

## **Wye River Separation Creek Progress Association AGM**

**17 January 2016**

### Welcome & Acknowledgements

Welcome to the annual general meeting of the Wye River & Separation Creek Progress Association.

I am chairing this meeting in the absence of our President Juliet Le Feuvre, who sends her apologies due to a long-standing overseas travel commitment.

We welcome special guests to our meeting and the Community Forum: Lisa Neville, Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Water; Jane Garrett, Minister for Emergency Services; Simon Ramsay MP, Member for Western District, who is attending today and representing Sarah Henderson, Federal member for Corangamite and Richard Riordan, State member for Polwarth;

Emergency Management Commissioner Craig Lapsley; the Mayor, CEO and Councillors of Colac Otway; and senior managers from support and services agencies.

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands in our region and pay our respects to their Elders both past and present and any here today.

### In Memoriam

It is customary to acknowledge – in memoriam – those we have lost from the community during the year:

Harry Dowd

Caroline Greene

Kate Lawson

Chris Lever

Eric Lewis

Derek Markham

### Challenge, Compassion & Resilience

This is a challenging time for our community and the Christmas Day fires and their aftermath have impacted dramatically on the lives and circumstances of many individuals and families. Many have lost much; and some have lost everything. They have the best wishes, prayers and support of the entire community.

At the meeting held here two weeks ago, Emergency Management Commissioner Craig Lapsley observed that the community of Wye and Sep was demonstrating both passion and compassion in the face of extreme adversity. It is part of what makes our townships special.

The Association has received many expressions of support. Last week, a young Sep Creek family sent a cheque for \$250 along with their annual subscription, as a statement of support and encouragement; and we will hear, through the Forum, of the plans for recovery and rebuilding in the challenging times ahead.

### The year in review

Following the adoption of new rules for our incorporated Association at last year's meeting, Consumer Affairs Victoria formally confirmed the changes.

The Committee is classifying and scanning the historical records of the Association, dating back to the sixties, that have been kept by former President David Henshall and we record our appreciation of his dedication.

The Committee met eight times during the year and your Association has continued to engage directly and constructively with external stakeholders and agencies, including Colac Otway Shire, Otway Coast Commission, Telstra, Department of Water Environment Land & Planning and VicRoads. We record our appreciation of their reciprocity, even if we don't always agree or secure the particular outcome we seek.

We publish the e-link to Colac Otway Shire on our website, and provide monthly summaries of Council's agendas and meetings, with particular focus on issues affecting Wye, Sep and Kennett River.

Colac Otway Shire CEO Sue Wilkinson attended our meeting in June where we canvassed openly and frankly issues including high season parking congestion at Wye River; maintenance and re-vegetation of Harrington Park; improved communication with OCC and foreshore caravan park users; allocation of capex funds to specific safety works and improvements; and the quantum and application of rates levied on Wye and Sep properties.

Brydon King and Jonathan Brett attended our meeting in September to discuss our submissions to Council on the shire's wastewater management plan.

We raised our strong concerns about progress on the River Walk with Council, the Big 4 park operators and the OCC. It is a matter of extreme regret that the principal parties to the negotiations failed to reach agreement on the alignment and construction of the River Walk, resulting in the forfeiture of allocated funds for the project from Regional Development Victoria.

The Progress Association views the River Walk as an item of unfinished business for 2016. As stated on our website, we will continue to agitate for the Walk to be clearly delineated, consistent with the terms of the commercial lease, so the community has unobstructed access to the river and the riverbanks.

### Re-construction & Recovery

We will hear about plans and strategies for the post-fire re-construction and recovery during the Forum. Suffice to say at this point that the Progress Association stands ready and able to contribute, in whatever capacity is useful and productive, to the tasks ahead.

Ian Angus

Vice-President

### **Questions from the floor**

Thankyou for the PA information & communication

Separation Creek bridge – Will that still happen? – Yes - referred to the Vic Roads Representative at the Forum

Wye River walk – Strong community support for the walk, will keep pushing for this in 2016

State of the Playground – PA will continue discussions with Otway Coast Committee

When will we discuss the recovery group? – Craig Lapsley will outline what is happening at the forum

Will the PA be the coordinating point for the issues? - PA will be a coordinating point – PA will be there to promote the well-being of the community, along with other organisations, will articulate concerns, in touch with COS and use the website as an active forum to communicate issues.

Will continue to use the resources, contacts and methods of communication to maintain the role of the PA

The minutes of the meeting will be posted to the website

Proceedings of the community forum will be recorded for podcast, not broadcast. Thank you to the OCR FM.

Communication on recovery for coming weeks and months? PA has continued to use website and distribution list and refer to website. Weeks and times ahead will continue to do that. Recovery forum will be able to answer many of the questions.

For people without social media, internet or email – can they have hard copy? Yes. Hard copies to be available at the shop

## Community Forum

Debra Hocking - Chairperson: Deb welcomed everyone to the Forum and introduced herself to the meeting. In her introductory comments Deb noted:

- Today is happening in a time of crisis for Wye River and Separation Creek.
- We all recognise the concern and pain in the community. There will be time for questions. For individual issues there are sheets circulating for you to put your questions and these will be collected and the questions answered by the relevant person.
- We know there are many questions. We will hear the presentations first then make sure there is time to answer as many questions as possible from the relevant spokesperson.
- There is strong support across the community for the recovery process and we want to move to this as soon as possible. This has been a physical assault on our community.

Acknowledgement of attendees

Simon Ramsay MLC

Rob Dedman DHHS (Health)

Helen Vaughan & Peter Galvin – Department Environment Land water Protection (DELWP)

Jessica Freame & Will Cox - Emergency Management Victoria

Welcome to the Hon Lisa Neville – Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water and Jane Garrett – Emergency Services Minister. Both Ministers have responsibility for assisting the recovery process and we are pleased to welcome them to the forum.

Press and media have been requested to wait outside and will not attend the forum. The forum is being recorded and podcast.

We have arranged 3 note takers - Yvonne Sheppard, Matt Jackman and Sandy Forbes

### **Hon Lisa Neville – Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Water**

“This is an important opportunity to be back in Wye River and to talk with all of you. Although I have been here in the last couple of weeks it is the first opportunity for me to talk with everyone.” Minister Neville acknowledged what a difficult period of time this has been and indicated government is here to walk beside you. Both Ministers aim to work through the issues and make the rebuilding as easy as possible

Minister Neville commented on the story in the Age in relation to the decision-making of fire agencies. She commented that she would not address that issue but Craig Lapsley will take us through the process.

“Government announcements will be made this week. We will make announcements to assist the recovery and how we will make that easier. There will be packages that will assist to make the recovery process easier. Whatever is needed, we are here to work with you.

Parks Victoria and DELWP staff are here to answer questions on how they are proceeding to extinguish the fire.

Announcements will be made formally on Monday by the Acting Premier.”

### **Summary of the announcement:**

- “Government will be establishing a One stop shop – Environment Protection Authority, simplified planning permit process, no third party appeals. The starting point is that everyone has a right to rebuild. We are organising the geotechnical study, waste water, and septic assessments for everyone. This has already started and you will have the assessments as soon as possible. We want people to be able to get back into their homes as quickly as possible.
- Starting point is to make it as easy as possible to organise all the information for the rebuild. This includes the bushfire assessment levels (BAL), understanding each site and what you need to do, and there will be an assistance fund to help people through the planning permit processes. All through the one stop shop system.
- There will be financial support for business and community groups (CFA, SLSC etc.) that have suffered financial loss due to the fire.
- Grants will be available to make projects happen. Assistance with the replenishment of the Otway Coast Committee Assets, Big 4 and the playground.
- There will be funding to repair and replace the pipes and extraction pumps which provide water to businesses and amenities. Safe water is critical for the community and easy access to water is critical for the CFA.
- There will be funding to repair and re-open Paddy’s path
- Funding to restore foreshore camping ground amenities.
- Program to support tourism and amenities
- There will be funds for the clean-up. Grocon will be contracted for the whole area and bring their experience to this task. They will employ local contractors as much as possible. Individuals can still do their own clean ups if they wish. Grocon will come in and deal with the asbestos and the trees and other hazards. There will be some restrictions to allow the clean-up to occur.
- Funding will be a mix of Commonwealth, State and insurance funding. There is provision for individual hardship.
- Peter Galvin here to help on an individual basis and will report back to Federal Government.
- Barwon Water will help restore water quality through COS who are arranging for the roof and tank cleaning by local tradies.

The One stop shop approach is an established task force with senior staff for all the departments involved to make sure what we need to do and how that happens – water, geography of the land and not just the day to day issues.

Details of the package will be released during the week.”

Minister Neville again thanked everyone for having the Ministers at the meeting, and reiterated that their role is to work through all the issues and make recovery as simple as possible. She wished to pay tribute to the community and acknowledged the full extent of losses, the response and compassion, and can feel that. She paid tribute to community’s strength and resilience.

### **Cr. Frank Buchanan, Mayor Colac Otway Shire**

Thanked everyone for the invitation and paid tribute to the community. The Mayor acknowledged the presence of other Council members Stephen Hart, Michael Delahunty, Brian Crook, Ministers Garrett and Neville, and Sue Wilkinson, CEO Colac Otway Shire (COS). The community has come a long way , COS is here to help to make the recovery as painless and re-build as quick as possible

The Christmas Day fire erupted into something that affected everybody and Mayors from all over Australia have contacted him with their support.

The Mayor acknowledged the spontaneous support from all the staff of COS – all the managers streamed in and all were on board so quickly - many returning from holidays - so that they could assist.

The Mayor said that COS will be assisting the community all the way. He hopes that we can have a productive partnership in the recovery.

**Announcements:**

- On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January Council will meet in Apollo Bay to consider rate relief for people who have lost their homes, and those unable to access their houses. The meeting will be held at the Senior Citizens Centre at 4 pm.
- A formal Community Recovery Committee is being established: The members will be COS Mayor, CEO - Sue Wilkinson and Craig Lapsley. Nominations from community members are being requested and encouraged. Nomination forms are available today and on the COS website. This is a coordinated process.
- Streamlined regulatory processes: there needs to be a clear way to deal with the process for permits, and the One stop shop will be the way to go through this.
- Shire Office in Apollo Bay will be open for the next 12 months to provide assistance for the recovery process.

The Mayor thanked the Progress Association for the role they have taken and its contribution to what has been done.

**Craig Lapsley- Emergency Services Commissioner**

The health and wellbeing of everyone is the most important thing for all of us. Craig commented that he knew people might be feeling angry but he encouraged people to look after each other and not to be angry with one another.

EMV is supported by the State. Ministers Garrett and Neville have huge support within Government and the Opposition. It is not about politics, it is about getting it right for people.

“We are all looking for the right outcome for the community.

Four things are going to be important:

- Leadership
- Accountability
- Agility
- Liveability

Other communities want to know how Wye managed. They will be looking to learn from our experience. The local CFA and Community Volunteers had excellent planning in place with a terrific outcome on the day. There were no deaths in this community and that is a great outcome. We now have the opportunity to set the example of an excellent recovery process. We are going to show how good we are at the next stage too.”

The community needs to be good to one another, do the hard yards to make it work and get it right. Craig wants to remove the fences. The community needs to stick together. There is a great vibe in the town.

Health & well-being is critical, there will be mental issues, the community needs to get through it together.

Community input is critical. Craig Lapsley had requested that a small community committee be formed to get things rolling and to start things happening. They have done this and things are happening. You will see tanks turning up to supply drinking water for instance.

The Mayor has talked about the establishment of an overall Recovery Committee.

There will be a meeting in Melbourne on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January for people who live in Melbourne and not able to be here today. Colac Otway Shire has advised that 'the forum will be held at Treasury Theatre, Lower Plaza, 1 Macarthur Street, East Melbourne on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January, and will run from 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm. Refreshments will be provided.'

Communication post-emergency is everything. An external expert has been appointed to help get the communication right and how to use all forms and modes of communication including social media and other channels. We have a very intelligent community that can build on strengths.

### **Comments on the fire:**

Craig commented that he was annoyed this week with the United Firefighters Union (UFU), which put out very destructive information. Targeted at Craig and the Minister but it is impacting on all of us.

The UFU had no representation on the fire ground.

Detailed commentary on the fire:

Craig placed a number of maps showing the history of the fire for all to view. From the first 2 lightning strikes up until very recently. The maps show where the fires moved. Every other option up until the 22nd December had been exhausted with fire management option moved to State level. Small pockets of land were approved to be burnt to put out the fire. Very hard calls. He commented "Damned if you do and damned if you do not".

By December 24 Craig attended the site and it was clear that they driven the fire to a point where they could put out the little spots but could not put one bit out in the bottom of the gorge near where the fire had started. Xmas morning was hot very early, 31 degrees by 10am The fire spotted in three locations, crowned and escaped into unburnt country. Photographs from a helicopter show how the fire travelled. Spot fires were in the wrong place and firefighters knew they could not get to them. It was not the burnt area that got away.

Minister Garrett has requested an inquiry, and a report will be put out on the detection of the lightning strike, control strategy and warnings, management and engagement plans of the events from 19-25 December. Unfair reports in the media cause people harm and are no good for the community.

Last week there was still concern about the fire running.

There is still a lot of heat in the fire. The fire hasn't moved much since 26<sup>th</sup> December. There are 270 people out in the bush clearing tracks to contain the fire, rather than using any fire to hold it in. We do not want a northerly wind turning it back into Kennett. 6kms of water piping has been laid, 20 days into the fire.

The Controller's date for containment is 30<sup>th</sup> January – as we cycle into hot weather we will need to monitor.

## **The forum then moved to Questions**

### **Question: Response required on truth behind the urban myth that people won't be able to re-build**

#### **Sue Wilkinson CEO, Colac Otway Council**

The intention is to assist people to rebuild as quickly and simply as possible. That is the intention of the One stop shop. Any gaps in the system will be identified and filled. The State response is the best she has seen.

#### **Minister Neville**

- The One stop shop will be getting up and running in Wye, Apollo Bay, and Melbourne within the week. Colac office can also be used
- There is a house by house geotechnical assessment taking place now. And assessments of septic tanks.
- The assumption is that you will be entitled to a planning permit.
- Rebuild is likely – only 3% rejected across the whole State – our aim is to make it possible. Sue commented that the standards that will apply are those set down by the Royal Commission into the Black Saturday fires. We cannot compromise the standards from the Royal Commission.
- FZ is the highest BAL rating. If that is the rating, then following the code will get the tick.
- Government architect to do some examples of beach houses that will fit into this community
- Government is working with the insurance companies and they will be requested to continue to support the community

Question: What about existing houses that do not meet the planning overlay requirements?

Minister Neville: Follow the rules and you will get the tick to proceed.

Question – (Andrew Dunn) - Is there any suggestion of changes to the 2009 rules? Will Government review the rules and delay the rebuilding process?

Minister Neville: No. The current rules will apply. We do not want to delay the rebuilding but will want to use new technology that can assist in meeting conditions. The One stop shop – driven by Council and State- is aimed to make this as simple as possible

Question: Does Council have the capacity to do the approvals?

The Regional Director DELWP Helen Vaughan will work closely with COS and get the planning happening. Additional resources have been provided to COS to assist the process. Starting point is a planning permit. No VCAT, no third party appeals

Question: (Stephen Rae)

When will those with fenced off houses know what is happening?

Craig: Process nearly done – trees still the issue, by the end of this week each of those property owners will get a call from the Shire with a report and a decision. Do not know all the answers yet.

The fence was originally put up for safety and security. The process is very comprehensive – if not able to get in, then need to work on how to remove the hazard as quickly as possible. Aim is to get back in. We will work with each owner to let them know.

Question: (Mark Stokes) *(Mark doesn't live up there, was asking on behalf of friends who do.)*

Are property owners on 'landslip hill' going to be able to rebuild? Craig: Don't know. Process has to run. Need the geotechnical reports to be complete.

Minister Neville: One on one discussion promised, through the One stop shop as a single point of contact, and there will be an individual management approach. Office of experts that can find answers

If unable to rebuild will there be compensation? Craig: We are not there yet and will need to be considered. Not the focus at this point. Aim is to re-build, not compensate. Very rare to buy back land.

Sue Wilkinson:

The regulatory landscape is really complex. It is difficult to comply here. The approach is to facilitate the community to get back in. There is discussion every day. We will do our best to simplify the regulations through a suite of solutions for a seamless process to re-build. The State is committed to solutions for each of the complexities street by street. The goal is to be more effective in the approval process. To be as agile and responsive as we can.

COS is currently talking to an inner metro Council that will allow us to share counter space so the process can happen in Melbourne for people who live there.

Question: (Sherryl Smith) If our blocks are subject to landslip will there be provision for buy back?

Minister Neville: It is early days and not yet discussed. We will do the assessments first and would only look at this option if not possible to resolve.

Ancillary costs for planning permission will be eligible for assistance. Geotechnical work will be done, septic will be done, program from DELWP for a grant for planning process being worked through the One stop shop. Council will be charging currently developing fees. Will be in the hands of COS – State will fund some things. The Minister undertook to have further discussions with COS.

Comment from Paul: The Wye Sep Recovery Group – interim group acknowledged and understand that intentions were good but felt that it was insensitive to the holiday house owners. Craig reiterated that he had asked them to do it quickly and was sure they would respond. Holiday house owners are a part of the community so let's think together.

Question: Grocon clearing – great contractors – worried about landslip. Will the existing foundations be treated carefully? Want to use the existing piers. Answer: Absolutely. Grocon have to be very careful.

Minister Neville: Grocon have experience and will access local expertise as part of the process.

Question: Ann Wilson – Maintaining driveways need to be considered in clean up

Answer: Grocon will assess property by property on best way to clear up each block.

Everyone was encouraged to use the call centre and record their individual questions..

**General reports:**

**Roy Moriarty , Captain CFA**

Roy commented that the CFA found that the timber retaining walls burnt which was hazardous for fire fighters. Perhaps we should replace them with concrete. He then moved to his report.

It had been an uneventful year until 19<sup>th</sup> December. The CFA responds to many emergencies in the area and has continued to assist in putting out trees on fire, attending accidents and assisting ambulances. Normal life goes on

He commented that the brand new truck did a mighty job. It was a fantastic acquisition. Lois, the slip-on vehicle is in the process of being replaced. The other existing tanker is due to be replaced this year. Breathing apparatus training will commence in February and we will soon have 3 new trucks in the shed.

Roy thanked all the CFA volunteers. Some had to watch their own homes burn while they were fighting the fire, but everyone performed well. The room erupted into extended applause to show the appreciation of all.

Roy noted it was his 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary to Helen and thanked the partners and wives of all the fire fighters for their support. He assured them that safety is always at the top of the list. Very tough time for them.

Only three houses were lost that could have been saved, all others lost were unsaveable.

Appreciative of this whole community, the teams that were brought in. Great support. Very well organised and very thankful for all that assisted.

### **Mark Koliba Vic Roads**

GOR upgrade program – Federal plus State have committed \$25 million to upgrade the GOR, including to rebuild and replace bridges and culverts damaged. Assets have deteriorated over time. This is an ongoing program and timely to re-engage to look at some local priorities. A lot of work to do. Only a year into the five-year program, so people should expect to see a lot more activity.

Vic Roads will deal with more high risk landslip and rock fall. The Separation Creek bridge contract has already been signed. They have paused works over summer and will be back in February replacing the bridge.

Vic Roads are very mindful to minimize disruption.

### **Jessica Freame Emergency Management Victoria**

Jess commented that the meeting had focussed on the rebuild and practical side of things. She wanted to note that this is very traumatic for everyone. Whatever the reaction, it is a long journey. Take a breath. There are many emotions. It is a normal reaction to feel tense. The Victorian Council of Churches and Red Cross are in attendance at the meeting today and she encouraged people to make contact and to access counselling and dealing with the holistic support used. It has only been 3 weeks.

Please use services that are available and ask for help.

DHHS here today will support health services and the surge of need. Already working with Barwon Health to provide the support.

### **Carolyn Tatchell**

Carolyn acknowledged the generosity of many. Donations that have come from Lions and Spirit Foundation – hands-on help.

Minister Garrett: The giving has been exceptional. \$ from the Red Cross. Falls Festival \$ - part of the broader package.

Smaller groups – table reports to be added to the discussion.

Sherryl Smith commented on Wildlife. She requested that people put out plenty of water and to please feed the birds. Seed, chopped up apple and meat.

Question: What is the timetable for clean-up and property access?

Craig: Tip space availability will need to be coordinated. Complex difficult terrain. Potential that roads will be closed. Debris off the property – one of the parts of the contract and general waste. Commencement about 4 weeks away. Street by street. What does it mean? – significant disruption when it starts, but once commenced should be very quick – some absence will be required.

Question: What cost to the community? Answer: MOU with insurance Council – RACV the most policies. One coordinated approach.

Question: Refilling of tanks, can Barwon Water tell us?

Answer: Book through the Shire – Wellsy and Dave H2O are cleaning roofs and tanks . Using fresh water, starting to happen.

### **Public Health – Rod Dedman (DHHS)**

Public health risk of asbestos and water supply. Reinforce – people's health is paramount. Conservative from day 1. COS – contract to clean roofs, gutters and tanks. Minimal risk to the systems. Risk assessment still ongoing – a lot of the tank water is ok.

Specific issues will be addressed as soon as possible.

Email list for people who have lost their homes.

Question: Roads, and safety of roads? Answer: Retaining walls are really tricky. Some on public land and roadways and require assessment of damage. Retaining walls on private land – rethinking the materials adds to the cost.

Surfaces of the roads – will Council maintain?

Sue Wilkinson: Some of the roads are Council responsibility, others Vic roads. COS roads – impact of the clean-up is a big issue. COS will do an evaluation. Community Recovery Committee will have to advise. Will be difficult to do during re-building of houses.

Question: When can we get caravans and trailers out? Salvage is part of the contract for the clearing – will have the chance to get them out before Grocon get in to start cleaning up.

Relationship Manager at the One stop shop will be the contact point. Estimated four weeks before cleaning up will start. Likely at the start of March

Question: Andrew: Has 3 survey pegs left in situ. Will there be awareness about the survey pegs? – yes noted.

Question: Landslip management highly specialised – is COS using outside specialist? – Answer: Yes. COS is using external experts who are being funded by the State.

Comment:

Kennett River – thank you for the work to prepare and save Kennett.

Question: Dr Dominique Hes - Offer of assistance from Melbourne Uni – keep spirits up and keep the nature in mind.

Announcement:

Angus Greene and Sophia Lubczenko, along with Mark Stokes and Mike Brady are organising the benefit concert at the hotel on 30<sup>th</sup> January – Wye Sep band Together – 11 bands, charity auction, no fee to enter, donate during night. half the takings will be used for the benefit of our community.

Anyone wishing to donate some time to help would be most welcome.

The event is called Wye River Separation Creek Band Together and it will be a great day.

In closing the meeting Deb said:

Thank you for your respectful responses, we are grateful to everyone for their attendance and participation.

The Colac Otway Shire has catered for light refreshments and there will be an opportunity to mingle with guests.

## **Community Group & Agency Notes provided post meeting due bushfire recovery items discussion**

### **Otway Coast Committee – Anthony Alfrenko General Manager**

Thank you to the Progress Association for the invitation to the community meeting.

It was great to catch up with you all as we work through this difficult time for all

Points the Otway Coast Committee (OCC) would have covered is as per below:

- One Voice, one contact point:

The OCC has received a number of email's and phone calls regarding different pieces of infrastructure at Wye River

The OCC are more than happy to work with all parties but we feel that these requests and communication best go through the WRSCPA and we work directly with yourselves as you have a better voice to the community. Correspondence / communication will go through Juliet – President WRSCPA

- Wye River Walk:

This project is still a priority for the OCC and we are working with DELWP and other parties to have this project reinstated

We will arrange to notify and meet with WRSCPA as we progress discussion

- Paddy's Path:

This project has been identified by DELWP, COS and the State Government as a priority

We are unsure when the green light will be given to commence this work due to the are being surveyed and checked for landslip

- Playground:

I have obtained pricing for a new playground at Wye River and I have been in discussion with COS regarding funding for this project

As discussed after the community forum its fine for the OCC to install a new playground but what does the community want?

Therefore as requested could the WRSCPA conduct a survey to obtain Community consultation?

Together we can collate this information and progress accordingly

- Other Items:

The OCC have identified a number of other smaller improvement projects that we will undertake and progress throughout the year to improve the facilities at Wye River.

Some of these items have been identified by our Asset Register List as items either needing to be replaced or repaired such as, to name a few:

- o picnic tables
- o Fixing of pot holes at the Foreshore Caravan Park
- o Bin stands along the foreshore

The OCC look forward to working with the WRSCPA throughout the year to ensure the Community can get back on their feet quickly and promptly in 2016

We also want to ensure that both parties can provide a better result for the community as we open up communication lines to better inform, notify and keep the community abreast of items the OCC are working on.

In the meantime should you have any further queries please do not hesitate in contacting me at any time. Best Regards - Anthony

### **Otway Coast Tourism – Rex Brown**

We are a network of local tourism operators from Separation Creek to Wongarra, mainly accommodation providers. Our activities include sharing best practice and lobbying for tourism. Prior to the fire we shared ways to provide bushfire readiness information, emergency kits, fire app, etc. During the fire we were part of daily teleconferences with Incident Controllers as areas were evacuated and re-opened. We also forwarded updates to our tourism group. After the fire we have helped with access to contractors to rental properties.

Ongoing we will continue to lobby for promoting the local economy through tourism development, one of which may be better facilities at Kennett River.

Our AGM is 25 February, all tourism operators welcome – contact Rex for enquiries, 0408 006 992.

### **Wye to Wongarra Landcare – Rex Brown**

Under the name Wye Weed Warriors, we worked on attacking the worst weeds in the villages, and received a \$5,000 grant from Colac Otway Shire. After mapping weeds in the area, we removed the new infesting colonies and prepared a brochure for future information to landowners.

After the fire, we will monitor re-infestations eg Asparagus Fern and help provide information to the community about suitable species for replanting on slopes and fire exposed areas.

### **WYE/SEP RECOVERY GROUP – Peter Latham - Chairperson**

The Wye/Sep Recovery Group is an interim body, whose function is to identify community needs in the recovery process, from as many sources as possible.

The WSRG is in the process of collating, pricing and eventually prioritising those ideas, after seeking advice as to those which Council, Government or other Agencies may be able to partly or wholly fund them.

As that task progresses, certain projects will be referred to the Spirit Foundation, predominantly, but potentially other agencies, for funding.

Up to now, only a handful of projects have been agreed, as we believe they are in all the Community interest. Namely a major overhaul of the Surf Club's First Aid room, additional drinking water tanks near the CFA which could double for CFA tanker supply, a working fire pump in Kennett and generators for the CFA and the bunkhouse. These needs were exposed during the Christmas and New Year's Eve fires.

The work the Group is doing will continue, until the formalised Council Recovery Group is operational, and then handed over to them.

## WYE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE AUXILIARY

President: Christine Shaw

Secretary: Yvonne Sheppard

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### DEAR MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND THE WYE RIVER, SEPARATION CREEK, KENNETT RIVER COMMUNITY

On behalf of the Wye River Rural Fire Brigade Auxiliary, I am pleased to let you know that this year's Easter Fete is still planned for –

**Easter Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2016 – 10 am to 12 noon.**

We are going to need lots of help to make it our biggest and best fete ever, so –

#### **How can I help?**

1. Attend our fete
2. Donate quality items in good condition.
3. Volunteer your time

#### **What can I donate?**

- Auction items
- Designer, new or pre-loved clothing, linen, shoes, bags, jewellery etc.
- Handcrafts
- Electrical items – in working order - they are tested before sale
- Toys
- Toiletries
- Books
- Bric-a-brac (must be in good condition)
- Home-made preserves, home-grown produce, cakes and baked goods.

#### **What can I do as a volunteer?**

- Assist with stalls set-up the day before
- Help sell raffle tickets the night before
- Help on the stalls and activities, and help pack up so the Brigade can have their Station back.

#### **What is our fundraising used for?**

What was found needed improving during the recent emergency, were the facilities at the Station. It needs to have a separate communications area, a dedicated meeting room and an ongoing training room. This is what our future fundraising will go towards achieving.

The Auxiliary is committed to raising funds to support our Brigade with the equipment they need to help keep our community safe. An example of this is the contribution we were able to make towards the additional tanker which was delivered earlier last year. Need we say more?

We are very grateful to those of you who have generously contributed in the past, and look forward to your continued support.

Do not hesitate to contact myself, or Yvonne. Christine Shaw