



Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority | Edition 06

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latestnews

Strathewen Primary School set to open in Term Four

Work is progressing on the rebuilding of the \$3.2 million Strathewen Primary School with construction well underway on the state-of-the-art building.

The school council and staff worked closely with the local community on plans for the school which will include two classrooms connected by a large project space, staff administration facilities and amenities, and a multi-purpose community hall.

The school has also benefited from generous donations, with Jim Kidd Sports providing \$200,000 towards activities to benefit pupils and \$20,000 coming from French students of Villers-Bretonneux, which will go towards building a giant outdoor chess set in the school grounds.

Strathewen Primary School is scheduled to be completed in September, with pupils set to return in term four.

Coleraine and Pomberneit recovery underway

A visit to the newly planted Avenue of Honour was one highlight for Christine Nixon on a recent visit to Coleraine in south western Victoria.

Back in April this year, local school children supported by the RSL and community members, replanted 54 trees along the Avenue that had been destroyed by the fires.

After spending time walking around the site with locals and council staff, Christine said she was thrilled to see how far the project had progressed and thanked all involved for their commitment.

At a morning tea prepared by the community and supported by the local Lions Club, Christine heard



personal stories on recovery efforts and was shown a photograph taken in 1919 of World War One diggers who planted the original Avenue of Honour.

Afterwards Christine travelled to Pomborneit where she met with locals at the Pomborneit Recreation Reserve, hearing the local perspective on recovery and stories of the inspiring resilience of individuals and families in the region.

She was told previous bushfires have helped build community knowledge around fire fighting, and heard one impressive tale about a resident who used blocks from the well known local stone fences to put out a fire on his property.

Update on Victorian Bushfires Business Investment Fund

Business owners have until 30 June to apply for grants under the \$10 million Victorian Bushfires Business Investment Fund.

The Fund aims to attract larger-scale investment opportunities that restore and improve affected areas through the creation of new industries, sustainable jobs and ongoing economic growth.

Grants of between \$50,000 and \$4 million are available to meet the capital costs of setting up new businesses or expanding an existing business in a fire-affected region. Applicants are required to meet a minimum of 50 per cent of the overall project cost.

The Fund has attracted significant interest from businesses across the state and applicants are encouraged to prepare competitive bids to maximise their chance of succeeding.

It comes on top of other small business assistance including a \$51 million Commonwealth and State government assistance package, the \$10 million Tourism Industry Support Package, the \$600,000 Business Recovery Program and free business mentoring and advice.

Copies of the Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund guidelines and application form are available by calling the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 or online at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

Narbethong Public Reserve – community workshops coming up

For many years Narbethong residents have wanted a public reserve – an open space for families, community celebrations and events. Two community workshops are planned to hear your ideas for this proposed reserve. You will also be able to have your say on the location of public facilities including toilets, the car park, a children’s playspace, a picnic area and the bushfire memorial.

Workshop One – Information, ideas and aspirations

When: Thursday 10 June 2010 7.00 - 8.30pm

Where: Black Spur Inn, Maroondah Highway, Narbethong

Workshop Two – Discussion and feedback on the draft MasterPlan

When: Thursday 1 July 2010 7.00 - 8.30pm

Where: Black Spur Inn, Maroondah Highway, Narbethong

Alexandra and Traralgon South Community Service Hubs

Alexandra Community Service Hub has now closed and the Traralgon South Community Service Hub be closing on Friday 28 May 2010.

As local people have begun to feel confident to manage their own recovery, demand for services at both Hubs has reduced. After these dates, services previously provided at the Hubs can be accessed as follows:



Centrelink	132 850 58 Grant Street, Alexandra (by appoint. Weds) Cnr Chapel and Elgin streets, Morwell
Bushfire Case Management Service	1800 050 400
Bushfire Housing Line	1800 006 468
Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund	1800 180 213
Building Advisory Service	0400 661 360
Murrindindi Shire Council	(03) 5772 0333
Mitchell Community Health	1300 773 352
Latrobe City Council	1300 367 700

Marysville, Buxton, Narbethong, Flowerdale, Kinglake, Hurstbridge and Whittlesea Community Service Hubs continue to operate. For Hub operating hours and contact details visit http://www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire/individuals/respond_recover/hubs.htm

Planning permit exemption extended for temporary accommodation

A planning permit will not be needed for another 12 months for residents building temporary accommodation on their fire-affected properties.

The Planning Minister has extended the planning permit exemption for temporary accommodation for another year, recognising that fire-affected residents are continuing to rebuild at their own pace, and in many cases want to live in temporary accommodation on their property while they oversee the rebuilding of their permanent home. For more information contact your local council.

Call for volunteers in the City of Whittlesea

An urgent call has gone out for volunteers to help replace boundary fences and clear trees and other debris from fire-affected properties in the City of Whittlesea.

So far more than 60 properties across Whittlesea, Humevale, and Kinglake West have had fences replaced as part of Whittlesea Council's Fence Aid, but there is still a long way to go.

Council recently secured new government and private funding so Fence Aid can continue until the end of June 2010.

It's hoped that all 63 properties who have registered for assistance in the City of Whittlesea area will have been helped by then – but volunteers are desperately needed to make this a reality.

It's not only fencing but also ongoing tasks such as replanting and helping to clear resident's blocks that require willing hands. To help, phone 9217 2532 or email bushfirerecovery@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Gippsland Update

Callignee Community Centre: The \$3 million Callignee Community Centre will replace the Callignee Hall which was destroyed by the fires. It will be a multi-use facility constructed to specifically meet the needs of several community groups, the Callignee CFA and the wider Callignee community. The project is starting to take shape, with frames up on each of the structures and brickwork nearing completion on the CFA station and cricket pavilion.

Traralgon South Men's Community Shed: This important community project will provide long-term opportunities for all to learn new skills and make new friends. Thanks to local support, the footings have been laid and the roof, frame and walls have been completed. Next steps are the electricals, plumbing and concrete slab. While it's known as the Men's Shed, the facility will be open to all members of the community. It will house Tool Library equipment, be available for community-based workshops and activities, and act a drop-in centre, among other uses.



Labertouche: Labertouche, along with the nearby Jindivick and Drouin West CRCs, felt it was important to thank all of the generous people who volunteered their time to help their communities rebuild. On 1 May, close to 400 people returned to Labertouche to share in a lunch and afternoon of activities as a thank you for their support.

Nangara Reserve: Adjacent to the Bunyip State Park, much of the reserve is remnant forest, which suffered fire damage on the western side on Black Saturday. Restoration works have started and will result in improved signage to and throughout the Reserve; upgraded walking tracks and erosion control; new information boards, interpretive signs, seating and art installations.

News from Telstra

Need help finding the right solution for your communications?

Following a community meeting in Flowerdale, Telstra has been working with more than 20 families to determine the best broadband, mobile and general telephone services for them. This has included some site visits to complete the assessment. Make sure you discuss with Telstra the right service for you.

Your telephone service when rebuilding

It's important to discuss lead-in and trenching needs in the early stages of rebuilding. Email the local Telstra team at MelbMetro@team.telstra.com and they will be in touch to discuss arrangements.

Hundreds of new broadband connections available

Telstra's \$15m bushfire infrastructure recovery project has resulted in hundreds more broadband services being made available to residents and businesses.

New telephone exchanges at Marysville, Narbethong, Kinglake and Kinglake West as well as other new infrastructure have improved access to ADSL broadband.

Telstra has also improved mobile coverage in Narbethong, Castella, Kinglake, Kinglake West, Dixons Creek, Arthurs Creek and Strathewen by investing in new Telstra Next G™ mobile network infrastructure.

Where to get help

Local residents can visit:

- T[life] Store at Westfield Plenty Valley (McDonalds Road, South Morang);
- T[life] Store at Westfield Doncaster (Doncaster Road, Doncaster);
- T[life] Store at Chirnside Park (Maroondah Highway, Chirnside Park);
- T[life] Store at Knox (Burwood Highway, Wantirna South);
- Telstra Shop at Greensborough (Main Street, Greensborough).

When visiting the T[life] Stores, customers can try an array of fully functioning 'live' handsets as part of the Try Before You Buy initiative. Telstra can also be contacted on 13 22 00.

Health and Wellbeing for Older People

A key part of VBAF's family support package, the Health and Wellbeing for Older People program, will provide funding for community organisations to run locally based health and wellbeing programs for older people in Victorian bushfire-affected areas.

Funds are available for three types of projects: physical activity, gardening events and social connectedness. An information sheet and expression of interest form is available from: <http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/people/health-and-wellbeing-for-older-people.html>

Applications close 7 June 2010. Further information from Office of Senior Victorians on 9208 3855 or email enquiries@seniors.vic.gov.au.



New Kids Grieve Too (KG2) Programs starting in Term 2

Kids Grieve Too (KG2) is a group support program designed to meet the special needs of children aged between 5 and 14 who have been bereaved through the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

The KG2 program will commence throughout Term 2 in the Ringwood/Lilydale area; in the Hurstbridge/Eltham area, and in Gippsland and North Melbourne. KG2 is already running in Kinglake with places still available.

Term 2 enrolments are now open. For further information or to enrol in the KG2 program in your area, please call the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement on 9256 2111.

Eight New Parenting Support Programs for Term 2

The Parenting Children and Teenagers Affected by Bushfire program is a free program for mothers, fathers and carers.

Eight new programs are planned to commence in Term 2 in Lilydale, Traralgon, Redesdale, Kangaroo Flat, Flowerdale, Eltham/Hurstbridge, Sandringham and Marysville.

Term 2 registrations are now open. To register or for more information regarding dates, times and exact locations, please visit: <http://parentingafterbushfire.net/>.

reminders

Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service Still Open

People directly affected by the February 2009 bushfires can access the case management service by calling **1800 050 400 until February 2011**.

Individuals and families can continue to access case management support through the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service, which over the past 15 months has assisted more than 5500 bushfire-affected people.

People can call the case management telephone service, staffed by experienced case managers who can discuss the different services available to bushfire-affected people. Case Managers can also check back if further support is required, and people can choose to use the service again if their circumstances change in the future.

Well over two thirds of case management clients are back to managing independently and case managers are working with people to make sure that they can access the information and services they need to continue with their recovery.

Material Aid Update – Marysville and Kinglake

A reminder that the Pheasant Creek and Marysville material aid centre will be closing when the lease ends on the facilities. Marysville will close on 18 June and Pheasant Creek on 25 June.

By then, most of the material aid generously donated to bushfire-affected families and individuals will have been distributed. After June, any remaining material aid will continue to be available from



Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul stores and the Kinglake Neighbourhood House to holders of blue referral cards.

Community barbecues will be held on 12 June at the Marysville material aid centre and on 19 June at the Pheasant Creek centre to thank workers and volunteers and mark the end of material aid from these facilities.

A list of material aid centres is at: <http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/people/material-aid.html>

Steely resolve will assist bushfire recovery

Almost \$1.6 million raised from recycling steel that was cleared from homes destroyed by the 2009 Victorian bushfires will be made available to Landcare and other community environmental groups to rehabilitate the environment.

Applications for funding for projects in fire-affected areas close on 4 June 2010. For more information call the Regional Landcare Coordinator in your local CMA, or Landcare and Community Engagement Policy Officer Allison Long at allison.long@dse.vic.gov.au

Tupperware packs still available

Tupperware packs are still available to bushfire-affected households with a blue referral card.

For more information go to <http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/financial-and-personal-support/tupperware-packs.html>

Toilets and Showers Extension

Bushfire-affected people rebuilding on their property will now be able to have the use of free portable toilets and showers until 30 November 2010.

Register for the free portable toilet and shower scheme via www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.



Youth events in St Andrews, Hurstbridge and Strathewen

Nillumbik Shire Council is interested in hearing ideas from people aged 10 to 19 years for youth events, projects, classes, activities and festivals that could be held in the St Andrews/ Hurstbridge/ Strathewen area. Contact Ele Jenkins - Youth Participation and Development Officer (Bushfire Recovery) - on 9433 3329 or email your ideas to eleonor.jenkins@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Art and play therapy for children

Free creative art and play therapy for children aged 3-13 years - in their own homes or at a convenient location. Program coordinated by EACH and CentaCare. Contact Tina Tasiopoulos on 0403 313 353 for details.

Financial Counselling

For more information or to make an appointment to speak with a qualified financial counsellor call EACH on 9871 1800. Financial counsellors offer assessment of your financial situation; advice if you can't pay bills or debts; help with budgeting; assistance with Centrelink issues and more.



Sing and Grow Music Therapy sessions for children under 3 – Yarra Glen and Healesville

Sing and Grow is an early intervention and prevention music therapy project. Sessions will run on Mondays until the end of June. Bookings are essential. Ring Jodie Bowker on 9871 1890 or email jbowker@each.com.au

Planning a Working Bee or needing some help around your block?

The Shire of Yarra Ranges has volunteers and individuals available to help with a variety of projects including fencing, painting, gardening, clearing, and transport. Contact the Shire's Community Recovery team on 1300 368 333 for more information.

Youth and music project - 'Right Here Write Now'

Sessions in Healesville and Yarra Glen for 12-18 year olds to create their own music and songs using professional sound and recording equipment. Contact Brad Freind on 0417 794 102 or brad.freind@aus.salvationarmy.org

Women's Health

Women's Health Goulburn North East would like to interview women who have experienced a change in their relationship with their partner or family since the 2009 bushfires. Recent changes to Family Violence Law state that family violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial and social, and can include threats and restriction on contact with family and friends.

Your story can help improve services to women and children and increase understanding about what can happen after a disaster. For more information, contact Karen O'Connor on whealth@whealth.com.au or call 03 5722 3009.

Building Contracts workshop – Marysville and Triangle residents

Tuesday 1 June, 4.30-6.30pm

Marysville Primary School, Falls Road

Are you about to rebuild your home and not sure what your building contract actually means? Do you want some helpful hints to negotiate your building contract? Have you started rebuilding and not sure what your builder is allowed to charge you for?

Our Rebuilding Workshop will try to answer these questions and provide you with some practical information for negotiation of your building contract and management of your building relationships.

'Blokes night out with Rex Hunt' - Healesville

Wednesday 2 June, 7.30pm

Don Road Sporting Complex in Healesville - 7.30pm. RSVP bookings on 1300 368 333 or email communityrecovery@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Dr Greg Moore talk about the effects of fire on vegetation - Whittlesea

Thursday 3 June, 7pm

Whittlesea Community Activity Centre, Laurel Street, Whittlesea

Listen to Dr Moore's experiences working with landowners following the Ash Wednesday fires. RSVP by Monday 31 May to Teneil Matuska on 9719 1000.

Labertouche Community Barbecue and Bushdance

Saturday 5 June, from 6.30pm

Run by the Community Church Warragul. BYO meat, everything else supplied. Bushdance to start at 7.30pm.

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Victorian Bushfire
Reconstruction and
Recovery Authority

Kinglake, Flowerdale, Toolangi Comprehensive Plan and Design Framework (KFT Plan) Sunday 6 June

KFT Plan community forums will be held to start the planning process. The forums will be held at:

- Flowerdale Hall, between 11am and 1pm
- CJ Dennis Hall, Toolangi, between 11am and 1pm
- Central Kinglake Community Centre (cnr Extons Road and Kinglake-Whittlesea Road), between 1.30pm and 5.30pm

For more information visit <http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/rebuilding-kinglake-ranges/kft-plan.html>

Gathering for Recovery – Bereaved Community Recovery Forum Saturday 10 July

'Gathering for Recovery' - the second Bereaved Community Recovery Forum. There will be a range of speakers including Julie Dunsmore, the President of the National Association of Loss and Grief and Bali Trauma Recovery Coordinator, who will present on her work with survivors, bereaved families and children following trauma. Christine Nixon will also provide a brief update on the progress of the reconstruction and recovery effort. If you would like any more information please call 9092 5898.

signup
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If you have a suggestion or would like to contribute to future editions of the *News Update*, please email yoursay@dpc.vic.gov.au or phone 9092 5875.

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