

July 2009
Issue 01

Mitchell Shire Bushfire Recovery Newsletter



Newsletter Information And Distribution

If you are not already on the newsletter distribution database or if you have anything to add to the newsletter, please contact Jacqui Sims on 0407 944 414 or via email at jacquis@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au

Welcome

Hello everyone, and welcome to the first publication of the Mitchell Recovery Community Newsletter which will offer important information for those in bushfire affected communities.

New Community Bushfire Recovery Workers

Bushfire affected communities can seek support through the Community Development Unit at Mitchell Shire Council for the following:

- Supporting community activities, events and meetings
- Assisting communities in gaining resources and information they need to recover and rebuild
- Assisting communities to plan for future emergencies
- Supporting communities to feedback their recovery information to local and state government
- Supporting and celebrating volunteer efforts

For more information, grants or to discuss your ideas please contact:

Jacqui Sims 0407 944 414

Clonbinane Doctors Creek Road, Waterford Park, Kilmore East, Reedy Creek, Strath Creek, Redesdale

Jo van Dort 0407 952 529

Wandong, Heathcote Junction, Upper Plenty, Wallan

Annemaree Docking 0419 318 497

Volunteer support

Destroyed Homes Payment

For the first query in regard to the Destroyed Homes Payment, the stage one payment (\$35K structural and \$15K contents) the following is required:

Before the Stage 1 payment is released applicants will need to receive one-to-one financial information in one of two ways:

1. Attending an information session coordinated by the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA); or
2. Seeking the information from your financial adviser or bank.

Stage 2 of the payment is up to \$40K and has the following requirement: Before the stage 2 payment is released applicants will need to certify and provide evidence that the funds allocated will be applied to meet their rehousing needs. Rehousing includes - rebuilding (either on site or

elsewhere); a new purchase (either in the community or elsewhere); or establishing a tenancy (either in the community or elsewhere). Evidence will include, amongst other things, building contracts, planning approvals, contracts for sale, or tenancy agreements.

Only the one lot of financial advice is required. The important thing is for people to apply and then all of the necessary information on requirements and financial advice will be provided to them (local banks and information sessions that they can attend).

You have until 30 December to lodge a claim for the Rehousing and Recovery/ Destroyed Homes payment.

For more details visit the DHS website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal/Fund-Payments/destroyed-homes-payment or call the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund on 1800 180 213.

Important Contacts

Case Management Service
1800 050 400

Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund
1800 180 213

Community Service Hub located at: 96 Walnut Street, Whittlesea

Open:

Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

Saturday 10am - 2pm

CLOSED Sunday

Phone: 03 9719 1000

Email:

whittlesearecovery@gmail.com

Mitchell Shire Council
5734 6200

Building Commission
1300 360 320

Victorian Bushfire
Reconstruction and Recovery
Authority
1800 240 667

Department of Primary Industries
– Broadford
5784 0600

Nurse on Call
1300 60 60 24

Department of Human Services
1300 650 172
www.dhs.vic.gov.au

CFA: www.cfa.vic.gov.au
DSE: www.dse.vic.gov.au

Mitchell Community Health
Services, Counselling and
Support 1300 773 352

Victorian Bushfire
Reconstruction and Recovery
Authority (VBARRA)
Central reception 9092 5875

Kids help line
1800 551 800
www.kidshelp.com.au

RSPCA for Bushfire Recovery
information or animal issues
9224 2222
www.rspcavic.org

Invitation To Informal Community Meeting

Christine Nixon, Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Recovery and Reconstruction Authority, invites all residents of fire affected areas within the Mitchell Shire to join her at an informal community discussion on Tuesday 14 July 2009 from 3pm to 4.30pm at Wandong/Heathcote Junction Sports and Community Centre, LB Davern Reserve, Wandong.

- A key goal of the authority is to ensure that local people have a chance to be actively involved in the process of recovery.
- Individuals can discuss with Christine how the recovery process is going in their local communities.
- This community meeting is the second of a number of opportunities to speak to Christine Nixon and the authority.
- Light refreshments will be provided.

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2009

Time: 3pm – 4.30pm

Location: Wandong/Heathcote Junction Sports and Community Centre, LB Davern Reserve Wandong

Please contact Jacqui Sims on 0407 944 414, Jo van Dort on 0407 952 529 or Annemaree Docking on 0419 318 497 for enquiries.

Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service

The Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service is providing all Victorians affected by the bushfires with the support they need to access assistance with matters including accommodation, finance, personal assistance, employment, education, counselling, health and legal services during this difficult time.

The case manager will work with individuals and families to determine their needs, prioritise the work that will be conducted, follow up on the agreed actions and report back to families.

They will help Victorians to locate and access the services they need to get back on track, and will act as the primary contact for the family or individual accessing services. Every family will have a case manager whose job it is to help them as they sort through what are very difficult issues.

Case managers will go over the grants that are available, help individuals and families work through which ones they are eligible to receive, and assist in the application process.

The bushfire case management service is available now - call the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service Line on 1800 050 400 to register and your own personal case manager will call you back.

Who can access the service?

All Victorians affected by the bushfires who need to access any of the help services during this time can access the bushfire case management service.

How to access the service?

Victorians can access the bushfire case management service by calling the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service Line on 1800 050 400. Call the line to speak to experienced staff member who will register Victorians in need and arrange for a case manager to contact you direct.

Alternatively, you can register for the case management service by speaking with staff at recovery centres and community hubs.

Mitchell Community Health Services Bushfire Relief Fund



Role of the MCHS Bushfire Relief Fund is to support the immediate needs of those affected in Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires. It is managed by a committee.

We have supplied fencing tools to Blazeaid, lots of tools such as rakes, shovels, axes, wood splitters, 185 wheelbarrows, tarps, buckets, gardening tools, mops, brooms, gloves, safety goggles, ear muffs, crow bars, face masks, scrubbing brushes, hammers, heaters, warm clothing, lots of storage tubs, woolen socks and flannelette shirts. More recently we have purchased books, tree guards and trees.

We are now taking requests for specific items up to a certain value per family. I don't mind if people ring or text me with requests. I do not get mobile reception at home but a text will get me eventually.

We purchase locally to support the local businesses which have been magnificent in their support, often donating goods or giving substantial discounts. I would encourage everyone to buy locally and in turn support the local storekeepers.

I would also like to point out that I have been working with the Broadford CWA which have been knitting beanies and scarves and providing coats. Wandong-Wallan Lions have provided funding for kitchen utensils and shirts. Broadford Men's Shed are making objects and Kilmore Men's Shed are making bookshelves with funding from Wandong-Wallan Lions so it is a fantastic community effort.

Please contact me on 0418 371147.
Regards,
Heather Knight



'Take A Break' Family Camps

Uniting Church in Australia and Synod of Victoria and Tasmania are offering free 'Take A Break Camps' holiday programs throughout 2009 and 2010 – these holidays are available to families and couples from communities affected by the 2009 bushfires.

These fully catered camps offer an opportunity to have a short break holiday where meals and accommodation are provided at charge.

Camps are being held at three separate

locations: Norva at Halls Gap; Portland Bay Lodge located on the edge of the bay and at Grantville Lodge overlooking Westernport Bay.

To register for any of the camps you need to complete the application form by the Monday 13 July 2009.

For further information and to obtain an application form for the 'Take A Break Camps' please phone (03) 9251 5246 or visit www.takeabreakcamps.org.au

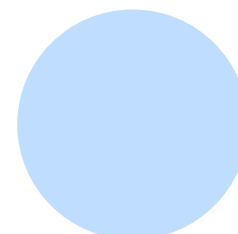
MAP Group (Many Australian Photographers Group)

Members of this group want to help people affected by the bushfires. They are offering to copy photos from friends or family into digital format and put the images onto CD. If you have damaged photos salvaged from burnt home they will endeavour to restore them.

The group is also offering to photograph families who have lost their homes and provide them with prints to re-start their family photo collections. This is at no

charge for those who lost homes in the bushfires.

For further information please go to www.mapgroup.org.au or contact Noel Butcher on 0419 727 777 noelb@noelb.com or Susan Gordon Brown on 0407 366 332 susan@susangordonbrown.com.au or Michael Silver on 0419 520 914 mail@photonet.com.au



Quilts all the way from WA



I delivered this quilt this morning to Ann Humphries. Ann's garden was destroyed in the fire and her house badly damaged. She hopes to move back into the house this week end after the repairs.

The quilt was made by a group of quilters in WA. For Ann her garden was her life. It is the most divine quilt ever and just perfect for Ann. Each quilt has the name of the person on it and comes with a card and photo of the quilters. Often they put in a book or some other gift which is appropriate. Ann was given a garden design book.

This is the 6th quilt to come this way and there are more in the pipeworks

TAX Time Assistance

For people and small businesses in the affected areas, the Commissioner has extended the due dates for:

- lodgement and payment of the January, February and March monthly activity statements to 21 May 2009
- lodgement and payment of the December and March quarterly activity statements to 28 May 2009, and
- lodgement of superannuation guarantee charge statements for the December quarter to 28 May 2009

The Tax Office can continue to help people in disaster affected areas by:

- fast tracking refunds
- giving people extra time to pay debts –

without interest charges

- giving more time to meet activity statement, income tax and other lodgement obligations without penalties
- helping reconstruct tax records where documents have been destroyed, and make reasonable estimates where necessary
- offering visits from field officers to help reconcile lost records, and
- helping people who qualify for hardship relief

For more information on practical help and assistance in relation to natural disasters visit www.ato.gov.au or call 1300 304 975.

NURSE-ON-CALL

NURSE-ON-CALL Bushfire Health and Counselling Line provides 24-hour support and counselling to anyone either directly or indirectly affected by the Victorian bushfires.

Call 1300 60 60 24 for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria.

(Calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate.)

Hamer Court Accommodation

The City of Boroondara is offering to those affected by bushfires Hamer Court Accommodations. The facility offers good quality medium or respite accommodation close to public transport and all the things to see and do around Kew. This is a great opportunity to have a break.

Hamer Court is located at 533-535 High Street, Kew and the accommodation consists of 30 rooms each with an ensuite. As of the 27 June rooms are still currently available so for further information please call 9278 4444 during business hours.

Mitchell Community Health

**Counselling and Support
1300 773 352**

Mitchell Community Health Services are providing coordination of counselling and personal support to residents in the Mitchell and Murrindindi communities that have been devastated by the Black Saturday Bushfires. Counselling and personal support services can be accessed by contacting 1300 773 352.

Other services available through Mitchell Community Health Services include:

Debriefing for individuals, community groups and businesses.

Access and referral to other local health and support services.

Financial counselling and health services.

To make an appointment please call **1300 773 352.**



MensLine Australia launches Bushfire EAR service

MensLine Australia has just launched the Bushfire EAR (Emergency Aftermath Rebuild) telephone call-back service for victims of the Victorian bushfires.

The service provides professional 24-hour, 7-day support, with the option of up to six calls from the same counsellor over a period of six months. A Telephone Call Back Service for people affected by the Victorian Bushfires

1300 78 99 78

How do I register for the Bushfire EAR Call Back Service?

Contact Bushfire EAR on 1300 78 99 78

Follow the menu option to be put through to an intake counsellor for the Bushfire EAR.

The intake counsellor will record your details and listen to your requirements and explain Bushfire EAR.

A call back counsellor will contact you within 72 hours.

Bushfire EAR also provides immediate counselling when you need it, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We will speak to men and women about any issues related to the Victorian bushfires. This service is anonymous and confidential.

To learn more visit

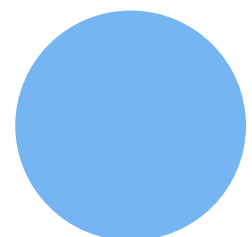
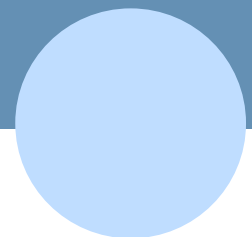
www.menslineaus.org.au

Morning Teas In Kilmore

Morning teas are held every Thursday mornings at 10am behind the Uniting Church in Unions Street (up behind Kemp's Bakery) in Kilmore.

These morning teas have been a great success with many women attending. It is a get together in a safe environment for women who have been affected by the bushfire. Also gives the chance to exchange stories and to connect with others who have experienced similar events.

All welcome and enquiries can be made to Heather 0418 371 147.



Your Stories

You may have been directly affected by the fire, been concerned about friends or relatives or been one of the many volunteers working in various capacities. Often members of the same household have different stories to relate as they were in different places on the day.

This is an opportunity for local residents to record a momentous event in the history of our area. "*7th and 8th February*" is a tale of great loss but also of amazing survival and should be recorded as testimony to those who battled to save themselves, their family, neighbours, animals and their homes. We would also like to record the accounts of the volunteers as their effort has been a large part of the overall story. Everyone has a story to tell and it does not have to be long or expertly written.

The book is being compiled by Heather Knight, Catherine Turnbull and Suzanne Jamieson. The three of us have been volunteering for the fire relief effort and have met many people affected by the fire. It is vital to record the stories of Black Saturday as a means of recording local history and *your* family history.

Suzanne, Catherine and Heather would welcome the opportunity to talk to

anyone about their experiences. We are more than happy to assist with writing if you need us to. (Don't worry about spelling or grammar if you are concerned as we will edit if necessary). We also have a tape recorder and can tape anyone who feels they cannot write their story.

You and your story will be treated with respect and your account will be printed only with your final approval. We suggest that you write for yourself (good therapy) and we will edit if necessary for the book.

We are also seeking photographs of the events of 7 February and afterwards.

If possible please record photographs to a CD or DVD. Make sure your name and contact number is on the disc. All written contributions and photographs used will be acknowledged.

Email: blacksaturday@nl.com.au

Contact Heather Knight (03) 5784 2126 or 0418 37 11 47 (no mobile reception at home) or Catherine Turnbull on 0400 687 771.

Gardening After The Fire – Plant Donation Scheme



The Sunday Creek - Dry Creek Landcare Group and the Pretty Sally Garden Club have initiated a plant donation scheme to assist people in the Mitchell Shire who lost their gardens in the Black Saturday Fires.

The program also has the support of the Rotary Club of Bacchus Marsh, Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group, Valley of a Thousand Hills Tree Nursery – Strath Creek, Mitchell Shire Council and several families and individuals who have donated plants, guards and stakes.

Whilst the groups acknowledge that gardening may not be a high priority right now, the re-establishment of gardens is part of the fire recovery process.

The groups are well aware of the risk of weed and disease spread; especially when there is no other plants to out complete the weeds and therefore will;

- not be supplying plants that have the potential to become environmental weeds
- will be disinfecting all pots prior to potting
- only be using potting mix, rather than garden soil

A set of simple guidelines has been developed for those wanting to donate plants.

Building on the plant donation scheme, The Sunday Creek-Dry Creek Landcare Group will be hosting a free workshop on establishing sustainable and ‘fire smart’ gardens run by Sustainable

Gardening Australia in August this year. Sustainable Gardening Australia has kindly offered to run the workshop free of charge for people in the fire affected areas. The details of the workshop will be advertised when more information becomes available.

There is native tube stock available now, from large trees through to small indigenous garden plants. More garden plants will be available in August/September, including geraniums, lavender and rosemary etc.

So far 1804 plants have been donated, with 1143 plants already picked up or ordered by 17 local landholders affected by the fires.

All landholders receive;

- plants and guards (presently we have run out of bamboo stakes, but are hopeful to get more)
- species list, including description of the species they are receiving
- a copy of the landcare flyer

People in the Mitchell Shire who have lost garden plants in the fires and would like some plants to help re-establish their gardens or plant trees on larger properties, or for those wanting to donate plants please contact Elyse Kelly from the Landcare Group on 5781 0155 or cambankke@bigpond.com or Dorothy Archbold from the Pretty Sally Garden Club on archbolds@hotmail.com or 5783 1576.

Please remember this is a volunteer program so species selection and numbers are limited.

Wallan Bushfire Relief Centre

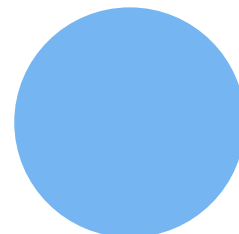
Open:
Thursday - Saturday
9.30 – 3pm

Contact: 0422 645 559.

Material aid

Located:
Old Home Hardware in
High Street Wallan
(next to Safeway)

* Please note that this relief centre is looking to wind down over the next few weeks with a view of closing in August.



Beltane@ The Shack

Beltane@ the Shack in Upper Plenty - Saturday 25 July, starting 8pm.

We are delighted to have this very talented group performing at the Hall once again. Headed up by local singer-songwriter Anne Gasko, they are seasoned performers having played at many local and interstate festivals. Their style can best be described as Celtic traditional and contemporary folk. The event will be cabaret-style with seating at tables of up to 8 people. BYO drinks and nibbles. A light supper will be served. Tickets are \$10 per person. Children under 10 free.

Bookings/enquiries:
Rose – 5783 1661



Men's Day 'Blokes Get Together'

Blokes get together, Friday 31 July 2009.

This day has been organised as a chance for men affected in any way by the Black Saturday bushfires to have a catch up over a game of golf.

Any man connected in any way with the bushfires is encouraged to come along. This includes fire survivors, all emergency services personnel, resident or non resident of any age. Bring your father, mate or son along for the day: it's free.

Never played golf?

Don't worry, golfing experience is not necessary, although, you will need to BYO some golf clubs.

Registration forms and more information for the Men's Day **Blokes get together** golf day are available from:

Mitchell Community Health,
72 Ferguson Street Broadford, or,
you can telephone: 5784 5555 or
email: briank@mitchellchs.org.au

A Day In The Valley

A day of free family entertainment is coming to Yarra Glen Football Club for those communities affected by the Victorian bushfires.

Wednesday 8 July, 10am - 3pm

Melway ref Page 267 B12

Kicking off with a NAB AFL Auskick Clinic hosted by AFL players and NAB Ambassadors Robert "Dipper" DiPierdomenico, Garry Lyon and Andrew Gaze, the day will also feature musical performances, a soccer clinic, children's rides, free food throughout the day and more.

There will be plenty of entertainment for the kids with face painting, an animal farm, competitions, giveaways and special appearances by AFL club mascots, Bob the Builder and Buddy Bear.

Don't forget to pick up an individually named flyer as you arrive to win spot prizes throughout the day! Plus, the first

500 children to the event can collect a free showbag from the event marquee!

3 free buses leaving from:

Alexandra 8.15am

Wallan 8.15am

Sunbury 8.30am

Bus departure time from event

All buses will depart from the event at Yarra Glen at 2pm SHARP

Register for the bus.

If you would like to reserve a seat on any of the above bus routes, please email footy@nab.com.au with your name and the location that you will be getting on the bus from.

For further information please visit www.nab.com.au/adayinthevalley

Supported by:

