

May 2010  
Issue 08

# 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](mailto:jacquis@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au)

## REMINDER - FREE TREES AND PLANTS

The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network are offering 300 native plants, shrubs and trees to any landholders in the bushfire affected areas wanting to re-establish plantations, windbreaks and gardens.

These plants are tube stock grown by volunteers at the Euroa Arboretum and the Tasmanian Understorey Network from seed collected in the Yea, Buxton, Alexandra and Kinglake areas. Selections can be made to suit gardens or farm paddocks. Plants can be delivered to your gate by the project coordinator with a free revegetation guide book.

Order your plants now for planting in Winter and Spring 2010.

Contact Janet Hagen 5790 4268 or [jhagen@harboursat.com.au](mailto:jhagen@harboursat.com.au)

## MITCHELL SHIRE BUSHFIRE RECOVERY WORKER UPDATE

Just a note to let you all know that I have finished my contract with the Mitchell Shire Council, and am beginning a new position with a community health centre in Melbourne in June. Thank you to everyone who has shared their stories with me, given their ideas to the community recovery plans, and supported the many recovery activities over the past year and a bit.  
Bye for now, Jo van Dort

Minister D'Ambrosio announced at Community Cabinet on 23 April 2010, that a further \$800,000 has been allocated for community development in the most bushfire affected local government areas. Of this, the Department of Human Services, the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority and the Department of Planning and Community Development have agreed to allocate \$50,000 to Mitchell Shire Council.

The announcement of this funding will enable continuation of the Community Development Bushfire Recovery Worker role within the Mitchell Shire's affected communities. Jacqui Sims will be continuing to work for the Mitchell Shire Council. She can be contacted on 0407 944 414 or [jacquis@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:jacquis@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au)

## Important Contacts

Case Management Service  
1800 050 400

Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund  
1800 180 213

*Community Service Hub located at: 96 Walnut Street, Whittlesea*

Phone: 03 9719 1000

Email:

[whittlesearecovery@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

CFA: [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)  
DSE: [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://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](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

RSPCA for Bushfire Recovery  
information or animal issues  
9224 2222  
[www.rspcavic.org](http://www.rspcavic.org)

## CHANGES TO COMMUNITY SERVICE HUB HOURS

Operating hours at Community Service Hubs have recently been modified, in line with changing community need. With many donated goods now distributed to fire affected households and most grants closed, there has been a drop in the number of people visiting hubs and changes in times they are visiting.

The new hours for hubs closest to Mitchell are:

Flowerdale: 10am – 4pm, Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri

Whittlesea: 10am – 4pm, Mon – Fri

Kinglake: 10am – 4pm, Mon – Fri

Hurstbridge: 10am – 4pm, Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri

For assistance when Hubs are closed, or if you are unable to go to one, please call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667. Centrelink can be contacted on 132 850.

## TOILET AND SHOWER EXTENSION

Bushfire affected people rebuilding on their property will now be able to have the use of free portable toilets and showers until 30 November 2010. The program was previously set to finish on 31 July this year but will now be extended to ensure people who are still rebuilding or have yet to begin the process can access free toilets and showers after this time.

Anyone with toilets and/or shower units on their block that they received under the scheme can continue to keep them free of charge for as long as they need, up until 30 November 2010. If you need the units after this time, you can enter into a contract with the supplier.

Register for the free portable toilet and shower scheme via [www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au](http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au) or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

## PERSONAL HARDSHIP GRANTS

All 2009 Bushfire Grants (Personal Hardship Grants) are now managed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) North and West Region. Enquiries are to be directed to John Davidson on 1800 604 428.



## TUPPERWARE PACKS STILL AVAILABLE

Tupperware packs are still available to bushfire affected households with a blue referral card.

If you feel that a Tupperware pack would benefit you in re-establishing your home after the fires and you haven't previously received one, visit a Community Service Hub with your blue card and ask for a letter of offer for the Tupperware pack.

The letter includes a unique referral number. You need to ring Tupperware's toll free customer information line on 1800 805 396, quote the referral number and their dedicated team will organise for a pack to be delivered to you.

For more information go to

<http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/financial-and-personal-support/tupperware-packs.html>

## RAINWATER TANK GRANTS

A one-off grant will be provided to residents rebuilding homes after the 2009 bushfires to purchase and install rainwater tanks. To claim the grant, residents need to have been eligible for the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund Destroyed homes payments.

Grants will be provided on the following basis:

- \$1000 for a tank 4000+ litres connected to all toilets and laundry
- \$900 for a tank 4000+ litres connected to all toilets
- \$500 for a tank 2000-3999 litres connected to all toilets (connection to laundry optional).

The grants will be available until 30 June 2011 and claims must be lodged by 30 September 2011. For further information please contact Sustainability Victoria on 1300 363 744, visit [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au) or email [rebates@sustainability.vic.gov.au](mailto:rebates@sustainability.vic.gov.au)

## BUSINESS INVESTMENT FUND

A new \$10 million in Commonwealth and Victorian Government Stimulus Package to create new jobs and attract business investment in communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires was announced recently.

The Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund has grants of \$50,000 to \$4 million available to support the capital costs involved in setting up new businesses and expanding existing businesses. This will help drive jobs, business confidence and economic growth in bushfire-affected regions.

The funding is subject to a competitive application process covering:

- the level of economic benefit the project will bring
- the number of sustainable, new full-time equivalent jobs created
- the applicant's access to skills, experience and resources, and
- the projects longer-term sustainability without need for ongoing Government support.

Application forms and more information are available on the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery website [www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au](http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au) or by contacting VBRRRA on (03) 9092 5875.



## YOUNG PEOPLE CALLED TO GET RECORDING AND 'GET EQUIPPED'

Young aspiring musicians between the ages of 15-21 years have the chance to win \$25,000 worth of music equipment of their choice through a Victorian Government 'Get Equipped' music equipment competition.

Youth Affairs Minister James Merlino has encouraged young artists of all genres to apply to go in the running for a share of new music gear, combined with access to professional coaching and artist development. 'Get Equipped' provides artists with a great opportunity to showcase their talents and go in the running for new music equipment that could help them realise their dreams.

Open from 10 April – 28 May 2010 and with a total prize pool of \$25,000, young musicians are called to submit a video recording of their live musical performance and get the chance to WIN! For more information including competition entry details, go to youth central – <http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/>

## KIDS GRIEVE TOO (KG2) – SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CHILDREN

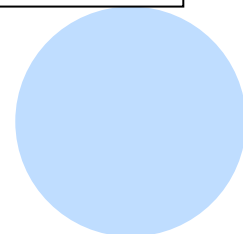
Kids Grieve Too or KG2 is a peer support group program designed to meet the special needs of children aged 5-14 years who are bereaved through the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

The Kinglake group began on Wednesday 10 March and will be held fortnightly initially. For more information or to register for the group please phone Sandra Hutton on (03) 8401 0142 or Leigh Ford on (03) 8401 0109.

KG2 groups are also starting in Term 2 in Ringwood/Lilydale, Hurstbridge/Eltham, Gippsland and North Melbourne. For further information or to register your interest in a group, please phone the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement on 9265 2111 or email [support@grief.org.au](mailto:support@grief.org.au)

## STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER

Following feedback from the Bereaved Community Recovery Forum (January 2010) and the Victorian Bushfire Remembrance Service (February 2010), the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority has put together a newsletter for those who have lost someone close to them in the Victorian bushfires. If you would like a copy of the first edition call 9092 5891 or 9092 5898 or go to <http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/financial-and-personal-support/information-for-the-bereaved-community.html>. The next newsletter is out in May.



## ARE YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE ON THE ELECTORAL ROLL?

With the federal election to be called at anytime and the Victorian state election due on 27 November this year, it's time to update your enrolment details.

Check your enrolment details online by visiting [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au) or by calling 132 326. You can also pick up an enrolment form in person at any Australian Post or Centrelink office or by visiting any AEC divisional office.

## PRIVATE SHELTERS NOW ACCREDITED

The Building Commission has accredited a private bushfire shelter which can be used on sites assessed to the highest attack level, BAL-FZ. The Victorian government recently regulated private shelters. The Regulations came into operation on 11 November 2009 with National Standards expected to be in place later this year. The regulations mean that a building permit is required to install or construct a private bushfire shelter. Until recently, there were no accredited shelters meaning that no permits could be issued. For more information please visit [www.buildingcommission.com.au](http://www.buildingcommission.com.au) or contact the Commission's Bushfire Building Advice Line on 1300 815 127.

## FIRE SMART GARDEN WORKSHOP

Dr Greg Moore, Research Associate with the University of Melbourne will provide information about ways to:

- reduce the impact of fire and assist in protecting your home
- learn how to manage fire fuels and prepare for future fire seasons
- assess fire damaged vegetation

The workshop will be held at 7pm, Thursday 3 June at the Whittlesea Community Activity Centre.

Please RSVP to Teneil Matuska on (03) 9719 1000 or email [teneil.matsuka@whittlesea.vic.gov.au](mailto:teneil.matsuka@whittlesea.vic.gov.au) by Monday 31 May 2010.

## CREATE YOUR OWN GETAWAY

The Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund has provided funding for a range of Men's Getaways and VBRRRA is now looking for men and activities for consideration.

A Men's Getaways Advisory Committee has been formed and applications are now being taken. A Men's Getaway event aims to give small groups of men (up to 15) a chance to getaway from their normal setting, go to another location and have a good time to do something enjoyable.

The getaways also provide a chance to get to know other men from fire-affected communities and catch up with people who can help you sort through things and maybe even pick up some tips to help your children and mates.

For more information please contact Paul Thorn at VBRRRA on (03) 9092 5897.



## COMPOST BIN AND WORM FARM SUBSIDY

The Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) and Mitchell Shire Council are offering residents up to \$50 subsidy on compost bins and worm farms purchased from 1 May to 11 June 2010. This subsidy provides a low cost opportunity to introduce composting and worm farming into your household's recycling routine.

The participating retailers are:  
Seymour Timber and Hardware  
Broadford Timber and Hardware  
Kilmore Timber and Hardware  
Kilmore Mitre 10  
Silkie Gardens Rose Nursery and Café, Kilmore  
Wyndywood Worm Farm, Kilmore

### How the subsidy works:

The Compost Bin and Worm Farm Subsidy will run for 6 weeks from 1 May or until voucher funds are expended. A voucher is required and is available from Council's website, municipal Libraries, Council Customer Service Centres and from participating retailers.

Have the voucher stamped by the retailer and send the voucher and receipt attached attention to Cathy Koning, Sustainable Communities Coordinator, Mitchell Shire Council, 113 High Street Broadford 3658. The rebate will be reimbursed and is capped at \$25 for compost bins and \$50 for worm farms.

Free composting and gardening workshops will be offered in spring. Workshop participants will receive all the tips they need to create and maintain a healthy compost or worm farm. For further details or to register your interest in participating in a SCP workshop please contact Cathy Koning, Sustainable Communities Coordinator on 5734 6357 or [cathyk@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:cathyk@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au)

## STEEL RECYCLING RAISES RECOVERY FUNDS

Funds raised from recycling steel that was cleared from homes destroyed by the 2009 Victorian bushfires will be made available to Landcare and other community environmental groups to rehabilitate the environment.

Almost \$1.6 million has been raised through the Recycling for Recovery Program. The Victorian and Federal Government-funded clean up of properties was carried out by Grocon and saw about 3,000 properties cleared, with 11,650 tonnes of steel recycled.

Landcare and other environmental groups will soon be invited to submit funding proposals, to be developed in conjunction with Community Recovery Committees. Grants may be used for projects such as preventing pest animal and weed species becoming established on public and adjoining private land or replanting vegetation to prevent erosion.

Applications for funding for projects in fire affected areas will open on 14 May 2010. More information is available by calling the Regional Landcare Coordinator in your local CMA or Landcare and Community Engagement Policy Officer, Allison Long at [Allison.long@dse.vic.gov.au](mailto:Allison.long@dse.vic.gov.au)

7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – ONE YEAR ON

The day has come, one long year on,  
To think about and dwell upon,  
The day that Nature changed our fate;  
The day will always resonate.

A day to think about the cost;  
Of loved ones and the homes we lost;  
Of lives destroyed and torn apart;  
The day that touched our nation's  
heart.

Of photos, heirlooms now in ash;  
Of bricks and iron turned to trash;  
Of heritage that was destroyed;  
The day that left a blackened void.

The day the wildlife fell and died,  
With nowhere left to run and hide;  
Of forests filled with charcoal trees;  
The day that brought us to our knees.

But now the dreaded year has passed;  
New shoots and leaves are growing  
fast;  
The animals and birds return,  
And forests fill with bracken fern.

It's time to put aside the guilt;  
New homes and lives are being built;  
It's time for us to reassess,  
And count the ways in which we're  
blessed.

© Heather Knight – February 2010

## BUSHFIRE – ELIZABETH MELLOR

Bushfire – this powerful novel for children and teenagers also provides a mentoring resource for parents and teachers.

This book is a gripping story about a child's experience of a bushfire and its aftermath. Although a fictional story, it also offers a path to dealing with the trauma and emotional upheaval experienced by anyone affected by bushfire. The book is written with children and teenagers in mind but speaks to all ages and provides parents, or anyone involved with young people, with a wonderful device to approach the issues surrounding tragic events.

The author of Bushfire, Elizabeth Mellor, has had firsthand experience of the terror and trauma of bushfire. In 2002 she spent thirteen hours alone at her home near Seymour, during which a firestorm raged up to the walls of her house. The Black Saturday bushfires triggered memories of her experience, prompting her to write this book. Her background as a social worker and counselor, combined with her personal experience, made her aware of the need to address some of the emotional issues faced by children who have been, either directly or indirectly, impacted by bushfire.

Bushfire begins on a very hot Australian summer's day with the threat of bushfire in the air. Ruby, the central character, lives with her parents and her dog, Gypsy, on a property some distance from town. For over 50 hours, Ruby and her parents face the rigours of bushfire. After a long fight, they and their house survive, although their olive grove is destroyed.

The Parent's Resource Book, is downloadable free of charge from the book website ([www.bushfirebook.com.au](http://www.bushfirebook.com.au)) to accompany Bushfire. The Parent's Resource Book outlines issues dealt with in the story, methods for dealing with impact of such issues, what to watch for in children and teenagers recovering from trauma, how to help them deal with it and advice for parents seeking additional help for children.

Bushfire will be available from Palmer Higgs Books, [www.palmerhiggsbooks.com.au](http://www.palmerhiggsbooks.com.au) for by telephoning (03) 8892 4410. The cost is \$17.95 plus post and packaging.



## CFA IPHONE AND FACEBOOK APPS

Victorians with an iPhone or Facebook profile can now access critical fire safety information wherever they are thanks to two new applications.

The iPhone and Facebook applications deliver emergency information and fire safety advice from the CFA website directly to user's mobile phones. Warnings, updates and advice and the location of fires are plotted on Google Maps as well as links to a wide range of community safety advice. The applications also provide easy access to Fire Danger Ratings and Total Fire Ban details and allow users to share information with friends, neighbours and loved ones via emails and social media. They have been designed to gather feedback and learn from user experience of the next bushfire season. For more information visit:

[http://www.cfaconnect.net.au/index.php?option=com\\_k2&id=1853:&view=item&Itemid=42](http://www.cfaconnect.net.au/index.php?option=com_k2&id=1853:&view=item&Itemid=42)

## FOOTY TICKETS

Sixty bushfire affected people were given free tickets to the Collingwood – North Melbourne game on Saturday 8 May. A great time was enjoyed by all. A very big thanks to the Collingwood Football Club for the donation of the tickets.



## KILMORE MEN'S SHED OPEN

The Kilmore Men's Shed is proud to be able to open it's doors on Saturday's, commencing 8 May – 31 March 2011.

The doors to the Men's Shed have been opened specifically to allow men that have been affected by the February 2009 bushfires who can not attend during the normal Men's Shed opening hours due to work commitments to come along, have a coffee, a chat, learn some new skills and also share their own skills.

The Kilmore Men's Shed is located in Graves Street Kilmore, from Powlett Street turn into Allen Street and right into Graves Street. Doors open 10am – 4pm.

For more information call Robin 0437 297 939.

## FREE MULCH

Free mulch is still available for bushfire affected people from the Wallan Transfer Station. Take your trailer and blue card to the Wallan Transfer Station, Wallan Industrial Estate, Freeway Drive, Wallan. The Wallan Transfer Station is open Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 10am – 2pm, and on Saturday and Sunday from 10am – 4pm.

Offer ends Wednesday 30 June 2010.