

To all of our wonderful Wye River and Separation Creek Community

This is a joint message from the Brigade and Auxiliary!

All is not lost, Wye and Sep are still here. It might not look the same but the spirit is still here - as is the love!

No one has died and there have been only a few slight injuries to some firefighters. It's fantastic!

Our hearts go out to all who lost their houses. Rest assured Wye /Sep is waiting for you to come and enjoy when she is safe and ready to receive you.

A huge hug to the ten local families who have lost their homes. They are Jany and Lola, David "Tuck", Paddy and Lorraine, Yvonne, Katie, Ben and Anne, Lesley and Tony, Sherryl, Sonja and Gary, Megan and Ziggy, and Libby and her husband and baby Tom.

We are all with you, you have all our support, love, prayers and strength, we are here to help in any way we can.

On behalf of all of us we wish to THANK

- **Our Fire fighters!**

What a wonderful brigade we have here in our little townships! We may be small but we are BIG!!! The job you have all done is fantastic! All that training and planning was so worth it. We hear it went like clockwork which is a credit to Roy and the entire brigade. We don't want to name anyone in particular because everyone was fantastic. Thank you Thank you! We're just sorry that the whole crew was not on the front page of the Herald Sun!!! Great photo! Roy will be joining Actor's Equity soon! And how about him shunning the Premier during TV interview to answer a call from Helen!

- **The Unsung heroes!** What about the band of people who stayed and then worked flat out in the Surf Club looking after the hundreds of fire fighters. Di and Bernie were the 'Masterchefs', Chris as always was her bubbly self and with Mary, Katrina, who with their great sense of humor worked tirelessly. We've left the best till last - Karyn, Juna and Pema ran everywhere, pulling more than their weight at all times. What a great team. I know that on one day they looked after more than 250 hungry firefighters. On the first day, by themselves, they managed to cater for hundreds with food they sourced by raiding caravans, as the 'official' food couldn't get through until evening! They are the real unsung heroes. Laura, Simon came in the next day and have proven themselves as great support A New 'Shift' of Volunteers are now replacing these exhausted bodies.

- **The Community Volunteers!** What a great system that was set up! We had the entire gear ready; everyone working has on the Community Volunteers tabards, which gives them instant recognition, respect and formality. Fantastic Pete for all your hard work in the beginning.
- **The Auxiliary!** If it weren't for the Auxiliary and all the money we raise we wouldn't have had the equipment we needed to be such an efficient and successful brigade. From such a small community it's AMAZING! XXXX
- **The Community!** What about the wonderful community. When people were told to leave everyone upped and left! Leaving Christmas lunches on tables and in fridges. Their fire plans were activated! By everyone leaving, it made the work of the Brigade so much easier. They were able to go up into the hills to put out spot fires where possible after the front had been through and save so many more houses. Since then, there have been so many offers of local accommodation, both homes and caravans to those of us made temporarily 'homeless' by the fire.
- **The Surf Club,** What a great facility our little community has. From the very beginning they have opened their doors to protect the people during the fire front. Now it is the focal social feeding area of the whole area and with the new kitchen everything is working brilliantly.
- **Other Brigades!** Our brigade is fantastic but also a huge thankyou to all the volunteers who came from brigades all over the state to help out. Hundreds are giving up their Christmas and holidays to help save our beloved area. XXX
- **DELWP** There are hundreds of Green-clad fire fighters from DELWP. They also have given up their Christmas and holidays. They have worked tirelessly fighting the fire, cutting down trees and, with Powercorp guys, making Wye and Sep as safe as possible.
- **Pilots!** While all this is happening on the ground there are helicopters and planes flying overhead. The pilots are amazing! They can 'bomb' their water loads with such incredible accuracy. And watching them carrying those huge buckets of water swinging underneath as they fly right into the heat and winds of the fire - fantastic.
- **Top Dogs!** Over seeing all of this is the 'Top Dogs' from CFA, DELWP, Colac Otway Shire, Red Cross, ambulance, medicos, Telstra, Vic Roads, Police, Emergency Management Victoria, Pilots and dozer drivers and hundreds of volunteers. Food for the masses just appears, as do all the essentials down to loo paper! They all have our interests at heart and are trying so hard to get the fire under control. They bought people who have lost their homes come back to prepare them and now are making it safe for us all to come back.

That is a pretty big Thank you list but we mean every little bit.

Thank you Thank you Thank you.

All these bodies, including our fantastic brigade are now working tirelessly to protect Kennett River and Grey River. This fire is still going. And the weather is getting hotter! Fingers crossed everyone.... even a rain dance would be good!

Thank you.

As a lot of you know this Wednesday was to be the lolly-bagging and final fete planning meeting.

Surprise, Surprise - IT'S CANCELLED!!!

The Fete on the 6th January has been postponed! Keep in tune!

If we are allowed to come back into town by the 6th January, keep the morning free as we might organize a Community picnic, get together etc. This will depend on so many issues not the least of which will be when we can return to WYE RIVER and SEPARATION CREEK---- HOME!! Stay tuned!

Lets all keep our fingers crossed that in the next few days the fire can be contained so Kennett, Wongarra and Lorne are safe.

Pray for RAIN!

The fire is not yet out!!

A Happy safe NEW YEAR with NO fires to you all.

Sincerely

Carolyn - Brigade Secretary and Yvonne – Auxiliary Secretary