

September 2009
Issue 03

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

Welcome to the September Newsletter. We hope that you enjoy reading through this edition and find the information useful. If anyone has anything they would like to contribute, please contact Jacqui Sims 0407 944 414 or Jo van Dort on 0407 952 529.

Local Assistance Available

Mitchell Shire has been working with other agencies to start the Mitchell Shire Bushfire Recovery Support Sessions.

These Sessions will be run at the Broadford Community Centre, High Street in Broadford, opposite the service station.

Representatives from CentaCare, Centrelink, the Department of Human Services, Mitchell Community Health

Service and the Salvation Army will be present to answer questions, provide information, help fill in forms, provide assistance etc. Appointments are not required, just come in and say hi.

The Bushfire Recovery Support Sessions will run from 9am – 12noon on Wednesday mornings.

For more information, contact Jacqui Sims on 0407 944 414.

Funding Available For Property Owners

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is providing funding for several different activities.

1) Fencing

Funding is available for protecting remnant vegetation and native habitats. Sites are to be greater than one hectare and used for the following purposes: protecting and managing perennial native pastures; protecting threatened species; reinstating of wildlife corridors that are greater than 40m wide; protecting creek lines and waterways; and helping to conserve fragile soils or re-growth.

2) Erosion

Funding for waterway protection including hill slope and gully.

3) Weed control

For protecting natural assets such as waterways, threatened species habitat and remnant vegetation.

Funding is available for any landholder whose property was burnt by the February 2009 bushfires and is located in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Funding is available from August 2009 until June 2010.

Who is Eligible? Any landholder whose property was burnt by the February 2009 bushfires and is located in the Goulburn Broken Catchment. Funding may vary according to priority areas and issues.

Landholders need to contact the DPI Officer closest to their property.

There is a DPI office in Broadford. The Officer is Bruce Radford and his phone number is 5784 0600.

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

Mitchell Community Health Service Bushfire Relief Fund

Mitchell Community Health Service Bushfire Relief Fund was established to support the immediate needs of people affected by the fires in Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires. Most of the donations have come from locals with the intention of supporting locals.

Items such as wheelbarrows, garden tools, crow bars, extension power leads, trenching shovels, post hole shovels and some kitchen appliances and furniture have been purchased recently through the fund.

As people are now at different stages in their recovery and have varying requirements we will take specific requests for goods required. We are able to purchase some larger tools and furniture up to a certain value.

I would encourage anyone who has lost a home or other property to contact me if you have any requirements. The only limitation is that we must buy locally. Please phone or text me with requests. I do not get mobile reception at home but a text will find me.

Please do not hesitate to call me, this fund was established by local people to support you.

Heather Knight - Volunteer MCHS Bushfire Relief Fund

Ph. 0417 371 147

10/30 Right to Clear Vegetation Now Law

The State Government has introduced new native vegetation clearance laws across the state.

The new laws mean that landowners can clear vegetation, including trees, within 10 metres of their house and any ground fuel within 30 metres of their house without a permit.

Residents can also clear all vegetation, including trees, for a combined maximum width of four metres either side of their property's boundary fence, providing they have the permission of the neighbouring landowner.

Loss of vegetation can have a range of environmental and safety impacts including landslip, erosion,

damage from storm water run off, loss of biodiversity and an impact on neighbourhood amenity.

Council encourages residents to consider these impacts along with other consideration such as fire safety to make an informed and sensible choice specific to their property and their neighbourhood.

Residents in areas that are potentially subject to landslip or erosion are strongly encouraged to contact Council for advice for their property prior to any vegetation clearing.

Further information can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au

Free Railway Sleepers

Free sleepers are available for those who were affected by the bushfires to use. Sleepers will be available from the Clonbinane and Wandong CFA sheds. For more information, please contact Lisa Bassett on 0400 721 339.

Hand-made Quilts Available

In2quilting have made and collected from regional and interstate, quilts, hand knits, books, craft magazines and other goods to pass on to fire affected people in Mitchell Shire.

Where: Wandong/Heathcote Junction Community Centre, Dry Creek Road, Wandong.

When: Saturday 19 September from 10am – 3pm

Come with the family and choose your own quilt and other goods.

Holidays Available

A range of donated holiday accommodation options are still available to those who were affected by the fires. Tourism Victoria is coordinating the holidays, which include up to two nights in a caravan park, B&B, motel or hotel. The holidays are suitable for couples or families. A range of holiday destinations is available.

For more information, contact Tourism Victoria's website at www.tourism.vic.gov.au/busfireoffer/accommodation or contact your case manager.

Solar Hot Water Rebate

The Australian Government is offering a \$1600 solar hot water rebate to people who lost their homes in the February bushfires, and for those whose homes were left uninhabitable.

The rebate normally applies to those replacing old electric hot water systems, but special arrangements have been made for bushfire affected properties if people:

- Are rebuilding a home they lost in the fires
- Are installing a solar or heat pump hot water system that is eligible for at least 20 renewal energy certificates
- Are installing a 2000 litre water tank compliant with Victorian 5-star building standards which is connected to the dwelling for toilet flushing
- Using a suitably qualified person for the installation e.g. plumber or electrician

For guidelines and more information visit www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency or call 1800 808 571.

MAP Group (Many Australian Photographers Group)

Members of MAP 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. Persons in possession of damaged photos salvaged from houses lost in the fires can contact MAP group, who 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. These services are offered 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



Evening social group in Wandong



An evening group has been meeting at the Community Centre in Wandong on Thursdays.

This is an informal group that gets together to enjoy a drink and some supper, as well as a chat, laugh or cry.

Bring your neighbour or friends and connect with others from your community.

Guest speakers and presentations are sometimes organised.

Where: Community Centre, LB Davern Reserve, Dry Creek Road, Wandong.

When: Every Thursday from 7:30pm.

More Information: Call Anne Rose on 0408 038 203 or Heather Knight on 0418 371 147.

Eucalypt Trees For Sale

Available in minimum lots of 50 tubes for \$0.40 per tube. Please contact Jason Hagan on 0428 414 547.



Bushland After The Fires Walks

Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare Group, Dayminga Catchment Cooperative and the Department of Primary Industries are presenting Bushland After The Fires. These bushland walks in the springtime will provide the opportunities for people to see how our native plants are recovering and what we can do to help.

Ecologist Graeme Lorimer and local experts will be guiding groups through the bushland.

Three walks have been planned.

Wandong and Heathcote Junction

Sunday 4 October, 315 South Mountain Road, Heathcote Junction

Clonbinane and Broadford

Saturday 10 October, 695B Spur Road, Clonbinane

Reedy Creek and Strath Creek

360 Murchison Spur Road, Reedy Creek

All walks begin at 10am and finish at noon. They are followed by a free lunch and chat.

As walks go through burnt bushland, suitable clothing and footwear is required.

Bookings essential – contact Peter Mitchell on 5784 0622 or 0409 432 498 or peter.mitchell@dpi.vic.gov.au

Free Art and Craft Classes

Free art and craft classes are available for those who were affected by the bushfires.

Classes will be held at UCanDoo art and craft school in Kilmore. Classes are available Wednesday and Friday mornings 9:30am – 1pm, and Saturday afternoons, 1pm – 3:30pm.

Participants can choose from painting, drawing, scrapbooking, beading, card making or paper craft. Tuition and materials will be supplied.

Classes start Wednesday 23 September 2009.

Bring your friends and neighbours to relax, catch up and make something new and unique.

UCanDoo is located at 40 Sydney Street, Kilmore.

To book, or for more information, call Maria at UCanDoo 5782 0433 or 0409 933 595.

Mitchell Community Health Service

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT 1300 773 352

Mitchell Community Health Service continues to coordinate counselling and personal support to residents of the Mitchell and Murrindindi communities affected by the February bushfires. Counselling and personal support services can be accessed by contacting our Service Access and Care Coordination (SACC) team on 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 the SACC team on **1300 773 352**.



Family Drive-In Movie Night

Saturday 19 September will see the LB Davern Reserve transform into a Drive-In Movie theatre.

The evening will begin with a free sausage sizzle at 6pm.

WALL-E, a family movie (G-rated) will then be shown from around 7pm. Cars will need to be parked on the oval by 6:45pm and will not be able to be moved until the movie has finished (approximately 9pm).

The movie will be shown on a giant inflatable screen and you can choose to watch the movie from the comfort of your car, or bring your blankets and beanbags to get close to the big screen.

Bring your friends and family and catch-up with your neighbours at this fun, free event.

For more information, contact Kristy Cesaria on 0417 506 130 or Jo van Dort 0407 952 529.

Clonbinane Family Fun Day

A fantastic Family Fun Day has been organised for Sunday 27 September, at Waterford Park Reserve in Clonbinane. This great day will provide lots of fun and entertainment for the whole family, right in the middle of the school holidays.

The day will begin at 11am and festivities will continue until 4pm.

Amusements will include Farmer Darryl's Petting Zoo, face painting, jumping castle and temporary tattoos. All of these activities will be free.

For those who enjoy more active pursuits, there will be 3-legged races,

sack races, and gumboot throwing.

A speed ball competition will also be held – this involves throwing a ball as fast as you can whilst the speed is measured by police radar.

Prizes will also be awarded during a pet competition – so bring your favourite pet along.

Food will be available throughout the day, or bring a picnic lunch.

For more information, please contact Sharon Wilson 0427 992 683, Jo-anne Fryer 5787 1453 or Jacqui Sims 0407 944 414.

Rob Gordon Afternoon

Due to unforeseen events, the August presentation by Dr Rob Gordon was cancelled.

It has been re-scheduled for Sunday 11 October.

His presentation will begin at 3pm, followed by a light afternoon tea.

Children can be brought to this event, as there will be child-minding and activities provided for them in a separate room.

The venue is yet to be confirmed, but please put the date in your diary now.

We will be publishing the venue in the Review, as well as sending reminder emails and putting up fliers closer to the date.

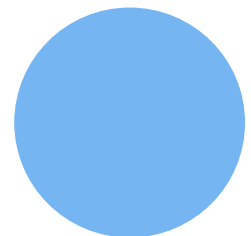
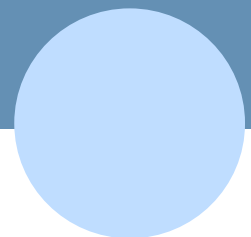
For more information contact Jacqui Sims on 0407 944 414 or Jo van Dort on 0407 952 529.

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.



Safe Removal of Hazardous Trees

The Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund has made available a payment of up to \$4000 per residential property to assist with the assessment and safe removal of hazardous trees affected by the 2009 bushfires.

Am I Eligible?

You are eligible if you are a homeowner with trees that are a hazard to human safety needing to be removed on your property as a result of the 2009 Bushfires.

If you are renting, your landlord should be notified of potentially hazardous trees and asked to have them assessed and treated. Payment will be made based on an assessment from a qualified arborist confirming the tree(s) are hazardous to human safety.

Applicants must provide a receipt or invoice for work completed and an arborist's report. Payment will be by way of reimbursement to a maximum of \$4,000 and will be made available upon the provision of receipts for work completed.

Payments can be claimed by completing an Application form and providing supporting documentation. The Application form is available from case managers and the Victorian Bushfire Appeal fund website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal

Owner occupiers and landlords have until 31 December 2009 to lodge a claim for Safe Removal of Hazardous Trees payment. Applications beyond this date will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What is an arborist and how do I find one?

An arborist is a trained technician for trees. An arborist's training enables them to assess the health and stability of a tree and to safely prune, fell and remove trees.

To find an arborist, contact the Mitchell Council Shire on 5734 6200, check the local yellow pages or the Tree Contractors Association Australia website www.tcaa.com.au

More information and assistance can be given by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund on 1800 180 213.

Permits and Regulations

It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain the appropriate council permit for tree removal. Areas covered by special planning overlays may require other approvals. Applicants should check with the Council as to restrictions or requirements associated with the removal of trees and vegetation.

This payment is strictly for the removal of hazardous trees burned in the 2009 fires. It does not apply to general removal of trees under the new 10/30 right. The new 10/30 right is a change to the planning provisions to assist Victorians to prepare for the 2009/2010 fire season. For more information on the 10/30 right see the Department of Sustainability (DSE) website www.dse.vic.gov.au or call the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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