

# Community Recovery Newsletter

## Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY  
RECOVERY

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

29 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

The One Stop Shops have commenced operation with the first appointments being scheduled and held at Richmond Town Hall on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February. Fire affected residents met with One Stop Staff to discuss a range of issues around planning and waste water.

The Wye River One Stop Shop, located at the Wye River Surf Life Saving Club was open on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February.

Bushfire Recovery Information Centre staff, DHHS staff and Red Cross Volunteers were on site to meet with fire affected residents to provide personal support and schedule appointments for future meetings with specialist One Stop Shop staff.

The Apollo Bay One Stop Shop, located at 69 Nelson Street, is undergoing some refurbishment work this week and next week. However, One Stop Shop staff including DHHS and Red Cross volunteers are on site to provide general information, personal support and assist with making appointments to meet with specialist officers.

All fire-affected residents are invited to make appointments to meet with specialist staff at each of the four One Stop Shops by phoning the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre on 5232 4900 and pressing 1.

It is important to book an appointment to ensure the right staff are there to help you.

If you have any questions about planning and building, personal support and wellbeing or water and environment, please phone the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre on 5232 9400 and press 1.

### Community Meetings

Two Community Meetings will be held this week in Melbourne (5:30 – 7pm, Treasury Theatre) and Wye River (1:30-3pm, Wye River SLSC Clubhouse).

At these meetings, guest speakers from Emergency Management Victoria and Major Projects Victoria, Grocon and VicRoads will provide progress updates on the Clean-up and the roadworks on the Great Ocean Road.

Dr Rob Gordan will also present about what individuals and the broader community may be experiencing and feeling.

A clinical psychologist, Dr Rob Gordon has spent the past 30 years working with people affected by emergencies and disasters.

Rob was there in the aftermath of the Bali bombings and Christchurch earthquake, Black Saturday, the Canberra firestorm and, most recently, the Tasmanian bushfires, as well as many other large-scale disasters.

He has advised the Red Cross, Department of Health and Human Services and governments on how to assist individual people and whole communities as they rebuild and recover.

His first-hand experience has helped many people affected by disasters to understand their reactions to trauma and grief, while his academic papers have contributed to new approaches to community engagement during the critical stages of recovery.

Rob's empathetic presence instils hope, while his stories and practical examples have supported thousands of people as they come to terms with their situation and their emotions.

Years later, many people can still recount the reassuring words from Rob that helped them through the most difficult time of their lives.

### What's On

**3 March - Melbourne Community Meeting**

**6 March - Wye River Community Meeting**

**12 March - Wye River Trivia Night**

**26 March - CFA Fete**

**27 March - Easter Sunday Wye Revival**

## From the Mayor

Are you OK?

While R U OK day isn't for a few months, it is important that we ask each other this important question and take note of the answer, especially after such a challenging time like the Christmas Day bushfires.

At the Community meetings this week, Dr Rob Gordon will be presenting about the impact of an event like a bushfire and what we can each expect to feel and experience.

Everyone will continue their recovery at different paces and it is important that we support each other and use the health and wellbeing services that are available.

At the One Stop Shops in Wye River and Apollo Bay, DHHS staff are available to talk to and support you during these difficult times.

At the Community Meetings on Thursday and Sunday, these support personnel, including Red Cross Volunteers, will also be in attendance. Thinking and reflecting on what has happened and the future might be emotional, so having someone to talk to, who is experienced in helping people in their recovery, can be very helpful.

There are a range of booklets and brochures, published by the Red Cross, about moving forward and coping through the relief and recovery stages. These are available at the One Stop Shops.

Please continue to take care of yourselves, your family, neighbours and community members as we continue working towards the resettlement and reconnection of the Wye River and Separation Creek communities.

*Cr Frank Buchanan*

## From the Emergency Management Commissioner

A few weeks ago I spoke about the need for partnerships and the need for government departments, agencies, contractors, local government and the community to work together on the complex job of resettlement for Wye River and Separation Creek.

These partnerships and the sheer volume of work that is being done is not always visible, but the work is happening and it is testament to everyone involved that we are finally at the point of seeing active recovery. I saw firsthand last week the complexity and incredible amount of work, and shortly we will see roads being built and the trucks on the ground, which is what people are waiting for.

The Leadership Group overseeing the recovery is determined that we give the community certainty and clarity around the resettlement process, which is why we are trying to only give dates when we know for certain that it can be delivered.

It is important to understand that within the Wye River and Separation Creek communities everyone is at different stages of resettlement, so not only is there a need to work in partnership but the work is being tailored to the individual needs of community members.

This is reflected in the structure of the One Stop Shops and the Community Meetings going forward. We are all keen to provide tailored, personalised information. The One Stop shops are operating and will grow according to need and progress.

This week we will also launch the WyeSep Connect website and Facebook page, an online portal that supports resettlement at Wye River and Separation Creek, sharing and sourcing information, news, events, achievements and challenges.

[www.WyeSepConnect.info](http://www.WyeSepConnect.info) is an initiative of Emergency Management Victoria and Colac Otway Shire, but its direction and evolution will be guided by the Wye River-Separation Creek Community Resilience Committee and community members.

It will evolve in stages and content will be driven by need, by information and by community members, to enable a connected community, and part of our shared vision for what Wye River and Separation Creek can be and will be.

*Craig Lapsley*

## Clean-up

Work around the clean-up progresses and Grocon has now completed 147 scopes of work and 106 fire affected property owners have signed off on their scope of works.

Work on the physical clean-up is scheduled to commence on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March and site visits with property owners will continue this week.

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.

## Emergency Re-establishment Payment - You may be eligible

People impacted by the fire may be eligible for a re-establishment payment.

Eligibility for the Emergency Re-establishment Payments depends on whether your home (principal place of residence) has been destroyed, is unfit or unsafe to live in, or made inaccessible for more than seven days.

You also need to meet an income test with the amount payable being influenced by your total weekly family income and where your losses are not being met by insurance, compensation or any other assistance.

Visit one of the One Stop Shops in either Wye River, Apollo Bay, Richmond or Colac for more information about your eligibility or call the Victorian Emergency Recovery Information Line on 1300 799 232.

Since the evacuation of Wye River and Separation Creek the Department of Health and Human Services has made 77 relief payments, totalling \$69,680 to help with the immediate needs of those displaced by the fire.

The department has also made fourteen Emergency Re-establishment Payments, totalling \$42,000 to eligible households for clean-up, emergency accommodation, repairs, rebuilding (a principal place of residence), and replacing some damaged contents.

### **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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

### **Red Cross says thank you**

“A big thank you to Falls Festival organisers who generously donated over \$120,000 to support those affected by the Wye River/Separation Creek bushfire on Christmas Day.

At the request of the Falls Festival organisers, the funds have now been transferred from Red Cross to The Spirit Foundation, a local registered charity who have been consulting with the interim Community Recovery Committee to understand local needs.

The Spirit Foundation and Red Cross have signed an agreement in which both organisations have agreed to make decisions in the best interests of the community and to comply with ATO Australian Disaster Relief Funds requirements.

As part of the agreement, Red Cross will share its expertise in the management of the funds and provide emergency preparedness and/ or recovery support as needed.

Clive Goldsworthy (Chairman, The Spirit Foundation) and Angela Sutherland (State Manager Emergency Services Red Cross) say a huge thank you to Falls Festival organisers on behalf of the Wye River and Separation Creek communities.

### **Art Project - A Symbol of Destruction and Survival**

Moving forward, an idea has emerged from local residents to commission a piece of art/sculpture incorporating items salvaged from houses destroyed in the bushfire.

Residents are invited to express interest to be part of the group that will be responsible for overseeing of the project, as well as contributing items from their property.

A shipping container next to the CFA will house the items and residents who would like to contribute items from their property can take them here. Each item will be recorded including where it came from and its significance.

Christine Shaw has volunteered to coordinate this project initially and can be contact on 0431 877 370 or via e-mail [christineshaw68@hotmail.com](mailto:christineshaw68@hotmail.com)

### **CFA Easter Fete**

Wye River CFA will be holding their annual fundraising Easter Fete on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:christineshaw68@hotmail.com) or phone 0431 877 370



## Great Ocean Road Events

There are a number of events scheduled for the Great Ocean Road throughout 2016.

The Great Ocean Road Marathon will be held on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May and includes a range of events staged between Lorne and Apollo Bay.

The Great Ocean Road will only be closed on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May for the ultra, half and full marathons.

Full details of the road closures are on their website <http://www.greatoceanroadmarathon.com.au/>

Amy's Gran Fondo will be held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September <http://amysgranfondo.org.au/>

Road closures around this fundraising event for the Amy Gillett Foundation are yet to be finalised and when they are, residents will be made aware.

The Great Victorian Bike Ride, held from 26<sup>th</sup> November – 4<sup>th</sup> December will include a section of the Great Ocean Road from Apollo Bay to Anglesea.

Riders will be staying in Apollo Bay on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November and will ride to Anglesea on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

As with all road closure or major events, residents will be notified by Colac Otway Shire of changes to road use or road closures.

## 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](mailto:Emma.Diffen@colacotway.vic.gov.au)

The Community Calendar will be available on the WyeSep Connect portal [www.WyeSepConnect.info](http://www.WyeSepConnect.info) from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## Apollo Bay Seafood Festival- Friday Night Sea Folly

As part of the State Government's 'Great Ocean Road Economic and Community Support Package', funds were given to extend the Apollo Bay Seafood Festival.

The Apollo Bay Seafood Festival Friday Night Sea Folly event was held on 19<sup>th</sup> February as a way to draw visitors to the region for an additional night and to build on the existing success of the Saturday Seafood Festival.

The fun-filled evening was a stand up 'Sea Folly' themed cocktail party featuring Melbourne Jazz Combo *The Furbelows*.

Approximately 330 people attended the event which was a great success.

Thanks to the amazing effort, support and hard work of local business, Regional Development Victoria, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism and Council staff, the evening proved to be a great success.



## More information and staying informed

Please call the Colac Otway Shire Bushfire Recovery Information Centre on 5232 9400 (and press 1) between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

To make appointments to see specialist staff at the four One Stop Shops in Wye River, Apollo Bay, Colac and Melbourne, please phone the Bushfire Information Recovery Centre.

Appointments are required to ensure the right staff are available to answer your specific questions about rebuilding and support services.

## One Stop Shops

Monday – Wednesday, 10am – 4pm  
Apollo Bay  
69 Nelson Street, Apollo Bay

Thursday, 2-7pm  
Richmond Town Hall  
333 Bridge Road, Richmond

Friday, 10am – 4pm and Saturday 10am – 1pm  
Wye River Surf Life Saving Club