

Community Resilience Newsletter

Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

11 APRIL 2016

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

One Stop Shop Teleconferences – bringing the One Stop Shop to residents

Residents are invited to schedule teleconference appointments with specialist staff at the one Stop Shop.

The teleconference service is being offered to provide greater access to One Stop Shop specialist staff and provides a convenient alternative for residents who may find it difficult to visit a One Stop Shop in person.

Initial planning application discussions can easily occur over the phone and will provide residents with all the information they need to get started on their planning application.

As their plans progress, they will then be able to make an appointment to meet with the One Stop Shop staff in person.

The teleconference service will also assist in answering general questions and provide clarity for residents.

Residents are invited to contact the Bushfire Recovery Information Centre to book a face to face or teleconference appointment by phoning 5232 9400 and selecting 1 or e-mailing bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Community Resilience Committee

The Community Resilience Committee met in Wye River yesterday, following the Community Meeting and sausage sizzle.

The Community Resilience Committee consists of 11 members including eight representatives from the Wye River and Separation Creek communities, Cr Frank Buchanan, mayor of Colac Otway Shire, Sue Wilkinson, CEO Colac Otway Shire and Craig Lapsley, Emergency Management Commissioner.

The Community Representatives from the Community Resilience Committee are hosting a Residents Meeting this Saturday, 16th April at the Surf Life Saving Club.

The meeting will commence at 11am and will provide residents with the opportunity to discuss issues like future protection of the settlement from fire as well as the planning process or to raising other matters of importance.

Residents are invited to send questions or make submissions by e-mail crcwyesepcommunityreps@gmail.com.

The One Stop Shop at the SLSC will be closed on Saturday morning to enable the Resident's Meeting to be held in the Surf Life Saving Club.

Clean-up Update

The clean-up is nearing completion in Separation Creek and the remaining sections of safety fencing will be removed shortly.

Grocon has advised that 47 properties (more than one-quarter) of the properties registered for its clean-up efforts have now been cleaned and are awaiting certification from the environmental hygienist.

There are 80 workers on site, with eight crews and four demolition crews across both Wye River and Separation Creek.

Grocon has also noted the regeneration of the vegetation and the return of many koalas and kookaburras to the area.

Air monitoring for asbestos also shows air quality is well below maximum levels and safe for residents returning to properties (where the fence has been moved).

What's On

Residents Meeting

11am, Saturday 16th April

Wye River SLSC

From the Mayor

The Melbourne and Wye River Community Meetings last week were important for residents to receive technical studies which have been completed, including Bushfire Attack Levels and the amendments to the Planning Regulations and to provide feedback to the Government.

While this is a very stressful time, I would like to thank everyone for taking the time to come to the meetings and listen to the information presented and ask their questions and provide feedback in a respectful way.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to the Surf Life Saving Club for the fantastic BBQ lunch they provided after the Community Meeting.

I have spoken previously about the importance of getting together - not only to continue the important discussions and conversations we are having at the information meetings, but to also spend time together and catch up in a more informal way.

Many of you have told me that one of the positives to come out of this tragedy is meeting new people and making new friends, being able to 'put faces to names'.

These BBQs and other catch-ups are a really important way to get together and support each other as well simply having an enjoyable time during challenging and stressful times.

Many of you have now met Clare Malone, our Community Recovery Coordinator, who will be working across the community to support activities and events to help the community come together

If you have an idea for a community event or activity please send your suggestions to bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au

I also invite you to put Thursday 5th and Saturday 7th May in your diaries for the next Community meetings.

We have scheduled the Wye River Community Meeting for the Saturday instead of the Sunday so that everyone can spend Sunday the 8th spoiling the Mums in their life as it is Mother's Day!

I look forward to seeing you in coming weeks and then at the May meetings.

- **Frank Buchanan**

From the Emergency Management Commissioner

I had the opportunity to hear directly from many of you at the Melbourne Community Meeting last Thursday, and your comments and questions were certainly noted.

I was unable to attend on Sunday, however talking with the Minister Lisa Neville and CFA Chief Joe Buffone, I understand that community concern continued to be centered around the Bushfire Attack Levels (BALs) and the impact on their ability to rebuild and to ultimately resettle as a community.

On Sunday the Minister committed to continuing to work through those issues with Colac Otway Shire and property owners.

Our goal is to support a community to rebuild while keeping them, and any who join temporarily or long term, as safe as possible.

The Wye River and Separation Creek townships have terrain and tree coverage factors that introduce additional risks to life and property.

These factors combine to increase the likelihood of house loss and reduce the likelihood of survival outside a building during a fire event.

The settlement wide BAL ratings are there, as part of the requirements for building in a bushfire prone area, for safety and the protection of human life.

We managed to decrease the ratings across the settlements from the original BAL assessment completed in 2012, by acknowledging the townships had modified fuels rather than forest fuels.

Your community focus and drive is something that has come through clearly and I acknowledge the complexity and difficulty facing the community during resettlement.

A lot of technical information has been provided over the past week, which may be difficult to translate without the support from experts.

I encourage everyone to book into the One Stop Shop and speak with your specialists about what it means for you, and what further action you need to consider taking.

Resettlement occurs in phases, and it is fantastic to see the first phase of clean-up progressing so well. Grocon have done a wonderful job working with community members, state and local government.

I have heard great feedback from some community members about how Grocon went above and beyond to ensure they felt part of the process and were confident in the works being completed.

Every week we provide an update on the clean-up progress via the website and Facebook page, and I hope that this week we will be able to announce the completion of Separation Creek.

The website is a place for community members to find key facts and receive updates from all parties involved in the resettlement.

This includes updates from community members, which can be provided by emailing contactus@wyeseconnect.info.

The website is maturing and will continue to host key information, along with community opinions and discussions.

- **Craig Lapsley**

Community Meetings

The Community Meetings for May will be held as follows:

Thursday 5th 5:30 – 7pm
Richmond Town Hall

and

Saturday 7th 10:30 – 12 midday with a community catch up to follow.
Wye River SLSC

\$10 million for Great Ocean Road

Sarah Henderson, Member for Corangamite, advised residents at the Community Meeting on Sunday that the Federal Government had committed a further \$10 million to continue upgrading the Great Ocean Road.

The \$10m to upgrade the Great Ocean Road is part of a \$345m investment for regional roads across Victoria.

Sarah said 'The Great Ocean Road attracts 2.5 million visitors each year and is the centrepiece of our regional \$2.1 billion tourism industry which supports 10,000 local jobs.'

Personal Support

There are a range of support services available to Wye River and Separation Creek residents.

For information on services available locally, please call Department of Health and Human Services on 0417 311 293 for tailored individual advice.

There are also a range of videos by Dr Rob Gordon on www.wyeseconnect.info

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

Do you have a question or suggestion?

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! Please e-mail bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Upcoming Events

ANZAC Day

There are a range of ANZAC Day services throughout the region

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 16th, 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.