

# Community Resilience Newsletter

## Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

4 APRIL 2016

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

### Planning Controls and Technical Reports Update

Property owners who lost their homes in the Christmas Day bushfires will now have access to a range of technical studies that have been commissioned by The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

This information and amendments made to the Colac Otway Shire Planning Scheme by the Minister for Planning are set to streamline the planning process for fire-affected property owners should they choose to build.

The technical assessments include:

Bushfire Risk Assessment - Bushfire Attack Levels;

Geotechnical Assessments of Landslip Hazards; and

Land Capability Assessment and Waste Water Management.

Data from the technical reports, the streamlined planning regulations and assistance from staff at the One Stop Shops will help residents understand what is required and how to submit a planning application.

All residents were sent a hard copy information pack by mail and an electronic version by e-mail (where possible) advising of how these reports affect their property.

Copies of the reports and associated fact sheets are available on [www.wyeseconnect.info](http://www.wyeseconnect.info)

The Victorian Government commissioned specialist bushfire risk management consultancy Terramatrix to map the bushfire risk – known as 'Bushfire Attack Levels (BAL) – in Wye River and Separation Creek.

### What's On

#### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April

Community Meeting

5:30 – 7pm Richmond Town Hall

#### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April

Community meeting

10:30am – 12 noon Wye River SLSC

12 noon Community BBQ

The individual BAL rating depends on vegetation, the primary source of fuel for a bushfire, and topography (or slope), which influences the rate of spread and intensity of a fire.

The Victorian Government also commissioned Coffey Environments Australia to conduct a broad geotechnical assessment of the area.

This assessment provides owners and designers with a preliminary assessment and advice to inform choice of dwelling style and type in response to the geotechnical risks and landscape constraints identified such as soil type, slope and depth to rock.

Coffey also provided a Land Capability assessment to investigate various waste-water management systems suitable for the affected settlement.

This assessment identifies building and development constraints including soil types, drainage lines, land slope, proximity to waterbodies as well as other relevant landscape concerns.

*The Waste-Water Management assessment will be available to download from [www.wyeseconnect.info](http://www.wyeseconnect.info) on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016.*

The findings of these studies will ensure new homes are more resilient to bushfires, minimise potential landslip hazards and positively contribute to the unique environment of our beautiful coastal towns.

It is important to know that these reports are not specific to each individual plot of land. However, each plot has a unique Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) rating, which has been provided to every property owner.

Owners will still need to undertake individual assessments of geotechnical, waste water management and land capability as part of the planning permit application.

However, the reports and the BAL rating will inform the individual reports and advice can be sought from the One Stop Shop, in terms of briefing practitioners for individual assessments.

The new streamlined planning process will be provided in an Incorporated Document, which will be made available to owners in April.

Permit, planning and application fees with Colac Otway Shire will be waived for fire-affected property owners.

### **From the Mayor**

March was an extremely busy month with both the Labor Day and Easter Long weekends where many of you took the opportunity to head to Wye River and Separation Creek and catch up with family and friends as well as visit your properties.

We also saw the clean-up work commence, the Community Resilience Committee holding their first official meeting and just last week the completion and delivery of the technical assessments and amendment of the planning controls.

The information in these technical reports is complex and I know many of you have questions about the broader context of these assessments as well as what it will mean for you and your researching, planning and building.

There will be a range of specialist speakers from the Victorian Government, Terramatrix and Coffey Environment Australia at the Community Meetings who will discuss these reports and what they mean to the community and also to individuals.

I encourage you to join us at the following Community Meetings:

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 5:30 – 7pm

Richmond Town Hall

333 bridge Road, Richmond, and

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April, 10:30 – 12 midday

Wye River SLSC

I would also like to invite everyone to join us for a community sausage sizzle at the conclusion of the Wye River Community Meeting.

This is an event for everyone in the community – parents, kids, full time residents, part timers – everyone is welcome.

It is important for these kinds of events to happen regularly so that everyone can stay connected and catch up.

I look forward to seeing you later this week.

- **Frank Buchanan**

### **From the Emergency Management Commissioner**

Over the past week you should have received information about the technical studies and the streamlined planning and building process, including your individual BAL rating.

Hopefully you have had some time over the past few days to read through all of the information. With each community members circumstances being different I encourage everyone to book into a One Stop Shop to talk it through in detail.

If you have any general questions that you think the community would like to hear please send them through before the next community meeting to [bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au](mailto:bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au).

The State Government has also provided all insurers with copies of the reports and BAL ratings, and the streamlined planning amendments will be made available shortly.

All of the technical reports and fact sheets are available on WyeSep Connect.

Although this website is hosting all of the factual information about the resettlement of Wye River and Separation Creek, it is also a community resource where all community members are invited to share information.

If you have a story, news piece, event or just want to suggest some ideas please feel free to send it through to the WyeSep Connect team via [contactus@wyesepconnect.info](mailto:contactus@wyesepconnect.info).

The clean-up is progressing well, with all affected properties in Separation Creek and Iluka Avenue in Wye River expected to be completed in the next two weeks.

I look forward to seeing many of the Melbourne based community members this Thursday evening in Richmond.

Unfortunately I will be an apology on Sunday, however I am sure you will have a great day with the community barbecue as well.

- **Craig Lapsley**

## Clean-up Update

The Clean-up has been underway for four weeks and to date, 25 properties have been cleaned and are awaiting certification from the hygienist.

Work is progressing well despite some bad weather causing small delays and also taking into consideration that there have been two long weekends in March, creating shorter weeks and resulting in some weekend work being undertaken.

Grocon crews continue working in Iluka Avenue, Dunoon Road, Karingal Drive, Mitchell Grove and Bass Avenue.

According to current plans, the clean-up and discoveries of all damaged properties in Separation Creek will be complete this week, weather and approvals permitting.

## Septic Systems – what to do

As part of the current clean-up of private properties in Wye River and Separation Creek, Grocon will be removing septic tanks from damaged properties if the owners have requested that the septic tank be removed.

Please be advised that you will need to remove your old septic tank at your own cost if the septic tank is not removed by Grocon and you are required to install a new system.

If you have a current planning permit, you will be able to install the same system as indicated in your planning permit, however importantly, if a new planning permit is required to re-develop your property you will need to meet current standards for on-site wastewater treatment and therefore it is very likely that you will be required to remove your old septic tank.

In general, if your septic system or treatment plant was designed and installed prior to February 2013, it is unlikely that it will comply with the current regulations and you should strongly consider removing it during the clean-up.

All fire affected residents have been provided with a fact sheet that will assist them with making a decision about whether to have your septic tank removed by Grocon.

If you would require further assistance, you can call the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre on 5232 9400 (select 1) to make an appointment with an Environmental Health Officer at the One Stop Shops.

## Do you have a question?

Is there a topic that you would like more information on?

Regular updates are provided to the community via the newsletter, WyeSep Connect, e-mails and via the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre.

Please get in touch and let us know what you'd like to know!

## Planned Burns in the Lorne – Saint George region

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning advises that a planned burn is scheduled on public land in the Lorne – Saint George area, 1km west of Lorne.

The burns are an important part of a local plan prepared in consultation with communities, to reduce bushfire risk to people, property and communities.

Forest Fire Management with Parks Victoria and experienced firefighters with the CFA will work closely with the Bureau of Meteorology, and will only do planned burns when conditions such as humidity, temperature and wind speed are right.

It is important to understand that this planned burn will only be ignited if the conditions are suitable.

The planned burn will be ignited in the next 10 days, if conditions are suitable.

The burn may be postponed and ignited at a later date, or if crews need to return and carry out further work within the burn area.

If that occurs, the public will be notified.

You can [sign up](#) to receive automated SMS and email notifications about planned burns when they are close to being carried out.

Visit [www.depi.vic.gov.au/burns](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/burns) or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667



## Lorne Sculpture Biennale – Shoso Shimbo works completed

Artist Shoso Shimbo has spent the last month creating incredible sculptures in Wye River as part of the Lorne Sculpture Biennale.

Shoso describes his work is a tribute to the families and communities ravaged by the bushfires that raged through Wye River and Separation Creek on Christmas Day 2015.

“This work is a reminder that we are powerless before the full force of nature, something often forgotten in our civilised world, he said.

“The fragility of our relationship with the environment is another theme running through this work, but more than anything it is the triumph of the human spirit over adversity and the certainty that new homes will rise from the ashes that I wanted to express with this work.

“One of the main design feature of the work, the spiral shape, symbolizes the natural living energy that runs through all creation.

“It is a visualization of universal life: rebirth, growth, and progress.

“Although fresh foliage and floral materials are small portion in the overall design, they create strong contrast with the burnt material and convey a message of rebirth, Shoso said.

## Upcoming Events

### Sustainable Hook and Vine Festival

The Sustainable Hook and Vine Festival is on this weekend in Torquay- Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> April. The organisers are kindly offering half price tickets to fire affected residents.

If you would like to organize a discounted ticket, please e-mail

[bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au](mailto:bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au)

### Great Ocean & Otway Classic Ride

The RACV Great Ocean & Otway Classic Ride is one of Australia's premier and most spectacular rides, attracting competitors from both Australia and from around the World.

Held on Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup>, the 145km ride features over 90km of road closures through the picturesque farmlands of the Otway ranges to Lorne and then back along the famous Great Ocean Road to Torquay.

### Great Ocean Road Marathon

Don't forget, the GMHBA Great Ocean Road Marathon will be held on the weekend of 14-15 May.

The Great Ocean Road will be closed on the Sunday, from 7am – 2:30pm so please factor this in if you are coming to Wye or Sep for that weekend.

### Personal Support

Dr Rob Gordon and David Younger, Clinical Psychologist will be holding a range of community sessions over coming months.

Support is available and for information on services and to find out about referrals, please call the Department of Health and Human Services on 0417 311 293 for tailored, individual advice.

There is also a range of videos by Dr Rob Gordon on

[www.wyeseconnect.info](http://www.wyeseconnect.info)

These videos provide some great tips on understanding and managing stress.