

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

### Weather impacts

*This message was provided from the Incident Control Centre in Colac on Thursday afternoon. This is a general update, and community members are advised to refer to [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) or tune into emergency broadcasters for all warnings and advice updates. For the latest on road closures visit: <http://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au>*

Wye River and Separation Creek, along with other towns along the Great Ocean Road, have experienced significant flooding and impacts from soil saturation.

A warning is currently in place (see [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)) for landslide risk in Wye River, Separation Creek and along the Great Ocean Road.

The Great Ocean Road between Lorne and Skenes Creek and between Eastern View and Lorne remains closed for public safety until further notice. Please continue to monitor the Emergency Victoria website for flood and landslip situation updates

Currently no-one is able to gain access into or out of Wye River and Separation Creek.

Public safety is the number one priority. Anyone currently in the Wye River and Separation Creek townships facing life-threatening emergencies should call **Triple Zero (000)** immediately.

Any residents or visitors within the Wye River and Separation Creek area who are unable to leave should make contact with the local authorities, if they have not already done so. Information is also available via the Flood and storm information line **1300 842 737**.

We remind people to never drive through floodwater – it only takes about 15 centimetres of water to lose control of your vehicle. If you are within the townships it is important that you look after your health and safety as the number one priority

VicRoads contractors are continuing to clear 30 major landslides between Lorne and Skenes Creek that pose significant risk to traffic due to high levels of mud, rock and water flows over the Great Ocean Road. There is potential for road surfaces and other infrastructure to be undermined by flood waters, making driving an extreme hazard until cleared for public use.

Geotechnical experts advise that landslides are continuing to occur onto the Great Ocean Road. The Paddys Path was impacted by a 35 metre tension crack and is posing a very significant landslip risk. VicRoads engineers have inspected Paddys Path today and will implement a complete lane closure of the Great Ocean Road at Wye River and provide ongoing traffic Management when the road is reopened.

Lorne, Apollo Bay and the 12 Apostles are being promoted as “open for business” via Emergency Victoria situational updates.

### What's On September/October

#### Victorian School Holidays

Saturday 17 September – Sunday 2 October

#### WyeSep Bird Day

Saturday 8 October, 10am-4pm

Wye River Surf Life Saving Club

## Preparing for the fire season

In response to community feedback, Colac Otway has brought forward its fire season planning by one month.

Fire Prevention Letters will be sent out to all properties in the Wye Sep areas in October.

These letters will contain information about how to ready your property for the fire season, including how to manage grass and piles of woody debris.

In addition, Council will be holding an Open House in Wye River on the Melbourne Cup weekend so you can ask questions and find out more.

The Open House will be attended by Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Officer along with staff from DEWLP and CFA to provide advice to property owners on how to manage their properties and explain how the agencies are working together to reduce the threat of fire in both the short, medium and long term. This will include advice about piles of fire wood and the proximity of trees, shrubs and mulch to buildings.

## One Stop Shop Update

Colac Otway Shire is expecting to issue a number of planning permits for replacement homes over the next couple of weeks.

Since the One-Stop-Shop opened in February, the Council has received 16 planning permit applications, issued one permit for a replacement house and agreed to extensions of time for six existing planning permits.

The shopfront at Richmond Town Hall has proved the most popular, recording 63 visits to September 1. Over the same period, Wye River had seen 17 people, Apollo Bay 10, Colac four and eight people had been involved in teleconferences.

Colac Otway Shire would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of DELWP and the Yarra City Council in helping the community to rebuild as quickly as possible.

## Managing the risks

The State Government has announced \$3 million to help stabilise and maintain the areas around Wye River and Separation Creek through improved drainage infrastructure.

The State has called on the Commonwealth Government to match the funding. Read the media release [here](#)

Colac Otway Shire will deliver the works, which are expected to be in place by the end of 2017.

Land surveyors will be in the area until mid-October mapping boundaries of road reserves and easements in the area in preparation for these works.

In the meantime, the Council will shortly be distributing an information letter and consent deeds to land owners whose properties have been identified in the Erosion and Sediment Control Management Plan for temporary works to improve stormwater management.

The letter outlines the range of works proposed across the township. Any works required on private property will take place at no cost to the land owner.

Land owners are asked to sign the consent deed attached to the letter and return it to Council as soon as possible to allow access to the land.

The treatment works have been designed to reduce the risk of landslip and erosion **for the whole area** and the works on each affected property are described in the attached plan

These temporary works are expected to commence in October and will be in place until the permanent stormwater drainage system has been installed.

Works will be implemented only on properties where the owners have given consent and can be removed at any time upon the landowner's request.

If you have any queries please call the Bushfire Recovery Information Hotline on 5232 9400.

## Green Army Recruits

Young people keen to work on coastal environment projects can sign up for the Green Army.

The Southern Otway Landcare Network (SOLN) and Conservation and Ecology Centre (CEC) are calling for recruits for three Australian Government Green Army projects restoring habitat along the Great Ocean Road.

The Green Army is an initiative for young Australians aged 17-24 years to gain training and experience in environment and heritage conservation by participating in natural and cultural environment projects.

SOLN and CEC deliver natural resource management projects, including habitat restoration, revegetation, flora and fauna monitoring, sustainable agriculture and pest, plant and animal control. The organisations will host three consecutive Green Army teams along the

Great Ocean Road and are now recruiting for their current project. The first project begins in October and ends in March 2017.

People can contact Green Army supervisor Georgia Tsaikos if they want to be involved. She said they would be working from Apollo Bay along Wongarra to Wye River restoring and improving foreshore areas, complementing the fire recovery work.

Green Army participants receive an allowance for working up to 30 hours a week for 20-26 weeks and undertake accredited training modules, working towards a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management.

To apply, please contact Green Army Team Supervisor Georgia Tsaikos by email at [Georgia.landcare@soln.org](mailto:Georgia.landcare@soln.org) or call the Southern Otway Landcare Network on (03) 5237 6904

### **Free Spring Health Checks**

Wye River and Separation Creek community members are reminded to prioritise their health and emotional wellbeing this Spring.

Continuing their support to all the community members of the Wye River and Separation Creek, the Lorne Community Hospital will continue to offer comprehensive medical health checks from September to November.

The free health check is available to permanent and part-time residents, with all appointments completely confidential and free of charge.

Residents can make an appointment by contacting the Lorne Medical Centre via 5289 4333 and asking for the free medical health check for Wye River and Separation Creek community members.

For psychological support, contact Dr Jay Robinson on 0416 166 186.

### **Community Environment Day success**

More than 30 enthusiastic community members gathered on Saturday 3 September to hear from local indigenous plant expert, Judi Forrester at the Community Environment Day in Wye River.

Up to 400 plants were given away to suit properties right across Wye River and Separation Creek.

The day was an initiative of the CRC Flora, Fauna and Beachscape Work Group, supported by the Colac Otway Shire and the Southern Otway Landcare Network.

For those unable to attend, checkout a new booklet launched at the last community meeting.

[Landscaping your coastal garden for bushfire](#) has been driven and funded by the Wye/Sep Vegetation Restoration Committee. It is designed to help communities plan their landscaping to make their gardens more resilient in a bushfire environment.

The booklet provides advice on species selection and plant arrangement to provide for lower fuel loads and reduced fire risks.

Several agencies have been involved in the development of the brochure and have provided advice on content. Agencies involved include Colac Otway Shire Council; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Parks Victoria; Southern Otway Landcare Network; Corangamite CMA; Otway Coast Committee and the Wye-to-Wongarra Landcare Group.

The booklet complements other documents that have been developed, including the CFA's Landscaping for Bushfire, Garden Design and Plant Selection booklet and the Colac Otway Significant Weeds Coast brochure.

See [wyeseconnect](#) for more information.