in effect from 17 November, but individual permits are available after that date.

### **Regional fire**

David Rourke, the DEPI Otway district manager, explained how there is a State-wide program of ongoing preventative burns aimed at halving overall fire risk, over a 4-year planning perspective. The sector from Kennett River to Torquay presents very high fire risk.

A network of tracks has been installed to allow control of a burn on the large private land (Donlevy Fitzpatrick estate) when conditions are right, probably next Autumn.

The regional [Strategic bushfire management plan](#) is available on the Progress Association [website](#).

David separately arranged for Dr Juliet le Feuvre from the Progress Association to attend a 'Bushfire Preparedness' workshop the following day, and Juliet is developing a follow up workshop for locals in March 2015 to understand regeneration aspects after fire.

David explained that there is large-scale coordination between agencies when a fire threatens, based in an incident centre in Colac. The local fire folks are kept in the loop and are critical resources with local knowledge.

### **Mobiles network**

Bill Mundy from Telstra (GM SW, Telstra Countrywide) acknowledged a long outage of the local mobile and copper network earlier in the year. Telstra have taken steps to minimise future outages with a program of network preparedness. There are now increased battery reserves in the exchange, and emergency generators have been located in the region closer to Wye River.

If a fire threatens, or if there is a long power outage, Telstra staff at monitoring centres will arrange for a generator to be brought in quickly, and if roads are closed a helicopter will fly in a generator.

The network has also been upgraded to cope with summer peaks and the new 4G system is running many times faster than the old 3G system. A new (700Mh) spectrum will further increase mobile capacity with better broadband speeds and digital TV reception.

### **Paddy's Path**

Gary McPike (Exec Officer) Otway Coast Committee explained that DEPI have engaged an experienced contractor to fix Paddy's Path. The path will be realigned around a bad existing landslip, once a Planning permit is approved by the shire.

A fact sheet showing the new alignment was provided to all present. There was unanimous support for the proposal and urging COS to expedite a planning permit to enable completion of the works before the peak season, which the contractor subsequently confirmed can be done within 2 weeks. Anyone interested was invited to an onsite meeting the following day with DEPI experts.

Gary also explained upgrades being installed for the foreshore camping ground and fixing of vandalised foreshore tables before summer.

### **Shire Matters**

Cr Michael Delahunty attended from Colac Otway Shire. He explained that other shire councillors and senior managers were at a 'listening session' arranged at an identical time at Lavers Hill. COS representatives are expected to attend the annual Wye community meeting on 18 January 2015.

### **Parking**

Rex Brown (President of PA) read an update from Doug McNeil from the shire about parking. The shire is investigating concerns raised by the PA, is considering a trial, and has received several submissions. It will consider a way forward later in the week of 3 November.

### **Harrington Park**

Key parts of the update about shire Harrington Park that was published in the PA newsletter were read, including December completion date and recent tree removal due to root damage. The park project remains a divisive issue for the community. Cr Delahunty explained he is pushing for an examination of what happened and why.

### **Bushfire Management Overlay**

There was continuing uncertainty as to the application by COS of the government's new rules on BMOs.

### **Estuary Watch**

Dr LeFeuvre introduced members of the newly formed volunteer group who will be taking measurements of Wye River estuary health.