

# Community Resilience Newsletter

## Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

8 NOVEMBER 2016

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

### **VicRoads starts work to secure landslide**

Works to install concrete retaining walls at two locations near Wye River and Separation Creek have started.

Drivers may have noticed new concrete barriers on the road east of Separation Creek, which is to increase safety for road users and construction workers. Three concrete retaining walls are being installed below the road at this site.

At Paddy's Path, a 50m long by 3m high wall is being installed beside the road. Works are expected to start Monday 14 November, weather permitting.

Our aim is to complete these stabilisation works with the current single lane closures, to allow traffic flow to continue along the Great Ocean Road. These works are expected to be completed before Christmas, which will enable two lanes to be available along the entire length of the Great Ocean Road. However, the dynamic landslide situation remains and if the geotechnical ground sensory equipment detects significant movement or saturation, VicRoads will not hesitate to close the road for safety reasons.

Residents will have also noticed a site compound established near Sarsfield Street in Separation Creek.

A weekly fact sheet detailing VicRoads' planned activity will be placed on noticeboards in the community and VicRoads has created a designated webpage for Great Ocean Road traffic conditions, which can be accessed via the homepage at [vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au) VicRoads invites feedback to be directed to [greatoceanroad@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:greatoceanroad@roads.vic.gov.au)

### **Great Victorian Bike Ride**

Colac-Otway Shire has worked with the organisers of the RACV Great Victorian Bike Ride to provide limited access for locals of Wye River, Separation Creek and Kennett River during the ride.

The RACV Great Victorian Bike Ride is set to travel through the region on Friday 2 December with more than 4000 riders expected to participate.

The Great Ocean Road will be closed to traffic between Skenes Creek and Armytage Street, Lorne between 8am and 1pm on December 2.

There will be limited access during the road closure for residents of Wye River, Separation Creek and Kennett River to allow access to their properties in extenuating circumstances.

Organisers have designed a contingency plan if bad weather causes the Great Ocean Road to close for safety reasons.

Residents can expect to receive full details of the ride in the mail within the next fortnight.

### **What's On in November/December**

#### **Great Victorian Bike Ride**

Friday 2 December, 8am-1pm

Planned closure Great Ocean Road

For further information refer to [www.greatvic.com.au](http://www.greatvic.com.au) or call 1800 639 634

## Cup weekend community lunch

Over the Melbourne Cup Weekend, on Sunday 30 October, the skies stayed clear and the community came together and enjoyed an afternoon of great company and food.

Nearly 150 people gathered at the Wye River CFA and enjoyed the company of family and friends as they celebrated being a part of the unique community of Wye River, Separation Creek and Kennett River.

Members of the Community Resilience Committee and the Community Connection and Wellbeing Work Group were on hand to assist and community members did a great job supervising the bbq.

Volunteers from Volunteering Victoria also worked hard to ensure it was an enjoyable day for all.

Local kids had a ball with plenty of activities on offer. The Southern Otway Landcare Network planted seeds; the Lorne Hospital organized an amazing creative activity for parents and children, using clay and organic materials; and Colac-Otway Shire provided plaster cast figurines for paintings with some wonderful artists (both parents and children) on display.

The lunch was organised by the CRC Community Connection and Wellbeing Work Group and funded by the Colac Otway Shire.

Thanks for a terrific day!



## Save money on your rebuild

Colac Otway Shire wants to remind those rebuilding after the bushfire that they can use the Council's building surveyor for prompt building permit processing at no cost.

To access the service call the Bushfire Recovery line on 5232 9400 and press 1.

## Public land projects in full swing

Following the extensive planning phase undertaken with the community, works are set to begin on a number of public land projects in Wye River, with a view to completion before the busy summer period.

The Playground Renewal Project starts with the careful removal of the existing pieces, which will be assessed for reuse as landscape pieces wherever possible. The new play pieces are set to arrive in a few weeks from an Australian-based company specialising in sustainably sourced Australian hardwood.

Community members are invited to leave a lasting impression in the new playground by submitting a small item that can be used to create an imprint in the cemented access path.

Those who are interested should put their items in an envelope marked with their name (if they would like the item returned) and place the envelope in the cardboard box located inside the Wye River General Store before Sunday 27 November.

The River Walk Project began this week, with construction of the bank stabilization works, followed by the installation of bollards and native trees to define the public walking zone.

The replacement of the water extraction pump and pipes from the back of the Big4 Wye River Holiday Park to the CFA water tanks is also set to begin mid-November.

As always, public safety is a high priority during construction and access to some areas will be restricted during this time.

## Action on the ground helping to restore Wye River and Separation Creek

A combined effort is behind an impressive list of achievements for managing weeds at Wye River and Separation Creek following December's bushfire.

In response to a need for quick action on weed control in the fire-affected parts of the townships and surrounding area, a working group made up of community and government agency representatives formed to coordinate work and set short-term goals for managing vegetation on public land in Wye River and Separation Creek.

The Wye/Sep Vegetation Restoration Committee (WVRC) includes representatives from Colac Otway Shire Council, Southern Otway Landcare Network (SOLN), Wye to Wongarra Landcare Group, Parks Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, VicRoads, Corangamite CMA, Otway Coast Committee and the Flora, Fauna and Beachscape (FFB) work group. The FFB is a sub group of the Community Resilience Committee to assist post fire community recovery.

The Southern Otway Landcare Network, with support from the WVRC, manages on-ground works and meet monthly to coordinate the project and discuss future opportunities. WVRC representatives have contributed funds, local knowledge, expert advice, and other resources to enable short term works to take place and take the opportunity to try and get on top of weeds after the fire and not let the weed problem get worse.

In addition to achievements on the ground, the environment recovery work has also been an opportunity for engaging with the community to enhance relationships and promote resilience.

The WVRC developed the Wye River and Separation Creek Bushfire Vegetation Restoration Short-term Scope of Works to coordinate works in 2016. The works for the April-December timeframe include weed control of target species in priority locations, revegetation on public land, monitoring on-ground works, developing a *Landscaping your coastal garden for bushfire* booklet, providing plants and bird habitat boxes to community members, and coordinating numerous community environment events.

WVRC member and Wye-to-Wongarra Landcare Group member Rex Brown said the WVRC was the most successful committee he had ever worked on.

Council's Environment and Community Safety Manager Stewart Anderson said the collaboration of all the groups and agencies involved to get the work done on the ground in a timely manner was impressive but there was still a large amount of work to do. He said the groups were now looking at a longer term strategy.

People can check the [WyeSep Connect website](#) and [WyeSep Connect Facebook](#) pages to keep up to date on environment and community activities and events at Wye River and Separation Creek.

## Health and Wellbeing is important

WyeSep Connect recently caught up with Dr Jay Robinson and Heather Ramp from the Lorne Community Hospital about the support services available and some thoughts on health, wellbeing and the reasons why staying socially connected helps the recovery process.

The full article can be viewed [here](#) but the following is an example of the topics covered.

***Question: Eight months on since the bushfires in Wye River & Separation Creek, and the conversation about community members looking after their overall health and wellbeing is still topical. Why is it important for everyone to continue to manage their health and wellbeing?***

**Answer:** People's recovery after an event like the bushfire is very individual and dependent on personal circumstances. In the case of Wye River and Separation Creek (WyeSep) following unseasonal rain the residents have been exposed to the problem of landslides. This has added to the communities' burden, increasing social isolation and causing delays in rebuilding. The landslides have led to restrictions being placed on travel, creating problems getting to work and sustaining the day-to-day running of business. This situation has frustrated the community and further depleted peoples' resources.

It is important for residents to remind themselves about the impact of stress, and the way stress hormones like adrenalin and cortisol (our "action and endurance" body chemistry) function to help us keep going to meet the demands of the

recovery process.

When our attention and resources are pre-occupied with the immediate recovery problems, our capacity to focus, attend and prioritise daily health maintaining activities (like relaxation and regular exercise, a healthy diet, and engaging in pleasurable, social experiences with family and friends) is compromised.

These activities are crucial in maintaining overall health and wellbeing. For example, regular exercise has numerous health benefits—exercise releases “FEEL GOOD” body chemistry, it heats up the body allowing the discharge of emotions like anger (anger is burned off in body heat). Likewise, it is well established that PLEASURE, having fun and laughing with people who matter to us, is the best medicine for combating stress. WyeSep residents are encouraged to plan protected time to engage in these activities to maintain overall health and wellbeing. It is important to recognise and focus on the fact many residents may be emotionally stressed, and to act on it. There is help available.

To arrange an appointment please call your own doctor, or the Lorne Medical Centre on 52894333. Doctors at the Lorne Medical Centre are also available for free comprehensive health checks.

For all medical emergencies call 000. For less urgent medical issues contact the Lorne Community Hospital on 52894300 24/7. The Lorne Medical Centre is open Monday to Friday from 9am till 5 pm. Please call 52894333 for an appointment.

### **Retaining Wall update**

It has been great to see some sunshine along the coast, after a challenging few weeks.

So far Grocon has completed the installation of 20 retaining walls across Wye River and Separation Creek.

There are 30 walls remaining, however work has already commenced on nine of those, along Iluka, Durimbil, Karingal, Bass and Mitchell.

There are two sites where works require detailed planning and management, along Coryule and Durimbil.

Grocon is continuing to work closely with Geotech experts, and inspections and updates are made as needed.



*Karingal Drive*



*Riverside Drive*