

Community Recovery Newsletter

Wye/Sep Bushfire

COMMUNITY
RECOVERY

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

15 FEBRUARY 2016

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



One Stop Shops for Wye River, Apollo Bay, Colac and Melbourne

Thanks to collaboration between the City of Yarra Council and the Colac Otway Shire Council, bushfire affected property owners who are based in Melbourne will now be able to access information on the streamlined building process, with the opening of a One Stop Shop in Richmond.

The City of Yarra is generously supporting Colac Otway Shire and fire affected residents by providing a space for the One Stop Shop team to operate from at Richmond Town Hall.

"This is a wonderful demonstration of the way that councils have been working together throughout this crisis," Cr Frank Buchanan, Mayor of Colac Otway Shire, said.

"The support from the City of Yarra is greatly appreciated and we believe that having this One Stop Shop in Richmond will help the Melbourne-based fire affected members of our community move forward through the recovery process" he said.

The 'One Stop Shop' will be a roving service and will commence operating next week in Richmond, from 2-7pm on Thursday 25th February.

The One Stop Shop is already operating in Apollo Bay and Colac and the location for the Wye River One Stop Shop is being finalised.

The One Stop Shop is part of the Victorian Government's \$2.75 million assistance package to help Great Ocean Road communities affected by the Christmas Day bushfires.

Through the One Stop Shop you will be able to access information around planning, building surveying, geotech and Bushfire Attack Levels and wastewater management, as well as psychosocial support, legal advice and financial counselling.

There will be a range of information available at each location, as well as online, and fire affected residents can an appointment to discuss their needs.

The schedule for when and where the team will be operating will be available shortly. These arrangements will be flexible and if demand increases in one location, appointments will be increased or decreased accordingly.

Fire affected residents wanting to make appointments to discuss their needs with the One Stop Shop team can do so via the Bushfire Information by phoning 5232 9400 and selecting 1, from 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Praise in Parliament

Colac Otway Shire Council was delighted to hear the comments made by the Member for Western Victoria in Parliament on Wednesday 10th February.

Speaking on the Wye River Bushfires, Member for Western Victoria, Deputy President of the Legislative Council, Gayle Tierney said, "I also acknowledge the amazing work done by the Colac Otway shire and the Surf Coast shire.

"We will continue to work with local stakeholders and communities to ensure the Great Ocean Road continues to be one of Victoria's biggest tourism drawcards" she said.

What's On

20 February: Apollo Bay Seafood Festival

12 March: Wye River Trivia Night

12 March Lorne Sculpture Biennale commences

19 March: Apollo Bay Show

25 March Good Friday

26 March Easter Sunday Wye Revival

From the Mayor

Today I had the pleasure of meeting with fellow Mayor, Cr Councillor Roberto Colanzi, Mayor of the City of Yarra, to finalise the details of the One Stop, to be located at Richmond Town Hall.

A central location, like Richmond Town Hall, will assist the large number of Melbourne based residents, whose homes were lost or damaged.

The support shown by the City of Yarra and many other shires and councils across Victoria during this challenging time is greatly appreciated by Colac Otway Shire, our staff and residents. During times of crisis, communities come together and support those close by as well as those far away.

Supporting the business community is another critical element of moving from response, recovery and into resilience.

Shopping locally, eating locally and supporting local businesses helps keep the local economy moving.

The Victorian Government has boosted economic development with an injection of funding for local events to help attract more visitors to the Great Ocean Road and towns affected by the fires.

This weekend, the famous Apollo Bay Seafood Festival will kick off on Friday evening with the Friday Sea Folly and during March there will be a number of local events in Wye River, including the Trivia Night and Revival - two great events for the community to get together and have some fun.

I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming community meetings and events.

Cr Frank Buchanan

From the Emergency Management Commissioner

No one person or organisation has the solution for the complex situation that is the resettlement of Wye River and Separation Creek. Partnership is the key word here.

This is a partnership between State Government, local government, business and service providers like VicRoads, Barwon Water, Grocon.

Local government is an important partner with responsibility for the management of infrastructure and planning controls and they are closest to community.

The array of departments and agencies which operate under the State Government umbrella have responsibility for the delivery of large projects including planning, infrastructure, community welfare and the environment.

Most importantly this is a partnership between those who are accountable and the community.

Today (Monday) the overall leadership group responsible for the resettlement, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Graeme Emerson, sitting in for Secretary Adam Fennessy, Colac Otway Shire CEO Sue Wilkinson and myself met officially, for the first time.

We're working through the establishment of the Wye River Separation Creek Resilience Committee, which will be the forum that community members will be involved in to connect throughout this time.

It's important for partners to consult and collaborate but ultimately those who are accountable have to deliver and that's what collectively we are here to do.

You will have noticed the different language being used; from recovery to re-establishment, resettlement and resilience. Why move from calling it recovery to resilience and resettlement? The Wye River and Separation Creek communities showed great resilience before and during the fire, and will do so after as well. This is a longer term effort which needs to build the resilience and connections of these communities. It might look different but it will become a new normal. Some will have heard me talk about resilience being about wellbeing, liveability, sustainability and viability. It's more than a buzzword and the Wye River and Separation Creek communities have to be a part of it.

Craig Lapsley

Community Resilience Committee

The application and appointment process for the Community Resilience Committee has now been completed and all applicants will be advised, in writing, of the outcome of their application.

The selection panel commented on the high calibre of the applicants and how the Committee is reflective of the Wye/Sep community.

The Committee will consist of eight members, will be Chaired by the Mayor of Colac Otway Shire, Cr Frank Buchanan and will be supported by the Emergency Management Commission, Craig Lapsley and the CEO of Colac Otway Shire, Sue Wilkinson.

The Community Resilience Committee will be meeting in coming weeks to develop their meeting schedule and determine how they will interact with the community to represent their views.

The Interim Community Recovery Committee has done an incredible job liaising with the community and representing their voice to the Victorian Government and Colac Otway Shire. Both the Emergency Management Commissioner and Colac Otway Shire CEO thank these community members for their hard work and contribution.

Clean-up progress

The preparation for the physical clean-up is continuing and many residents have requested to meet with Grocon to discuss their clean-up needs. This is Grocon's second week on site in Wye River and Separation Creek.

During these two weeks, 201 properties have consented to being contacted by Grocon to discuss the scope of their clean-up.

One hundred and fifteen property owners have been contacted and 64 scopes of work have been signed off by property owners.

Grocon is developing clean-up zones in Wye River and Separation Creek and these zones will be prioritised for clean-up.

It is expected that the zone around Illuka Avenue will be a priority due to the potential hazard of loose debris falling and impacting the Great Ocean Road.

Roads are currently being inspected by a civil engineer to determine capacity for trucks and machinery to use them.

For those fire affected residents opting to clean-up their site privately, Colac Otway Shire is finalising an information kit detailing the legislative requirement for safe clean-up and disposal of bushfire waste.

If you would like to receive this information kit, please e-mail bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Grocon is adopting the same approach to the clean-up as they did following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and are endeavoring to use local sub-contractors as part of the clean-up operations, whenever possible.

All sub-contractors engaged must meet Grocon's minimum safety and, where applicable, other accreditation requirements.

This is important to ensure that all works are carried out safely and in a manner that ensures works do not cause contamination of, or other harm to the immediate and neighbouring environment, including water catchments.

If you are a local sub-contractor, with skills you believe may be of assistance in the clean-up work, please e-mail your expression of interest to enquiries@grocon.com.au

If you would like Grocon to contact you to discuss your needs with prior to making a decision to opt in or opt out of the clean-up process, this can be organised via the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre by phoning 52329400 and pressing 1.

Community Meetings

Colac Otway Shire is collating a calendar of events, which it will make available via the website and in the weekly newsletter.

Dates for the next four Community Meetings in Wye River and Melbourne have been set. Venues will be advised as soon as they are confirmed.

Community Meeting dates are:

Thursday 3rd March – Melbourne

Sunday 6th March – Wye River

Thursday 7th April – Melbourne

Sunday 10th April – Wye River

The Insurance Council of Australia will be hosting two community meetings in late March to enable residents to discuss any issues they are having regarding insurance. The ICA will advise of these dates and venues.

Disaster Legal Help

Disaster Legal Help Victoria provides free legal advice, assistance and referrals to Victorians affected by a disaster.

If a disaster occurs, volunteer lawyers will come to the affected community to meet with those in need of legal information and assistance.

Representatives from Disaster Legal Help have attended Community Meetings and will continue to provide advice and support to fire affected residents.

For assistance, please phone Disaster Legal Help Victoria's free helpline on 1800 113 432. This phone line is open throughout the year between 8.45am-5.15pm, Monday to Friday.

Disaster Legal Help Victoria is a joint initiative of Victoria Legal Aid, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Law Institute of Victoria, Victoria Law Foundation, the Victorian Bar and Justice Connect. It was originally formed to provide free legal support for those affected by the February 2009 Victorian bushfires.

www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au

Planning Update

The Victorian Department of Planning is continuing to review current planning regulations to streamline the process for all new building work in Wye River and Separation Creek.

Technical assessors are continuing to study the fire affected areas to collect data to inform wastewater management, Bushfire Attack Levels and geotech issues around landslip and land capability.

The Bushfire Attack Level report is expected to be completed by late March and the Geotech assessment by late March/early April.

It is important for data to be collected from across the affected areas. If you do not consent to these technical assessors gaining access to your property, please respond to the e-mail or letter sent from the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre this week.

The Victorian Government Architect will be providing 'demonstration' plans which will give residents an idea of the kinds of homes that can be built in the type of terrain in Wye River and Separation Creek.

These plans will incorporate a variety of BAL ratings applicable to the area.

Planning updates will continue to be included in upcoming Community Meetings.

Economic boost for fire affected communities

Communities affected by the Wye River/Separation Creek fires got a boost to their economic recovery, with the announcement of \$50,000 in grants to support local events.

The Victorian Government is providing grants to support the Lorne Sculpture Biennale, the Apollo Bay Seafood Festival, and two fundraising events to be held by Wye River Surf Life Saving Club.

As the Surf Life Saving Club missed their main fundraising opportunities over the Christmas period, these two events will provide a much-needed opportunity to raise funds and bring the community together.

Colac Otway Shire Council, Surf Coast Shire Council and Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board have worked with local communities to identify events to help drive economic activity in the affected region.

Regional Development Victoria is leading the Regional Economic Recovery Sub-Committee for the Wye River/Separation Creek bushfire, working with affected businesses to assess impacts on business and tourism. This will inform the development of priority economic recovery activities.

Apollo Bay Seafood Friday Night Sea Folly

The Apollo Bay Seafood Festival has been boosted by State Government economic development funding and will now include an event on the Friday night, 19th February.

The Friday Night Sea Folly will be a fun-filled, stand up cocktail party featuring Melbourne jazz combo *The Furbelows* who will perform classic jazz standards with close vocal harmony and fiery gypsy guitars.

Tickets are \$25.00 and include a drink on arrival, light canapes entertainment and entry to the 2016 Apollo Bay Seafood Festival. Dress in your finest Sea Folly – your own version of cocktail attire with a hint of the ocean.

<http://seafolly.eventbrite.com.au>

Wye River Community Events

A number of fundraising events will be held in Wye River during March. On the 12th, the Surf Life Saving Club will host a fundraising trivia night.

On Easter Sunday, 26th March, the Wye Revival family day will be held to provide an opportunity for the community to get together.

Further details of all community events will be added to a Community Calendar, being created by the Bushfire Recovery team at Colac Otway Shire.

If you have an event you would like included, please advise Emma Diffen in the Bushfire Recovery team via e-mail Emma.Diffen@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Lorne Sculpture Biennale 2016

The Lorne Sculpture Biennale commences on March 12th and runs until 3rd April. This year will see the inclusion of a special exhibition in Wye River.

For more information, visit www.lornesculpture.com

More information and staying informed

A specialised bushfire recovery line has been established to assist with enquires and requests arising from the fire. Please call the Colac shire office on 5232 9400 between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. You will be prompted to 'dial 1' to access the recovery line.

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, Monday to Friday.

