

Community Resilience Newsletter

Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

1 FEBRUARY 2017

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

Message from the Mayor

Happy New Year and I hope you've had a restful break. It was great to catch up with so many of the Wye River/Separation Creek community at the recent Wye River Separation Creek Progress Association Community Forum. It's also great to see so much progress taking place as the community rebuilds. I understand we now have two houses completed, with 14 planning permits approved under the streamlined planning process and a further 11 being considered.

Now that Grocon has completed its clean-up work, Council will be embarking on a number of important projects in the area including:

- Installation of reticulated drainage by the end of the year
- The completion of a construction, traffic and environmental management plan to help co-ordinate construction and infrastructure works over the next 12 months
- Re-establishment of council-owned retaining walls damaged by the fire
- Revegetation

Details of where these projects are at are covered in this newsletter.

The Council is committed to continuing to work with your community to help you rebuild effectively.

We will continue to update you through this newsletter and council's other communications channels as well as directly with property owners where required.

- **Cr Chris Potter**
Mayor Colac Otway Shire

VicRoads update

VicRoads' representatives have recently visited Wye River and Separation Creek to discuss the next phase of stabilisation works with the local community.

Works will recommence on February 9 to install a rock façade on the concrete wall completed before Christmas to stabilise land above the Great Ocean Road.

The rock façade will consist of light basalt rock, local to the area. This was the overwhelming favourite, voted for by the community on wyesep connect over the Christmas period.

VicRoads will also start preparation works for the retaining wall above Paddy's Path. In addition, a rock wall, approximately 150m in length and designed to provide a barrier against any falling rocks, will be erected on the Separation Creek side of the concrete wall. This will be much less intrusive than the concrete wall and will not impact on any housing.

The works are expected to be completed by June and traffic management will be in place as lane closures will be necessary.

The community will be kept up to date via the [VicRoads website](#), WyeSepConnect and this newsletter.

What's On in February

VicRoads works recommence

Thursday, 9 February

Great Ocean Road

Traffic management in place

Renewal Plan Feedback

Feedback closes Friday 3 February

Comments to:

crcwyesepcommunityreps@gmail.com

Renewal Plan feedback closes this Friday

Residents and visitors to Wye River and Separation Creek are reminded to have their say on the Draft Renewal Plan for the area by this Friday 3 February.

The Plan was developed by the CRC Community Representatives, DELWP, EMV and Colac Otway Shire and identifies 14 initiatives designed to deliver on the [Community Statement](#) endorsed earlier in the year.

Comments on the plan can be made on the WyeSepConnect website or by direct mail to CRC Community Representatives at crcwyesepcommunityreps@gmail.com. Written comments can also be sent to Clare Malone at Colac Otway Shire via email clare.malone@colacotway.vic.gov.au. The CRC is hoping to finalise the plan in March.

Update on reticulated drainage

Council has prepared a brief for the design of the reticulated drainage system for Wye River and Separation Creek and will shortly call for tenders.

The brief outlines the objectives of the drainage system, particularly the need to provide properties with a legal point of discharge for stormwater.

A legal point of discharge is a point within each property, usually at the lowest level of the land, to which stormwater from a development can be directed and collected by a pipe or surface drain and carried away without causing damage or a nuisance to neighbouring property.

The brief emphasises the unique environmental attributes of the two settlements and requires the designers to carefully consider the likely impacts on vegetation of both the construction of the drainage system and the resulting capture of stormwater runoff in the catchment.

The designers will be encouraged to find innovative solutions to fit in with the character of Wye River and Separation Creek to resolve elements of the system such as pits and other inlet structures, open channels, particularly on roadsides, materials and treatments in natural waterways and outlet structures to the river, the creek and to the ocean.

The design brief requires the design consultants to consult with the community on issues as the design progresses. It is hoped that the design work can be completed in four months and that construction can get underway following a construction tender process in August 2017.

Erosion and sediment control works

Council's contractor is progressing well with the installation of measures to reduce erosion and control sediment in order to improve land stability in Wye River and Separation Creek.

The measures are temporary and will stay in place until the completion of the reticulated drainage system later in 2017.

The measures consist of;

Slope drains (pictured below) in gullies to better direct water flows. The drains are constructed of black plastic half pipes pinned to the ground.

Erosion matting. In some instances, erosion is caused by sheets of water flowing across an area. This can produce significant sediment. In order to prevent this, a synthetic matting material is placed over the ground and pegged in place.

Silt fences. Silt fences are frequently installed on road and other construction sites to prevent silt flowing into the underground drains and ultimately to waterways.

Fibre rolls and gabion check dams, similar to silt fences but can be used to redirect water flow as well as collect silt.

All of these measures in conjunction with the Hydro-mulching done last year should provide much improved erosion protection this coming winter.



Fixing Council's retaining walls

Council has appointed a contractor to carry out repair and replacement of fire damaged retaining walls on the road reservations in Wye River and Separation Creek.

These walls are described as low risk and are predominantly associated with driveway access to private property.

Council officers will be contacting each landowner with a damaged retaining wall to describe the work proposed and obtain formal consent before the works proceed. A standard retaining wall design (pictured below) has been developed from the design successfully used by Grocon in the replacement of the larger high-risk walls. The design consists of galvanised steel posts and precast concrete "sleepers" similar to most of the original timber retaining walls. These materials have been chosen for their fire resistance.

Landowners will be offered a choice of colour for the concrete "sleepers" of grey or sandstone.

The council officers will contact affected landowners through February with a view to starting works in early March. The works will take until the end of June to be completed, depending on the weather.



Construction, traffic and environmental management plan

The final additions are being made to a draft of the Construction Traffic and Environmental Management Plan which has been prepared to assist in managing the concentration of construction activity that is likely to occur this year and beyond.

With Council constructing more than 30 retaining walls on the road reservations and a reticulated drainage system, and in excess of 15 houses being constructed privately in the next 12 months it is essential that a plan is available to help manage this activity.

The plan will provide guidance to builders / landowners on such matters as access for delivery, storage of materials, waste disposal, noise, protection of flora and fauna, vehicle parking and traffic control and many other issues associated with construction.

The plan also provides guidance for Council in managing multiple sites and ensuring public safety for the community generally.

The draft plan will be made available shortly and Council will seek comments on the draft prior to finalising and adoption. Information on how to access the draft and make comments will be provided in the coming weeks.

Vegetation management

The efforts over the past three months to help re-establish vegetation in order to stabilise the soil and reduce erosion have paid dividends and resulted in some impressive grass growth in some places.

The hydro mulching promoted the growth of two grasses, one being rye and the other wallaby grass.

The rye grass was chosen for its fast growth rate and ability to bind the soil, the wallaby grass for its longer term sustainability.

The rye grass will begin to die off soon but a lot of other grasses and some weeds are emerging and if left unchecked will result in fire hazards.

As always, it is the responsibility of property owners to maintain their properties and reduce fire hazards when they occur. Council staff have noticed that there are some areas where grass growth requires some intervention by owners to reduce the potential for fire and this should be undertaken now. There are still several warm and relatively dry months ahead and the danger of grass fires is very real.

Undergrounding power in Illuka Avenue

Powercor has completed the costing process for underground electricity assets in Illuka Avenue.

The customer contribution amount will be notified to property owners to enable a final decision on the preferred option (underground cable / conventional poles and wires).

Powercor has advised that it will need in-principle approval from property owners to fund the total Customer Contribution by March 3. The timeframe for works to proceed is commencing March, into the second quarter.

For further technical information, please contact Ian Williams, Project Manager - Major Projects on 5563 2547.

Council's fire prevention inspections

Council continues its fire prevention inspections and has this year issued 16 Fire Prevention Notices for Wye River and Separation Creek.

The majority have achieved compliance but there are five properties that have not previously received notices and we are working with those property owners to achieve compliance.

These are bush blocks or ones that share a boundary with residential areas. They have not previously received Fire Prevention Notices because the work required on these properties involves major expense and extensive vegetation modification beyond what our fire prevention notices target (i.e. long grass etc) and are seen as a long term goals rather than something that can be achieved this season.

Targeted burns, weeds-to-mulch programs and other more major works are the most effective means to manage the fuel in these cases so Council will be continuing to work with these property owners, DEWLP and CFA through 2017 to try to ensure the properties are better prepared for the 17/18 fire season.

In addition, Council does not issue notices on public land but where it is made aware of an issue it works with the relevant agency to try to have the fuel managed in an appropriate manner.

These areas are often not simple to address (e.g. Wye River drainage reserve) because there are competing values. The work being led by DEWLP to develop a Community Based Fire Plan for the town along with the work looking at how the towns should be revegetated will need to try to balance

these values to give a clear idea on how the community wants the vegetation managed in the future. This work is in progress.

Health and Wellbeing services

Het Ramp from Lorne Hospital will be available at the Wye River General Store this Saturday 4 February from 2pm until 3pm if anyone would like to catch up. She can provide information about ongoing stress and practical ways people can use to improve their sense of wellbeing, as well as information about health and wellbeing support services that are available.

For all medical emergencies call 000

For less urgent medical issues contact the Lorne Community Hospital on 52894300 at any time

The Lorne Medical Centre is open Monday to Friday from 9am till 5pm.

Please call 52894333 for an appointment.

Doctors at the Lorne Medical Centre are available for free comprehensive health checks for all Wye River Separation Creek and Kennett River community members. Please call 52894333 for an appointment.