

April 2010
Issue 07

Mitchell Shire Bushfire Recovery Newsletter



Welcome Newsletter Information And Distribution

If you are not already on the newsletter distribution database or if you have anything to add to the newsletter, please contact

Jacqui Sims on 0407 944 414 or via email at jacquis@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au or

Jo van Dort on 0407 952 529 or via email at jov@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au

TWELVE MONTHS ON

These two photos were taken by Heather Knight. The first was taken 16 March 2009 and the second on 20 March 2010. They were taken from a track off North Mountain Road. Thanks Heather for sharing them with us.



CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICE UPDATE

Individuals and families can continue to access case management support. The service will work long-term with those who require it. Even now, some people are asking for case management support for the first time and it is important they know that they haven't 'missed the boat'. Some former clients are also getting in touch with the service again as new issues arise.

To contact the Case Management Service please call 1800 050 400. The service will operate until February 2011.



Important Contacts

Case Management Service
1800 050 400

Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund
1800 180 213

Community Service Hub located at: 96 Walnut Street, Whittlesea
9719 1000
whittlesearecovery@gmail.com

Mitchell Shire Council
5734 6200

Building Commission
1300 360 320

Victorian Bushfire
Reconstruction and Recovery
Authority
1800 240 667

Department of Primary Industries
– Broadford
5784 0600

Nurse on Call
1300 606 024

Department of Human Services
1300 650 172
www.dhs.vic.gov.au

CFA: www.cfa.vic.gov.au
DSE: www.dse.vic.gov.au

Mitchell Community Health
Service, Counselling and
Support
1300 773 352

Victorian Bushfire
Reconstruction and Recovery
Authority (VBRRA)
Central reception 9092 5875

Kids help line
1800 551 800
www.kidshelp.com.au

RSPCA for Bushfire Recovery
information or animal issues
9224 2222
www.rspcavic.org

BUILDING ADVISORY SERVICE

The Building Advisory Service is a free service available by appointment in the Mitchell area. Please call Hank Leine on 0400 666 660 to make an appointment.

Alternatively, it is available at the Flowerdale Hub:

Mon: 9am – 12noon
Tue: 10am – 12noon and 1pm – 4pm
Fri: 9am – 12noon
Sat: 10am – 2pm

Or Whittlesea Hub:

Mon: 9am – 12noon and 1pm – 4pm
Wed: 9am – 12noon and 1pm – 4pm
Thur: 9am – 12noon
Fri: 10am – 12noon and 1pm – 4pm

ARCHITECTS BUSHFIRE HOME SERVICE

The Architects Bushfire Home Service has been established to assist people who lost their home in the February 2009 fires.

The service offers people access to a range of house designs and one free consultation with an architect. The house designs are tailored to be able to comply with the new Australian Standard for residential buildings in bushfire prone areas.

The Architects Bushfire Home Service is being provided by architects who are offering their services to assist people who lost their homes. The service is offered at no cost to people who choose to use it.

The service is coordinated by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect, the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects and the Building Commission.

If you are interested in registering to participate in this offer please phone (03) 8620 3866 or email vic@raia.com.au More information can be found at www.wewillrebuild and follow the links to Planning and Rebuilding.



RED CROSS LAUNCHES 'AFTER THE EMERGENCY' MP3 PLAYER

Red Cross is using MP3 players to share information with young people affected in emergencies. The After the Emergency MP3 includes:

- A 40 minute radio show hosted by Triple J's Zan Rowe
- Music from Aussie artists like Blue King Brown, Lisa Mitchell and Bluejuice
- Information on trauma recovery
- Tips from health professionals on how to look after your mind and body
- Messages from people who've been through disasters

The players also include 1GB of space for music or other files, a USB function, an FM radio, batteries and headphones.

The After the Emergency MP3s and website were developed in response to the 2009 Victorian bushfires as immediate and long-term resources for young people (12-25) affected by disasters.

The MP3 players are free for any young person affected by an emergency. They have been developed specifically for a 12-25 age group and are not age appropriate for children under 12.

MP3s are available from aftertheemergency.redcross.org.au or by emailing aftertheemergency@redcross.org.au

HEADSPACE: YOUTH BUSHFIRE SPACE

Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation, Headspace, has developed an interactive space to support young people through their bushfire experience.

The portal is a place to:

- Get information
- Ask questions about coping and recovery
- Share thoughts and stories about your bushfire experience
- Give other young people ideas about recovery

Visit www.headspace.org.au/bushfirespace to learn more.

PARENTING CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS AFFECTED BY BUSHFIRE

A practical parenting program to help you:

- Manage stress and anxiety
- Help your children by gaining skills and confidence
- Support your family's recovery

This is a six week group program for mothers, fathers and carers of children and teenagers affected by bushfires early in 2009, and is free of charge.

The program will be available throughout 2010 in bushfire affected areas and other areas of Victoria depending on the level of interest.

To register your interest, please call the Parenting Research Centre on 1800 780 720 or register online at www.parentingafterbushfire.com.au



PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING VOUCHER

The Bushfire Psychological Counselling Voucher Program provides six counselling sessions to each individual (including dependant children over five years of age) who has been directly affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires. Applicants will be sent six vouchers that can be used to see an eligible counselor of their own choice, and in their own time. There is no cash involved in this process and applicants will not have to pay any co-payment to the counselor. Vouchers can be used anytime between 10 August 2009 to 10 August 2010. Vouchers cannot be used for counselling sessions that have taken place before 10 August 2009.

People eligible for this program include:

- People who have received grants paid by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund
- People receiving or who have received Victorian Bushfire Case Management
- Dependant children (over five years of age) of eligible people above
- Other people who have been directly affected by the Victorian bushfires eg. family and close friends of people affected by the bushfires and those people who have lost their livelihood directly through the effects of the bushfires

The program has four steps.

- 1) Register for the program
- 2) Receive your vouchers
- 3) Make an appointment with an eligible counselor
- 4) Attend your appointment and give the counselor your vouchers

A list of eligible counselors is available by calling 1800 180 213 or online at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au and follow the links to financial and personal support. Application forms are available from hubs, Case Managers or online at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au or www.dhs.vic.gov.au and follow the links to VBAF fund payments, support payments, psychological support package.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Discussion and support groups have been set up for people who lost someone close to them in the 2009 bushfires. Groups have been established in the following nearby areas:

Epping: Group meets monthly on a Monday evening
Eltham: Group meets monthly on a Monday evening
Kinglake: Group meets monthly on a Thursday evening

A new group is currently being developed for Whittlesea. Groups can be developed elsewhere on request. Other groups are also available.

For further information or to register your interest in an existing or new groups, please call the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement on 9265 2111 or email support@grief.org.au



WINDOW SOLUTIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR FLAME ZONE

A combined window and screen system manufactured for use in BAL-FZ is now on the market.

The Building Commission engaged industry participants to manufacture the windows and screens to the specifications as these had not been developed privately in the market place. The system has now been tested and approved by the Building Commission to meet the Australian Standards, AS 1530.8.2. Building surveyors can now approve window systems using the consultant engineer's report as expert opinion to meet the State Government's Interim Building Regulations.

The Commission hopes that several other manufactures will also soon have products available that meet the design criteria. The Commission is continuing to trust other combinations of products to broaden the scope of solutions and product choice for windows and screens for use in BAL-FZ.

For more information about the window and screen system please visit www.wildfireprotection.com.au

CLAYTON MATERIAL AID

Second hand clothing, toiletries, used books and bed linen make up the majority of what is now left at Clayton. The Clayton Warehouse will be open from 10am – 2pm on Saturday 20 and 27 March for those wishing to access material aid. Please call 0413 888 775 to make an appointment.

With all remaining stock expected to have run down by late March, the warehouse will close in April – with any remaining stock of second-hand clothing sent out to regional distribution points at Marysville and Pheasant Creek or to the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul.

Blue referral card holders can access material aid from the following locations: the Kinglake Neighbourhood House, Marysville, Pheasant Creek, Hurstbridge Relief Centre and Diamond Valley Baptist Church. The Salvation Army still have relief centres operating in Whittlesea and Traralgon.

HAZARDOUS TREES

The Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund has made available a payment of up to \$4000 per residential property to assist with the assessment and safe removal of trees that have been made hazardous as a direct result of bushfire sustained in the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

The closing date for this payment has changed and you now have until 30 June 2010 to lodge an application. More information and forms available from www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/environmental-recovery.html or email vicbushfireappealfund@dhs.vic.gov.au or call 1800 180 213.

DONATIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM NOW CLOSED

Smalls Business Mentoring Service has been assisting businesses affected by the February bushfires by providing mentoring services, advice on grant availability and steering business owners to support services.

If your business was affected by the bushfires call 13 22 15 and ask for mentoring help through the Small Business Mentoring Service Experienced Mentors.



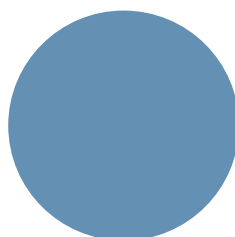
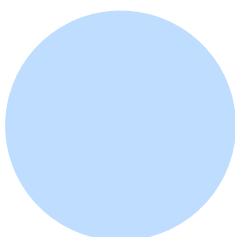
WANDONG HEATHCOTE JUNCTION COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE

We would like to advise all residents of our progress so far. The following is a short list of the projects the WHJ CAG is working on at the moment.

- 1 Memorial Park – create a memorial park opposite the shopping plaza
- 2 Historic Old Wandong Hall – upgrade to include new toilets, kitchen and bbq facilities
- 3 Passive walking and recreation spaces and environment – walking/cycling track from LB Davern reserve to top of North Mountain Road
- 4 LB Davern Reserve upgrade – upgrade as promised by Government following fires
- 5 Town appearance and attractiveness – improve overall appearance of the roads, streetscapes and shops, improve attractiveness of living/business by improving services
- 6 Community emergency management - training for future emergencies
- 7 Revegetation of fire affected roadsides and reserves

We would also like to remind everyone that we meet at the Magpie and Stump Hotel at 7pm, on the second Thursday of the month. These meetings are open to all residents, so come along and share your ideas. We would love to see you there.

For more information contact Kristy on 0417 506 130.



WHAT'S ON?

Upper Plenty BBQ: The next Upper Plenty BBQ is on Friday 9 April at The Shack. Come and catch up with friends and neighbours. Begins at 7pm, contact Kris for more information on 0401 133 400.

Wandong Breakfast: Come and enjoy breakfast on Saturday 24 April at the Wandong Plaza. There will be a free BBQ breakfast, and free activities for the kids. Begins at 9am, contact Kristy for more information on 0417 506 130.

YOUTH REBUILD

Kildonan's Youth Service is an outreach program for young people aged 10-26 years and their families who have been affected by the bushfires.

The service can provide counselling, practical support, advocacy, information and referral, an informal drop-in and connecting to program to help find employment, education, training or housing support.

It is also a service where young people and young adults can talk about things that are important to them.

The service is available at the Kinglake Youth Space and Whittlesea Community Services Hub or as an outreach. Call (03) 8401 0100 and ask to speak to the Youth Duty Worker or visit www.kildonanunitingcare.org.au/youth

FENCING OPPORTUNITIES

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) has received joint State and Federal Government funding to support fencing along waterways burnt in the February 2009 bushfires. With the employment of GBCMA works crews later this month there will be two options available to landholders for fencing support.

Option 1: The offer of \$8 per metre subsidy for a standard fence, or \$6 per metre subsidy for an electric fence.

Option 2: Where the GBCMA will supply materials equivalent to a standard fence and the new GBCMA work crews will be fully supervised to construct the fence. Paul Hobby, GBCMA Fire Recovery Work Crews Coordinator said 'The works crews will be engaged primarily to construct fences, however weed spraying, rubbish removal, and tree planting will also be carried out within the burnt region of the catchment.'

To be eligible for either grant option, landholders must be willing to place fence lines 20m back from the top bank. Grant support is also available for installation of off stream stock water points and revegetation works where needed.

Fire Recovery Work Crews will commence employment on 22 March 2010 to undertake works in the fire region for a period of 12 months. Landholders along burnt waterways are encouraged to contact the GBCMA to obtain waterway grant assistance or further information. Standard grants still apply for landholders along unburnt waterways.

For more information contact GBCMA Yea Office on 5736 0100.

EROSION CONTROL

Erosion and the siltation of waterways and dams is a real issue post fire. The Sunday Creek – Dry Creek Landcare Group are able to assist landholders by providing free rice straw to help prevent erosion.

A demonstration site has been established at Walls Crossing, Clonbinane, this was undertaken in partnership with Greencorp and Mitchell Shire Council. Rice straw, fallen branches and ring lock fencing recovered from fences damaged by the fires have been strategically placed to slow down and spread out water flow from rainfall, preventing further ash and sediments to entering the Sunday Creek. The project looks to improve environmental outcomes and act as an educational demonstration site for erosion control on fire affected creek lines and gullies.

For further information and to obtain free rice straw, please contact Dianne Dixon on 5782 1446.

VICTORIAN STORM ASSISTANCE

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) is now available to assist people who have been adversely affected by the series of storms that began on 5 March 2010 and continued until 7 March 2010.

You have until 20 September 2010 to lodge a claim for this assistance. There is a set criteria that claimants need to meet. Although Mitchell Shire Council is not specifically listed as an affected area, claimants by the storms can test their eligibility criteria. The criteria includes serious injury incurred to an individual or dependant child, or major damage to your home. For more information visit www.centrelink.gov.au and follow the link to Community Recovery, then Victorian Storms or call Centrelink on 13 2850.



SEEDS OF COMPASSION

Seeds of Compassion Day suggests that we all make a simple act of kindness for a bushfire-affected person on the first day of each month, for the next 12 months.

The initiative has been created by one fire-affected person who suffered multiple family deaths in the fires to help impacted people and our State to recover, and to honour the loved ones who perished. For further information visit <http://www.socday.vpweb.com.au/default.html>

END OF CFA FIRE RESTRICTIONS

The CFA have removed the fire restrictions in the Municipality at 1am on Monday 22 March 2010. Burning off can occur outside the Township at any time without a permit. Within a Township, burning is between 10am – 3pm Wednesday and Saturday. Council restrictions come in force again on 1 October 2010.

BUSINESS INVESTMENT FUND

The Australian and Victorian Governments have established a \$10 million Victorian Bushfires Business Investment Fund (VBBIF) to encourage private sector investment and job creation in areas affected by the February 2009 Victorian Bushfires.

The fund aims to restore and improve the business capacity of these areas and enhance economic development to ensure their sustainable future.

Grant amounts will range from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$4 million. Grant amounts requested cannot exceed 50% of the total capital cost of the project.

Access to funding will be subject to a competitive process, with applications closing on 30 June 2010.

Copies of the comprehensive Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund Guidelines and the associated application form are available by calling the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

BUSHFIRE LEGAL HELP

Bushfire affected people who require legal advice can visit Bushfire Legal Help at www.bushfirelegalhelp.org.au

The 1800 Victorian Bushfire Legal Help Line was closed on 31 March 2010, but the website is being maintained as an ongoing community resource.

Bushfire Legal Help is a group of legal service organisations who provide free information and support for Victorians affected by the bushfires, and the website has recently been updated to include information on preparing for current and future bushfire seasons.



Supported by:

