

Tuesday 15 December, 2009

## **BUSHFIRE UPDATE**

**FROM CHRISTINE NIXON**

**CHAIR**

### **BUSHFIRE RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY AUTHORITY**

#### **COMMUNITY AND MEMORIAL EVENTS GET BUSHFIRE APPEAL FUNDING**

Bushfire-affected communities will receive funding from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund for community events over the Christmas and New Year period and for memorial events for those communities who choose to, for the anniversary of Black Saturday under a new \$870,000 package aimed at bringing communities together.

The Appeal Fund has set aside \$580,000 to support communities who wish to do so to hold memorial or commemorative events in the lead up or on the one-year anniversary of the February 7 fires.

A further \$290,000 has been allocated by the Fund to a new Community Summer Events package to support community recovery committees to organise summer activities which unite and support communities.

For more information contact the Appeal Fund on 1800 180 213 or visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/appealfund](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/appealfund).

#### **KINGLAKE RANGES STRATEGIC PLAN AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

A community workshop is being held to discuss key aspects of the Kinglake Ranges Strategic Plan and Design Framework so that it can get underway prior to Christmas.

The workshop will bring together community organisations, government agencies and other stakeholders who have an active interest in strategic planning across the Ranges to discuss:

- The scope of the project including geographic communities and topics that must be covered
- How to involve the broader community in the planning process
- Setting up a Community Reference Group for the project
- Establishing a smaller group to administer the project
- Appointment of independent consultants to undertake the project

Anyone who has an interest in strategic planning for the future of Kinglake Ranges is invited to attend the Workshop this Wednesday 16 December 2009 at the Kinglake West Mechanics Institute Hall from 7pm until 9pm.

The Kinglake Ranges Strategic Plan and Design Framework will be led by the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority in partnership with the Kinglake Ranges Community Recovery Committee and Murrindindi Shire Council.

For further info contact the Chair of the Kinglake Ranges CRC Bill Gale or Kerry O'Neill on 03 9092 2561.

## **CALLIGNEE COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE**

Plans for the \$3.1 million multipurpose Callignee Community Centre are complete and construction is expected to get underway next month, with tenders closing yesterday. Preparation works for the project have already been completed, including a road diversion and the installation of street lights. The new Callignee Community Centre will incorporate a community hall, a children's playgroup, sports change rooms and a stand-alone CFA station.

## **UGFM RADIO GETS OUTSIDE SUPPORT**

Bendigo Bank has agreed to sponsor Radio UGFM for a deal to support the station's outside broadcast capabilities. The bank has agreed to fund the community station to the tune of \$17,500, which was facilitated through VBRRA. Despite losing transmitters on Black Saturday, UGFM continued to provide invaluable information to the community during the fires and throughout the

rebuilding and recovery period. Earlier this month UGFM took out the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia's prestigious Tony Staley Award for Excellence in Community Broadcasting.

## **KINGLAKE REBUILDING ADVISORY CENTRE**

The location of the Kinglake Rebuilding Advisory Centre has been confirmed, with building to commence on the site on the corner of Kinglake and Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, next to the Kinglake Temporary Village, next month.

## **FREE SWIMMING LESSONS FOR MARYSVILLE AND TRIANGLE KIDS**

Marysville and surrounding 'Triangle' residents will benefit from free learn to swim lessons for the kids as part of the new VICSWIM Summer Kidz program.

At the re-opening of the Marysville swimming pool, Aquatics and Recreation Victoria's CEO Ian Swan offered local children a week of free learn to swim lessons as part of its VICSWIM Summer Kidz program to help, in a small way, to rebuild the bushfire-affected community.

The program will be offered from Monday 11 January to Friday 15 January 2010 as part of ARV's state wide VICSIWM Summer Kidz community aquatic education program.

Anyone wanting to enroll in the free lessons should speak to the hub captain at the Marysville Community Services Hub.

## **DONATIONS BALLOT REMINDER**

The next ballot for David Jones and Ikea vouchers will close on Jan 8 2010. The ballot process for distributing the vouchers was introduced due to the overwhelming demand for donated store vouchers.

Those who have not yet received either a David Jones or Ikea voucher, get in touch with your Case Manager or local Donations Coordinator to be entered into the ballot.

Bushfire affected households who haven't used all of their points to access larger donations are encouraged to do so over the next few months, with the points system due to finish at the end of February 2010.

The points system has been in place since July, to ensure some \$8 million worth of larger donations from businesses and corporations, such as shopping vouchers, electrical goods, free flights and holiday accommodation, are distributed as fairly and efficiently as possible to individuals and families.

The release of these items has been staggered over a number of months to ensure that people at different stages in their recovery could access them when they most needed them.

VBRRRA expects that all of these donations will be handed out by the end of February, so the points system will close then. Donations Coordinators, who have been in place since July to administer the system, will remain in place and continue to assist households until the system closes.

Any bushfire affected person who was approved for or received a grant from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund is able to access donations under the points system.

These donations are just one part of the package of assistance available to help bushfire affected individuals and families get back on their feet and come on top of material aid for essential items and a wide range of grants through the Bushfire Appeal Fund.

## **SUSTAINABLE REBUILDING IDEAS**

Comprehensive advice is now available to assist people rebuilding after the February fires. Information sheets have been designed to provide cost effective and simple ideas that make new homes more comfortable to live in, cheaper to run and with a lighter footprint on the environment.

Information material has been designed to make people aware of the opportunities to improve their house designs and make it easier for them, to talk with their builders and designers about the features they want.

The materials are readily accessible from Sustainability Victoria or from Community Service Hubs and VBRRRA rebuilding advisors. Sustainability Victoria is also presenting these materials to local groups rebuilding expos. The materials can be also be found at:

[www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/sustainablebuildingideas](http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/sustainablebuildingideas)

Ask your VBRRRA Rebuilding Advisor or Hub Captain for more information about support available or call Sustainability Victoria on 1300 262 744.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE HUB CHRISTMAS OPERATING HOURS AND SATURDAY OPENINGS**

Community Service Hubs will close at 1pm on Thursday 24 December for the Christmas break. They will reopen Monday 4 January 2010.

For urgent matters, please call the Victorian Bushfire Information hotline on 1800 240 667.

The information hotline will operate on business days during this period and will link callers and key services such as Grants, the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service, Housing and Centrelink.

The following hubs will be open on Saturdays during January as follows:

Kinglake Community Service Hub - 16 January 2010  
Flowerdale Community Service Hub - 9 January 2010  
Marysville Community Service Hub - 16 January 2010

## **VBRRA MATERIAL AID CENTRE OPENING HOURS**

The VBRRA Material Aid Clayton Central Warehouse and the centres in Pheasant Creek and Marysville will be closed over the Christmas period from Christmas Day and will reopen on Tuesday 5 January 2010.

Please make sure you check other centre opening times and dates over the Christmas period.

## **1 YEAR ON COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS**

As we near the one year mark since the bushfires, some communities have started to think about how, or if, they would like to commemorate the day.

Communities may choose to hold a service or community barbecue to mark the anniversary, while some may choose to do nothing at all.

The Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority will support the wishes of each community.

A special service is planned to be held in Melbourne for people living away from their communities and for other Victorians wishing to pay their respects. Other churches around the state will also be encouraged to remember bushfire-affected communities in their services on the day.

There will also be one minutes' silence across the state on the day as a mark of respect and condolence.

The Authority is also inviting those who lost loved ones in the February fires to a Bereaved Community Recovery Forum on Saturday 16 January.

## **MARYSVILLE BUSINESS NETWORKING**

The Marysville Economic Leadership Group will join NAB, Mystic Mountain Tourism and local businesses for a free evening of business support and networking on tomorrow (Tuesday 15 December) from 6.00-9.00pm at Marysville Crossways Tavern.

Dr. Rob Gordon will present "Handling the Blue Dog" – anxiety, fatigue, peer support and what to expect in the future. There will be a special presentation for small business owners and information about the Murrindindi Shire Council Sustainable Business Program.

Music, drinks and food will be provided. The event will also recognise and thank the Marysville & Triangle Stars for their contribution to business.

Bookings are essential. Please RSVP by 11 December 2009, call Sandra Slatter on 0427 920912 or [sslatter@murrindindi.vic.gov.au](mailto:sslatter@murrindindi.vic.gov.au).

## **ARCHITECT APPOINTED FOR MARYSVILLE HUB STAGE TWO**

Spowers Architects have been appointed to design the Marysville Community Hub stage two development.

The second stage development will include a multi-purpose community meeting space, community health service and recreation centre. The first stage, which is currently underway, includes the new primary school and children's centre.

Spowers are a Melbourne practice with an extensive experience in sustainable building design for public buildings including Williamstown High School that won the Premier's sustainability award in 2008, the 60L green office building in Carlton and the new headquarters for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Burnley.

## **DHS PERSONAL HARDSHIP GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Department of Human Services is reminding all bushfire affected people that applications for the temporary living expenses grant and the re-establishment grant are due to close on 31 December, 2009.

For information and to make an application see your local Community Service Hub, case manager or DHS regional office. For further information visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency/current-events/bushfire/financial-assistance/major-grant](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency/current-events/bushfire/financial-assistance/major-grant)

## **STAY INFORMED ABOUT THE LATEST RECOVERY NEWS**

The Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority is about to send out a reply paid card to ensure we capture the best way to stay in touch with people.

There are several ways to stay up to date with news from the Authority, including via email newsletter update, SMS and hard copy newsletter.

## **COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

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|------------|---|
| Tue 15 Dec | Feeling Safe workshop - Kinglake West Uniting Church  |
| Sun 20 Dec | Traralgon South Celebration and closure of relief centre  |
| Sat 16 Jan | Special community event for Ladies affected directly or indirectly by the Bushfires at the Alexandra Picnic Races |
| Sat 16 Jan | Ladies Affected By Bushfire Community Event, Alexandra Picnic Races   |
| Fri Jan 29 | Kinglake Ranges Radio Official launch   |