

August 2009
Issue 02

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

Destroyed Homes Payment

For the first query in regard to the Destroyed Homes Payment, the stage 1 payment (\$35K structural and \$15K contents) Stage 2 of the payment is up to \$40K

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

More details are on the DHS website:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal/Fund-Payments/destroyed-homes-payment>

Welcome

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



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

Tai Chi Classes To Support Fire Affected Communities

Vicki Katte, a practitioner and teacher of Tai Chi, is offering her services to the fire affected communities by conducting a term of free classes for fire affected people.

The Tai Chi is Chen Pan Ling style. Chen Pan Ling was a famous Martial Artist in China, who united all the different martial arts, as well as boxing, under one organisation. He fled China to Taiwan in the fifties, and died in 1967. He took the best parts of different styles of Tai Chi and combined them into one form.

Vicki Katte has been training for 7 years and regularly attends intensive workshops. There is more to her

training than Tai Chi. Vicki is also studied in sword, staff, Kung Fu, Mountain Top Boxing, and much more. After all, Tai Chi itself is a martial art!

Classes will be commencing at 7pm on Monday 13 July at the Wandong/Heathcote Junction Community Centre, LB Davern Reserve, Dry Creek Road, Wandong. All are welcome. Classes are offered for free to all fire affected people and those who were not affected by the fires but are still keen to participate can do so for the cost of \$10.

For more information, contact Vicki on **5782 1765**.

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: 9719 1000

Email:

whittlesearecovery@gmail.com

Mitchell Shire Council
5734 6200

Building Commission
1300 360 320

Victorian Bushfire
Reconstruction and Recovery
Authority (VBRRA)
1800 240 667

Department of Primary Industries
(DPI) – 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 (MCHS), Counselling
and Support 1300 773 352

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

Kids help line
1800 551 80
www.kidshelp.com.au

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

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 sites, they will endeavor 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 0419 727 777

noelb@noelb.com or

Susan Gordon Brown 0407 366 332

susan@susangordonbrown.com.au or

Michael Silver 0419 520 914

mail@photonet.com.au

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.

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 who will register Victorians in need and arrange for a case manager to contact you.

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

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 counselor over a period of six months. A *Telephone Call Back Service* for people affected by the Victorian Bushfires on:

1300 78 99 78

MensLine 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



A Guide To Temporary Housing Options

With the passing of time and with many people reviewing their long-term housing options, this new guide has been developed to help ensure people have appropriate housing throughout the rebuilding process.

An online version of the document is available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency/current-events/bushfire/accommodation>

The Guide was created jointly by the Department of Human Services, Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, Victorian Building Commission and Municipal Association of Victoria. It includes the latest information on temporary housing. Topics include the range of accommodation options available for those who lost their homes in the February 2009 bushfires, the costs associated with temporary accommodation, information for those already living on their property and more.

The range of accommodation options available for those who lost their homes in the February 2009 bushfires vary in cost and location. They include:

- Rental accommodation – homes and units – through private providers and through the Department of Human Services (DHS)

- Transportable housing on-site through private providers
- Temporary villages in Marysville, Flowerdale and Kinglake – individual units and dongas – through DHS
- On-site accommodation like caravans provided by private providers or DHS
- On-site sheds provided through private providers
- Off-site caravans in caravan parks or on other private property provided by private providers or DHS
- Lodging with family or friends
- Public and social housing through DHS
- Amenity support (toilets and showers) for those in on-site living arrangements provided by the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority.

These booklets are available through your case manager or call the Victorian Bushfire Accommodation Line to have one mailed to you on **1800 006 468**.



Bushfire Relief Camp 2009 for Teenagers

This is a camp for teenagers in Years 7-10 at high school who were impacted by the February bushfires.

The camp will be held at 'The Portsea Camp', 24-27 August 2009.

Places still available, but limited, so make your enquiries soon.

To find out more, email bushfirecamp@bridgebuilders.com.au
If you don't have access to email, call **9038 8818**.



A Special Evening With Rob Gordon

Dr Rob Gordon is a renowned psychologist specialising in helping communities affected by emergencies.

7pm Wednesday 12 August @ Whittlesea Secondary College Auditorium, 55 Laurel Street, Whittlesea.

ALL WELCOME. Light refreshments will be provided.

Since Ash Wednesday, Rob has worked alongside many Victorian and Australian communities experiencing major disasters including fires, floods and cyclones. Presented by the Whittlesea Wellbeing and Mental Health Group.

For more information please contact **9217 2532**.





NURSE-ON-CALL

Nurse-On-Call Bushfire Health and Counselling Line provides 24-hour support and counseling 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).



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**.

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**.

Calendar Of Environmental Events In Mitchell Shire

Managing erosion after fire

Saturday 15 August 10am-12noon, Walls Crossing, Spur Road, Clonbinane. A demonstration of techniques and distribution of rice straw for erosion works. Come for morning tea. Bring a ute or trailer. Sunday Creek/Dry Creek Landcare Group contact Dianne Dixon 5782 1446.

Property rehabilitation workshop

Friday 21 August 6-9pm Wandong/Heathcote Junction Community Centre, Dry Creek Crescent, Wandong. A workshop to discuss weeds, water supply and land management issues after fire, and opportunities for financial assistance. Aerial photos of your property will be provided. Light meal available. Contact Peter Mitchell from DPI on **5784 0622** or **0409 432 498** peter.mitchell@dpi.vic.gov.au **Bookings essential.**

Sustainable gardening and fire

Saturday 22 August 10am-12noon, Mitchell Shire Offices, Broadford. Sustainable Gardening Australia will provide ideas on gardening in a dry and fire-prone environment contact Mitchell Shires Elyse Kelly on 5734 6200.

Bushland Walks in Spring after the Fires

Bushland after the fires at Wandong Sunday 4 October 10am-12noon, 315 South Mountain Road, Heathcote Junction. Organised by Sunday Creek/Dry Creek Landcare Group and DPI.

Bushland after the fires at Clonbinane Saturday 10 October 10-12noon, 695B Spur Road, Clonbinane. Also organised by Sunday Creek/Dry Creek Landcare Group and DPI.

Bushland after the fires at Reedy Creek and Strath Creek Sunday 11 October 10am-12noon, 360 Murchison Spur Road, Reedy Creek. Organised by Reedy Creek Landcare Group and DPI.

Bushland walks in Spring to see how our native plants are recovering after the fires and what we can do to help. Guest speaker: TBA. Lunch provided. Bring suitable footwear. For walks please contact Peter Mitchell **5784 0622** or **0409 432 498** peter.mitchell@dpi.vic.gov.au



Public Transport Assistance

The Brumby Government, in conjunction with V/Line, Connex, Yarra Trams and the bus industry, are providing free travel to those who have lost their homes in the February bushfires.

Free travel is available to all eligible people until 1 October 2009 on all public transport services in Victoria, including metro, V/Line and bus services within regional cities.

Free public transport will be provided to individuals and families who have received one of the following grants from the Department of Human Services (DHS): Emergency Grant, Temporary Living Grant or Re-establishment Grant.



To obtain a travel pass, a completed Victorian Public Transport Bushfire Assistance Application form and copy of your grant receipt need to be sent to Metlink.

The form can be downloaded at <http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au/news-promotions/free-public-transport-for-bushfire-victims> or call 131 638

The pass can also be issued on the spot at the Central Pass Office at Southern Cross Station (you will need a copy of your grant receipt).

Forms can be emailed, faxed or posted to Metlink. Call **131 638** for more information.

Morning Teas in Kilmore

Morning Teas held every Thursday mornings at 10am Kilmore Anglican Church House at the corner of Church and Union Streets, Kilmore (up behind Kemp's)

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. **Now**

EVENING GROUP

Due to the success of the morning tea group an evening group has started to cater for both women and men who work or cannot come during the day.

Every Thursday 7.30pm
Wandong/Heathcote Junction Community Centre, LB Davern Reserve, Wandong

All welcome and enquiries can be made to Heather 0418 371 147 or Anne Rose 5783 1085

Free Toilets And Showers For Temporary Accommodation

Thanks to the generous donations made to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund, free portable toilets and shower units will be available to bushfire affected property owners living in temporary accommodation on their land.

VBRRRA will oversee the hire, installation and management of the amenities which will be available to people who are living in temporary accommodation on the property where their principal place of residence was destroyed in the 2009 fires.

Portable single toilet and shower units will be fully installed at no cost to property owners, although the ongoing cost of consumables such as gas refills and water supply will be the responsibility of the property owner.

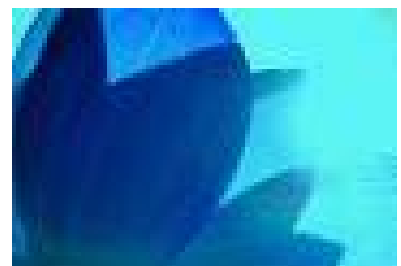
Grocon, who were contracted by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to undertake the bushfire clean up, will continue their work in affected communities by assisting with project coordination in the rollout of this initiative.

Grocon and its network of Community Liaison Officers will work with property owners through the next phase of recovery.

If you have registered for the clean up program you can use the same log in details for the toilet and shower scheme. Property owners who did not previously register for clean-up can still register for free toilets and shower.

Those who are eligible for this scheme and have already commissioned toilets or showers are still able to participate. They should register, stating their specific details, and VBRRRA will either come to an arrangement with the existing hirer, replace the existing units or assist by providing part or all rental costs.

Register now at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on **1800 240 667**.



Rural Recovery Services – Post Fire

Department of Primary Industries (DPI) can provide medium to long term help for fire affected landholders.

Pasture Re-establishment and Management

Fires can change the botanical composition of pastures and can lead to reduced growth rates and a reduction in carrying capacity. DPI can provide advice on pasture recovery, seed mixes and establishment techniques.

Weed and Pest Animal Management

Advice on control measures to minimise the likelihood of weeds becoming established on your property following fire, or pest animals impacting on livestock.

Whole Farm Planning

Fences may have to be replaced as a result of the fire. Whole farm planning allows you to review the current farm layout and make changes for improved management. DPI can provide further advice.

Crown Land Boundary Fencing

Reimbursement of insurance excess up to \$400 is available for claims made for Crownland (Park and State Forest) boundary fences that have been damaged or destroyed by the 2009 bushfires.

Lifestyle Landholders

Fire recovery advice can be provided to lifestyle landholders.

Soil Conservation and Erosion Control

With large areas of bare ground caused by fire, there is the potential for soil erosion to occur. DPI can provide advice on soil protection measures.

Water Quality Supplies – Farm Dams

Rainfall on paddocks with minimal ground cover can lead to siltation of farm dams that can reduce their capacity and contribute to water quality problems.

Stock Containment Areas

Well designed stock containment areas can assist with hand feeding of stock while pastures recover, reduce soil erosion and provide better control of weed contamination from imported feed. They can also be used as a safe area for stock during future fires. DPI can provide further advice.

Livestock – Feed Planning

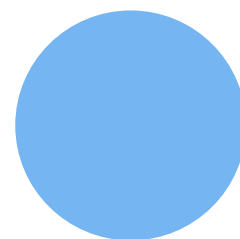
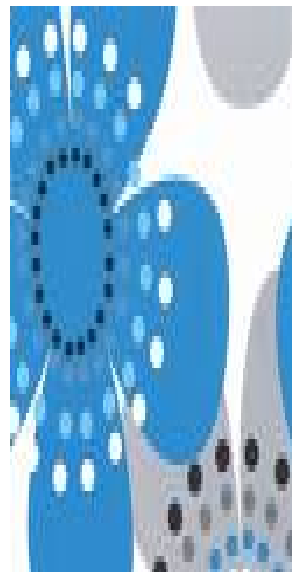
Managing livestock with reduced feed supplies is an enormous challenge. DPI can provide advice on feeding strategies to get stock through the recovery phase.

Livestock – Animal Health

Advice about any issues or concerns about livestock affected by the fire.

Call **1800 240 667** – Victorian Bushfire Information Line or DPI Broadford on 5784 0600 to be put in touch with one of DPI's Rural Recovery staff.

For more information about DPI visit: www.dpi.vic.gov.au or call the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



Laughter Class

By Bronwyn Roberts
Date: Sunday 9 August 2009 @ 2pm
Venue: Wandong (To be confirmed)

Cost: FREE

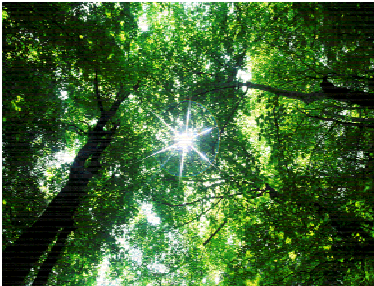
Please register your interest by Thursday 6 August
with Cathy Soulsby by emailing

cathylew@bigpond.com or phone Cathy on 5787 1561

Gardening After The Fires

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.

People 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**.



Hamer Court Accommodation

The City of Boroondara in conjunction with YMCA Victoria 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.

Hamer Court is located at 533-535 High Street, Kew and the accommodation consists of 30 rooms each with an ensuite. This is a great opportunity to have a break.

Points System For Donated Goods

A new system for distributing goods and services donated by businesses and corporations is now in place. Donations include holiday accommodation, shopping vouchers and flights.

Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority state that 'Each item will be given a points value and each household will be given an initial allocation of 1000 points to use in accessing the items.'

'Any bushfire affected person who was approved for or received a grant from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund will be able to access the donations.'

Donation Coordinators will be on the ground to administer the new system working with Case Managers. Households should talk to their case managers with regards to this new system.

Mitchell Community Health Service Bushfire Relief Fund

Role of the Mitchell Community Health Service (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 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, Heather, eventually on **0418 371 147**.

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.

Lets Get Together

Out of the Black Social Group

*Lets Get Together!!
An opportunity to catch up with everyone on the 1st Saturday of every month for an informal get together.*

*Where: Whittlesea Pub-Opp Primary School
2424 Plenty Rd
Whittlesea*

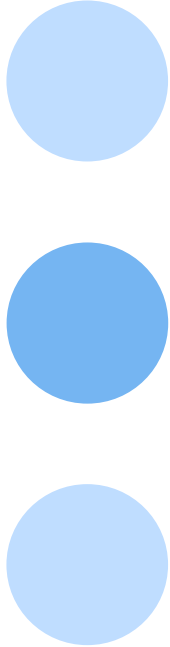
Starting: Saturday 1 August

Time: Lunchtime onwards

Any inquiries contact Iona 0407 384 699



Memorials And Commemorative Events Funding



The Victorian Community Recovery fund has allocated \$159,556 to Council to support communities affected by the Black Saturday Bushfires in the creation of memorials and commemorative events.

Memorials represent a genuine response to grief, a shared experience and desire for formal remembrance by the wider community. Community memorials give people the chance to reflect and remember the impact of the bushfires as an important step in rebuilding. They can be a site, structure, building, landscape, art, sculpture or monument. There may be one or many throughout the shire.

Funds can be used to create memorials or events that remember the bushfire events, recognise loss, honour the courage and efforts of community members and emergency service workers who risked their lives.

Although Council is accountable for the funding provided, Council would like to invite community members and community artists within the Shire to put forward their ideas for the funding.

Jacqui Sims (0407 944 414), Jo van Dort (0407 952 529), and Annemaree Docking (0419 318 497), are the Bushfire Community Development Workers and work with communities to facilitate their input the community recover process. Individuals and community groups who would like express their ideas relating to this project should contact them directly.

Christine Payne, Manager Libraries Arts and Culture would like to hear from any artist living or working in Mitchell Shire, who would like to be involved in this exciting project. Christine can be contacted on 5734 6240 or via email chrisp@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au.

Erosion Controlled At Walls Crossing

Local residents who are looking for solutions to control erosion on their properties after the bushfires can look at an example of works that has been conducted in the local area.

An environmental restoration project has recently commenced at Wall's Crossing on Spur Rd in Clonbinane. The project is a collaboration of the Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare group, Rotary Club of Southern Mitchell, Green Corp and Mitchell Shire Council. Sediment traps will control erosion damage at Wall's Crossing and protect the Sunday Creek. Green Corp volunteers are assisting with labour for the project. Rice straw, fallen branches, ring lock fencing recovered from fences damaged by the fires and steel droppers have been strategically placed to slow down and spread out water flow from

rainfall, preventing further ash and sediments entering the Sunday Creek. The rice straw is weed free and heavy enough not to blow away in winds, whilst the ring lock assists with keeping it in place. Fallen branches are readily available materials for many people and are very effective in slowing water down and trapping sediments.

Council has provided traffic management signage and will develop an educational sign to raise awareness of the project. The project will improve environmental outcomes and act as an educational demonstration site for erosion control on fire affected creek lines and gullies. Local people who are looking for ideas are encouraged to look at the site. If you would like any further advice, contact the Department of Primary Industries in Broadford on **5784 0600**.



Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare Group

2 upcoming events;

- Managing erosion after fire demonstration – Saturday 15 August, 10am-12noon at Walls Crossing, Spur Road, Clonbinane.
- Gardening after the fire workshop – Saturday 22 August 1-3pm at the Council Chamber, 113 High Street Broadford.

Erosion Control following the fires

Erosion and the siltation of waterways and dams is a real issue post fire. To this effect the Rotary Club of Southern Mitchell have secured loads of rice straw which are available to landholders affected by the fires - the Sunday Creek-Dry Creek Landcare Group are assisting to deliver this program, together with a Greencorp team.

A demonstration site has been established at Walls Crossing, Clonbinane, this was undertaken in partnership with Greencorp and Mitchell Shire Council. Rice straw, fallen branches and ring lock fencing recovered from fences damaged by the fires have been strategically placed to slow down and spread out water flow from rainfall, preventing further ash and sediments to entering the Sunday Creek. The project looks to improve environmental outcomes and act as an educational demonstration site for erosion control on fire affected creek lines and gullies.

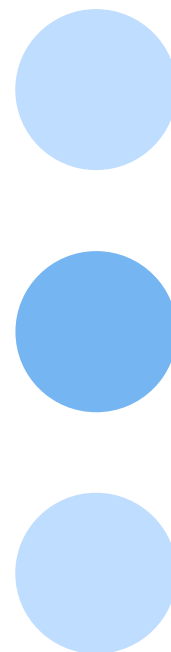
A demonstration day “Managing erosion after fire” has been scheduled for Saturday 15 August, 10am-12noon at Walls Crossing, Spur Road, Clonbinane. (Walls Crossing is the bridge at the start of Spur Road, when you enter off the Broadford-Wandong Road) The day will include a demonstration of techniques and distribution of rice straw for erosion works. Fire affected landholders are encouraged to bring a ute or trailer, as there is rice straw stockpiled nearby. Morning tea included. For further information contact Dianne Dixon on **5782 1446**.

Gardening after the fire

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 on Saturday 22 August from 1–3pm at the Council Chamber, 113 High Street Broadford.

People who have lost trees and gardens in the fires are encouraged to bring a box to fill with plants donated through the ‘Gardening after the Fire’ plant donation scheme. Many of these have been propagated by Landcare members and members of the Pretty Sally Garden Club. So far over 1500 plants have been donated, to over 30 local landholders affected by the fires.

For further information, or to RSVP to the workshop please contact Elyse Kelly on **5781 0155** or cambankke@bigpond.com



Supported by:

