

# Community Recovery Newsletter

## Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY  
RECOVERY

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

8 FEBRUARY 2016

*This is a weekly newsletter issued by Colac Otway Shire to provide the community key updates about recovery following the fire.*



### Clean Up commences

Preparation for the clean-up has commenced with Grocon staff now on the ground in Wye River.

Fire affected residents were invited to give consent to Colac Otway Shire, permitting their contact information to be provided to Emergency Management Victoria and Grocon so that their clean-up needs could be assessed.

Almost half have of the fire affected property owners have now given consent for Grocon to contact them and start discussing their individual clean-up.

Grocon has already met with 35 property owners, and will be meeting with a further 21 this week to undertake a site visit and clarify a scope of works.

Grocon is continuing to contact property owners this week to organise suitable inspection times.

Even if you are thinking about hiring a contractor to clean-up your property, by meeting with the Grocon staff you can gain a better insight into the complexities of the clean-up process, including the guidelines you must adhere to regarding safety and the environment.

Removal and disposal of bushfire waste requires a great deal of planning, specialised equipment and specific safety procedures to ensure the safety of all involved and everyone in the vicinity of the clean-up

If you are unsure of what the clean-up process involves, or if you have already opted out but would like to have a discussion with Grocon, you are still able to do so.

If you want Grocon to contact you, then you need to provide consent for your contact details to be released to EMV and Grocon by filling out this survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YS5HK2Y>

For more information, contact the Bushfire Recovery Information Line on 5232 9400

### Calendar of Events

#### Melbourne Community Meeting

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February, 5:30-7:30 pm

Treasury Theatre

Lower Plaza

1 Macarthur Street, East Melbourne

#### Apollo Bay Seafood Festival

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February

Apollo Bay Foreshore

## **From the Mayor**

### *Collaboration and a framework for moving forward*

Fortunately, we are now moving out of the initial response phase of the bushfire and into the process of cleaning up and planning for the future.

Colac Otway Shire, with assistance from the Victorian Government, has established a Bushfire Recovery team, which will be in place for the next 12 months, and possibly beyond, to oversee all aspects of the recovery.

This team is led by General Manager Sandra Wade, who has extensive experience in Local Government and whose knowledge will be of great benefit in the recovery process.

The Bushfire Recovery Division includes a dedicated team to oversee the recovery of the Built and Natural Environments, Community Development and Communications.

These additional staff are being put in place as required, however many of them have been working on Bushfire Recovery for many weeks.

Colac Otway Shire continues to seek advice from, and is being supported by, other local government municipalities and organisations who have experienced the dramatic impact of bushfires and the how best to move forward.

We will continue to work together and we will continue to work hard throughout the coming months and years to support the communities affected by the bushfires as they move forward.

***Cr Frank Buchanan***

## **From the Emergency Management Commissioner**

Six weeks on and we – the community, business, government and agencies – have achieved so much.

These achievements have also been at a busy time of year, during the hustle and bustle of January and the busy season for Great Ocean Road communities.

Looking back, I must compliment the Wye River, Separation Creek, Kennedy River, Grey River, Wongarra and Lorne communities for your attentiveness and patience and most of all, for your engagement and approach to fire safety.

The Wye River and Separation Creek community fire safety plan has to be acknowledged as an exceptional plan and what a stellar effort by all involved in pulling this plan together and executing it during the fires.

This plan and an integrated warning system that informed a community who took action and protected themselves are just two reasons why we had no loss of lives during this fire and no significant injury. We must also acknowledge the stand out efforts of our firefighters and emergency personnel during this process.

Immediate relief and recovery services have been progressing and we are now in the planning and implementation phase for the next 18 months to two years of the resettlement approach.

This will include the establishment of the Wye River Separation Creek Resilience Committee, which will be the forum that community members will be involved in to collaborate and connect throughout this time.

The overall leadership for the resettlement will involve the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Secretary, Adam Fennessy, Colac Otway Shire CEO Sue Wilkinson and myself.

Key elements of the resettlement program being developed are community connection and wellbeing, the clean-up, tourism and business, infrastructure, flora and fauna and planning and building.

We will continue to keep you updated about milestones and progress being made by the Community Resilience Committee and leadership group, and about the overall resettlement.

## **Craig Lapsley**

### **Community Meetings**

Colac Otway Shire Bushfire Recovery and Emergency Management Victoria are working together to develop a schedule of Community Meetings both in Wye River/Separation Creek and in Melbourne. A meeting is scheduled for Melbourne on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February at 5:30pm. The meeting will be held at Treasury Theatre, 1 Macarthur Street, East Melbourne.

### **Community Resilience Committee**

Nominations for the Community Resilience Committee (also known as the Community Recovery Committee) have been received, and are currently being reviewed. The membership of the committee will be announced in coming days.

The Community Recovery Committee will be chaired by the Mayor of Colac Otway Shire, and supported by Council staff and Emergency Management Victoria.

The Committee will meet fortnightly initially and will then develop a schedule of meetings. The Committee will assist with the ongoing recovery process, ensuring that the community's views are actively integrated across all recovery activities.

### **Fencing**

A fence is still in place restricting access to those areas of Wye River and Separation Creek which were severely affected by the Christmas Day bushfires and still pose a threat to public safety.

Council, DELWP and EMV are working closely together to assess the safety of these areas and review the location of the fence to allow more property owners access.

Some areas may continue to experience restricted access until the site clean-up has occurred.

Escorted visits will be taking place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday this week, subject to weather conditions.

Contact the Bushfire Information Line on 5232 4900 and selection option 1, to book an appointment.

### **Victorian Treasurer meets with Colac Otway Shire CEO**

Treasurer Tim Pallas visited Colac on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February to meet with staff at Bulla Dairy Foods.

While in Colac he also met with Colac Otway Shire CEO, Sue Wilkinson, to discuss the long term economic impact of the Wye River/ Separation Creek Bushfires.

The CEO, Mayor and Bushfire Recovery staff continue to work closely with the Victorian Government on all aspects of the recovery.



### **Planning Regulations**

The review of planning regulations is still underway and is expected to be completed in March.

### **Minister says Thank You**

Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Lisa Neville visited the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Gellibrand Depot on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> February, to host a thank you BBQ and personally acknowledge the extraordinary effort and dedication shown by those who fought the Wye River-Jamieson Track fire.

The nature and location of the Wye River-Jamieson Track fire required the use of specialist firefighters, aircraft and targeted burning to secure a safer, more accessible fire edge.

Fire agencies faced an extremely difficult situation, confronted with steep, densely forested and dry terrain.

The fire response effort was a collaborative effort between DELWP, Parks Victoria, Emergency Management Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Colac Otway, Surf Coast and Corangamite Shire Councils, the Environment Protection Authority, and a range of agencies with emergency management roles.

### Weather Watch

The changes to the landscape following a bushfire are significant. Fire affected trees can become unstable and more prone to falling in wet and windy conditions. There is often increased run off from fire-hardened soil, possibly leading to flash flooding. Large amounts of debris from the fire can be washed downhill during a flash flood, and the floodwater may contain contaminants from things like broken septic tanks or burnt materials.

Stay informed about weather forecasts by:

- Tuning in to ABC radio, commercial and designated radio stations or Sky News TV.
- Downloading the FireReady App – set up 'watch zones' to allow for push notifications for incidents and warnings.
- Adding [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) to your favourites list on your internet browser.
- Enter the Victorian Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667 and the Flood and Storm Information Line 1300 842 737 into your phone contacts.
- Connect with CFA and VICSES Twitter and Facebook accounts.

### Apollo Bay Seafood Festival

Seafood lovers take note! Mark Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February in your diary and grab your family and head down to Apollo Bay for the annual Seafood Festival.

This fun festival will feature cooking demonstrations from local and celebrity chefs including Jacques Raymond, live entertainment,

market stalls, wine, beer and of course, seafood in abundance!

On the menu you'll find fresh shellfish, fish blueberries, raspberries, shitake mushrooms, olives, wines, beers, truffles, cheese, vegetables and meats – all locally sourced!

The Apollo Bay Seafood Festival began in 2011 and is staged on the picturesque foreshore of Apollo Bay.

Tickets are available on the day for \$5 per person or \$20 per family.

For more information, visit [www.apollobayseafoodfestival.com](http://www.apollobayseafoodfestival.com)

### More information and staying informed

The Bushfire Recovery Information Line is still in place. If you would like information over the phone, please call 5232 4900 between 8:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday and between 10.00am and 4.00pm over the weekend. You will be prompted to 'dial 1' to access the recovery line.

The Colac Otway Shire website has a range of Bushfire Recovery information.

Please visit [www.colacotway.vic.gov.au](http://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au)

You can like the Colac Otway Shire Facebook page for updates or go to <https://www.facebook.com/colacotwayshirecouncil>

A Community Recovery Information Centre is open at 69 Nelson Street, Apollo Bay. Opening hours: 10 am - 4 pm every day.

Representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, Red Cross, Victorian Council of Churches and local council are in attendance.

