

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

October community meetings announced

Community meetings will be held in Melbourne and Wye River on October 20 and 22 respectively to update the community on recovery activities and provide information about recent landslides.

The building guidelines and the final APZ report will be released on wyeseconnect prior to the Melbourne meeting to help encourage discussion.

An agenda will take the form of a panel-style discussion, with representatives from EMV, DELWP, VicRoads and Colac-Otway Shire. Community members are encouraged to submit questions via email prior to the meeting to ensure the right people are on hand to provide the information the community is seeking.

Questions can be sent to

Bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au or if you are more comfortable speaking to your Community Resilience Committee representative, you can send them to crcwyeseppcommunityreps@gmail.com.

Stanway Drive closed

Council, in consultation with Grocon, has again closed Stanway Drive from 5pm Tuesday 11 October due to safety concerns arising from further landslide activity.

Works are being planned to upgrade the road to make it safe for traffic. This work may take a number of weeks and Council will continue to update the community on progress.

VicRoads clean up

In response to concerns raised about soil and road material spilling onto Kennett River beach, VicRoads has apologised and clean up has begun.

VicRoads has placed soil in stockpiles near Kennett River, removing material from the road as a result of recent landslides.

The clean-up of the stockpiled material along various car parks and lookout areas started this week and will take a few weeks to complete.

Some of the material will remain to be recycled as part of repairs to the Great Ocean Road.

VicRoads thanks the community for its patience as the clean up continues.

Erosion and sediment control works

Colac-Otway Shire contractors are scheduled to begin the temporary works recommended to improve drainage and reduce erosion in the Wye River and Separation Creek areas on Monday October 17.

Some of these works are required to take place on private property and the property owners involved have been sent Access Deeds to sign and return to Council.

Those who are yet to sign the deeds are reminded to do so by the end of this week.

If you have not already viewed the plans you can do so on wyeseconnect.

What's On in October

Melbourne community meeting

Thursday, 20 October, 5.30pm-7pm

Treasury Theatre, 1 MacArthur Street,
East Melbourne

Wye River community meeting

Saturday, 22 October, 10.30am-12 noon

Wye River CFA, The Boulevard,
Wye River

Wye and Sep Cup Weekend

Sunday 30 October, 12 noon -3pm

Community event, Wye River Foreshore

The water tank donated by the Lions Club has been installed in Harrington Park.

H2O Plumbing installed the tank above the car park on the eastern side, which was the preferred location following the community poll held in August.

The tank is connected by a pipe to the existing water tank adjacent to the shelter, with a pump installed to take water from that tank to the new tank. This ensures the new tank will be filled with rainfall rather than relying on being refilled manually from time to time.

The water will be suitable for drinking and for future use if domestic supplies are interrupted. Council has installed a UV filter to ensure all health standards are met. The water can be accessed from the existing tap within the shelter.

The plumber is in the process of installing the electrical connection to the fuse box to ensure the pump works and will tidy up around the site once the weather improves.

Council appoints independent arborist

Colac-Otway Shire has appointed ENSPEC to conduct an assessment of the bushfire-affected trees on Council-owned land.

In appointing ENSPEC, the Shire has established the following principles for conducting their assessment.

- The assessment must ensure public safety
- The assessment should advise appropriate works to be undertaken, with tree maintenance as opposed to removal preferred where acceptable levels of public safety can be ensured.
- The assessment is to be undertaken by an arborist independent of companies that have undertaken work in Wye River and Separation Creek in response to the bushfire.

The arborist's assessments will be made public for information prior to any work being done.

As Colac-Otway Shire is undertaking this work independently, it is not constrained by Grocon's timing. The arborist is due to begin their initial assessment this week.

Cup Day weekend event

All those visiting Wye River and Separation Creek for the Cup Day weekend are encouraged to watch the WyeSep connect website for details of a family day being planned for Sunday October 30.

The event will be held on the Wye River foreshore between 12 noon and 3pm. Be sure to bring a hat.

Bird Day success

The Wye River and Separation Creek community enjoyed a great day out on Saturday 8th October with ornithologist Simon Starr. Organised by the Flora and Fauna group, the day was an opportunity for community members to learn more about our birds and, through two field trips, to explore our local bird habitats. Highlights included finding a male Satin Bowerbird's bower (complete with many blue stolen items), close encounter with a pardalote and sightings of the endangered Hooded Plover as well as hearing many bird calls.

We know that birds are an important part of our environment and the community has been engaged in discussions about re-vegetation for birds and the bird nesting box project helping birds who've lost tree branches for breeding in the bushfire. Birds are one of the key wildlife experiences for our communities and one of the things people always mention when they talk about how they love to live here or visit on a regular basis.

Simon Starr runs Firetail Bird Watching Tours and is an expert on birds in Victoria and especially in our region. We started the day with a presentation by Simon where he shared photos of many of our local birds and gave us a huge amount of insights and information on how these birds live, what types of habitat they prefer, their food preferences, mating and breeding behaviours and the threats to their environment.

Over 30 people came along and many also contributed stories and insights of their own bird experiences in our towns over many years.

The weather was absolutely superb for walks through Wye River and along the beaches near Apollo Bay and up to Carisbrooke Falls. People also reflected on what a lovely activity it was for the community to get together.

Many thanks to Simon; to organisers Yvonne Shepherd and Sibylle Noras; and the Flora and Fauna Group.

Thanks also to Roy Moriarty for driving the group to bird watching spots in the school bus in the afternoon and also our gratitude to the Colac Otway Shire for support and funding the event.

Fire season preparation

Residents in fire-prone areas across Colac-Otway Shire, including Wye River and Separation Creek, will have recently received letters with information about cleaning up their properties prior to the fire season.

To help residents reduce the fuel around their homes, Council is offering a weekly organics kerbside collection throughout October. The collection will take place on the same day as the red bin collection.

An Open House event will also be held on Saturday 29 October at the Wye River Fire Station from 11am to 2pm, where Council officers and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning staff will be on hand to answer questions and provide advice about the upcoming fire season. Council is also planning a service to assist residents manage heavy fuels that don't fit into the organics bin. Residents will need to register for this service at the Open House.

Council's fire inspection program will commence on 2 November 2016. The program includes individual property inspections throughout the shire.

It is also important to note that reducing the fire hazard on your property is only one part of being prepared for a bushfire and grassfire event. Developing a bushfire survival plan for your whole family that focuses on the preservation of life as the priority is critical. More information on how to develop a bushfire survival plan for your family can be found on the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Photography workshop

People on the coast with a passion for the environment are in for a treat.

Environment photographer Alison Pouliot is set to host a two-day photography workshop on November 26 and 27 at Apollo Bay.

The Southern Otway Landcare Network will host the photography workshop and want to encourage people's passion for this beautiful coastal region.

Alison specialises in scientific and environmental photography and has worked as a freshwater research scientist with Melbourne, La Trobe and Northern Territory universities and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Alison combines her creativity, passion for the natural environment and a background in research ecology to capture a catalogue of images reflecting her impressive talent.

So do yourself a favour and register for this event. For more information or to register contact libby.landcare@soln.org

Spring health checks continue

The Lorne Community Hospital is continuing to offer comprehensive medical health checks to ALL community members of Wye River and Separation Creek.

- All appointments will be completely confidential and free of charge.
- Appointments are available throughout Spring.
- This offer is also available to part-time residents.

Make your appointment at the Lorne Medical Centre on 5289 4333. Ask 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.

Landscaping booklets now available in hard copy

The popular information booklet, *Landscaping your coastal garden for bushfire* is now available in hard copy.

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

The booklet has been driven and funded by the Wye/Sep Vegetation Restoration Committee.

Copies will be available at the upcoming Melbourne and Wye River community meetings and the Melbourne Cup weekend events in Wye River. It is also available from the Southern Otway Landcare Network or by phoning Council on 5232 9400