

Community Recovery Newsletter

Wye/Sep Bushfire

COMMUNITY
RECOVERY

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

22 FEBRUARY 2016

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



Community Resilience Committee

Appointments to the Community Resilience Committee have been made. The following community members (listed alphabetically) have been appointed to the Committee:

Ian Angus
Andrew Dunn
Paul Greene
Deb Hocking
Roy Moriarty
Diane Sisley
Mark Stokes
Joanne Tyler

The Community Resilience Committee is reflective of the Wye River and Separation Creek community and represents people who live in both Wye River and Separation Creek permanently, those who have holiday homes and live here part time, those whose homes were damaged or destroyed, local business owners and active members of the community.

Applicants were appointed by a selection panel consisting of: Cr Frank Buchanan, Mayor of Colac Otway Shire; Sue Wilkinson, CEO, Colac Otway Shire CEO; Craig Lapsley, Emergency Management Commissioner; and Helen Paatsch, an independent panel member who is a former Mayor of Colac Otway Shire and active member of the local community.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Community Resilience Committee will operate for a period of 12 months.

The CRC's first meeting is expected to be held in early March. During this meeting the Committee will determine how it wants to operate and represent the community.

Colac Otway Shire will provide Secretariat support to the Committee and the community will be advised shortly of the process for interacting with the Committee.

One Stop Shop

Bushfire Information Centre staff are taking appointments for the One Stop Shop in Melbourne, Apollo Bay and Colac, while a site for the Wye River location is being finalised.

This Thursday will see the first appointments held with One Stop Shop staff at Richmond Town Hall, from 2-7pm.

Fire affected residents who live in Melbourne, are able to make an appointment to meet with One Stop Shop staff to discuss a range of topics relating to rebuilding their home as well as accessing information about services such as financial counselling, legal advice and health and well-being.

Residents are invited to contact the Bushfire Information Centre by phoning 5232 9400 and selecting 1 to discuss their individual needs and make an appointment to see the appropriate service.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is currently assessing and amending planning regulations and this work is expected to be completed by the end of March.

Fire affected residents can submit a planning application now, however, it is important to note that a current application will be assessed under the current regulations, not the new streamlined system being developed.

What's On

3 March – Melbourne Community Meeting

6 March – Wye River Community Meeting

12 March - Wye River Trivia Night

12 March - Lorne Sculpture Biennale commences

26 March - CFA Fete

27 March - Easter Sunday Wye Revival

From the Mayor

I was pleased, last Friday, to advise residents of Wye River and Separation Creek of the selection of applicants for the Community Resilience Committee (CRC).

I will be Chairing the Committee and I look forward to working alongside these eight community members as well as the CEO of Colac Otway Shire, Sue Wilkinson and Emergency Management Commissioner, Craig Lapsley.

The Community Resilience Committee provides an important role in driving the process of resettlement with the Wye/Sep community over the long term.

While the Committee itself consists of eight members of the community, individuals and community organisations can contribute in many other ways.

The Community Resilience Committee may co-opt particular individuals or community organisations as required for specific purposes.

The CRC will be having its first meeting in coming weeks and it will determine priorities for resettlement, how it will liaise with the community, how community members can contact the CRC and raise topics for discussion and consideration.

I am confident that the Community Resilience Committee strongly represents the broad community and I encourage you to support the Committee as it gets up and running.

Cr Frank Buchanan

From the Emergency Management Commissioner

Since the December 2015 fire, the Wye River and Separation Creek communities have continued to be an exemplar in community resilience due to the planning, connection and organised approach at a community level. The community has been active and interested in their own recovery.

Early relief and recovery within the Wye River and Separation Creek communities has been effective and we are now moving into longer term resettling and reconnecting of the communities. This will be achieved through a governance model that has been established to provide connection at both a strategic leadership and community level.

This includes the establishment of the Wye River Separation Creek Resilience Committee and the leadership group of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Secretary, Adam Fennessy, Colac Otway Shire CEO Sue Wilkinson and myself. This group met for the first time last Monday and will continue to meet initially on a weekly basis.

The Leadership Group discussed the key elements of the longer term, resettlement program which includes

community connection and wellbeing, the clean-up, tourism and business, infrastructure, flora and fauna and planning and building.

A Program Management office is being established to ensure the delivery and implementation of these different components to the program. It is vital these components are connected and each one is dependent on the other. The Program Management office is designed to keep those wheels turning.

A WyeSep website is also in the final stages of development and this will provide a single portal which will help streamline information, and in the longer term, provide for interactive and connected conversations, information, milestones and news. More information to come on this and how you can be involved.

Craig Lapsley

Current Planning Permits

Colac Otway Shire is writing directly to all fire affected residents we believe have current planning permits.

This proactive measure is part of the Shire's work in streamlining the planning process for fire-affected residents.

If you are unsure of the status of your planning permit, you can contact the Bushfire Information Centre for clarification by calling 5232 9400 and selecting 1.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is continuing to work on updating existing planning regulations and these amendments and updates are expected to be published at the end of March.

Clean-up

Work around the clean-up progresses with fire affected residents continuing to discuss the clean-up of their property with Grocon.

To date, Grocon has been in contact with 162 property owners and 114 scopes of work have been completed.

Eighty eight property owners have signed off on the scope of work and a number are in the process of being signed off.

Site visits with property owners are scheduled this week and Grocon continues to work towards commencing the clean-up in early March.

Residents yet to make a decision about the clean-up of their property can contact the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre for more information and to discuss their options.

It is important to consider that the longer the scoping and planning process takes, the longer the clean-up will take.

The priority is for the public spaces and individual properties to be cleaned up and made safe as soon as possible so that residents can progress with researching and planning their next steps forward.

For those residents who want to engage private contractors to clean-up their property, Colac Otway Shire is working with the EPA and Worksafe to finalise an information kit explaining the requirements they must abide by.

Disposal of Bushfire Waste is a complex process due to the highly toxic nature of the waste. Collection and disposal of bushfire waste must be undertaken by a licensed professional, in accordance with EPA and worksafe legislation.

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

Fence update

Preparations are being made to remove and/or relocate some areas of the fence.

Geotech, dangerous tree and safety and risk assessments are being finalised in Separation Creek with the hope of moving the fence in coming weeks.

Water Tanks

The water tank clean and 5000L replacement service, which involves a roof clean (hose down), emptying of the water tanks(s) and replacement with 5000L only, is progressing well and the contractors are on track to complete all currently requested works before Easter.

The cut-off date for requesting this service is 18th March 2016. If you have not registered for this service yet, you will need to do so by this date.

Fire affected residents who currently do not have access to their properties or whose properties are behind the fence can still register for this service. The cleaning and filling service will be completed at these properties when it is safe to do so.

To request this service or to discuss conducting a risk assessment of your water, please contact the Bushfire Recovery Team on 5232 9400 and press 1 when prompted.

Insurance questions

The Insurance Council of Australia will be hosting insurance information sessions in both Wye River and Melbourne for fire affected residents to discuss insurance specific issues.

These sessions are due to take place in late March and will be confirmed in the next week.

If you have concerns or are not happy with how your insurance claim is being processed, you can contact the Insurance Council Taskforce on 1800 734 621 for advice and they can then put you in touch with the Head of Claims from your insurer.

Disaster Legal Help can also provide legal advice relating to your insurance.

www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au

Community Survey

The Interim Community Recovery Committee is seeking feedback from the community and has published an online survey.

Wye River and Separation Creek residents are invited to contribute and can find the survey at <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2574996/Wye-River-Separation-Creek-Interim-Recovery-Group-Survey>

Submissions must be made by 29th February 2016

CFA Easter Fete

Wye River CFA will be holding their annual fundraising Easter Fete on Saturday 26th March, from 10:30am – 1:30pm.

There will be a range of items for sale including handmade crafts, delicious home grown and home made bottled goods, baked items and produce, new and pre-loved designer clothes and accessories, tagged and tested electrical items, toys, toiletries, books and Bric-a-Brac.

There will also be a raffle and a range of auction items to bid on.

Funds raised will be directed towards training and communications facilities within the Fire Station.

For more information or to donate items, please contact Christine Shaw christineshaw68@hotmail.com or phone 0431 877 370

Wye River/Separation Creek Community Events

A number of community and fundraising events will be held in Wye River and Separation Creek in coming weeks

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

More information and staying informed

Please call the Colac Otway Shire on 5232 9400 (and press 1) between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday and from 10am – 1pm Saturday.

A Bushfire Recovery One Stop Shop is open at 69 Nelson Street, Apollo Bay from 10am - 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

Fire affected residents can now make appointments at the One Stop Shops in Apollo Bay, Colac and Richmond.