

Bushfire Update From Christine Nixon

CHAIR: BUSHFIRE RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY AUTHORITY (VBRRA)

FREE TOILET AND SHOWER SCHEME

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

The Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (the Authority) 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 liaise with property owners through the next phase of recovery.

The same on-line and telephone register used for the free government-funded clean up will be used to apply for the toilet and shower scheme. Property owners who did not previously register for clean-up can still register for free toilets and showers.

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 the Authority will come to an arrangement with the existing hirer, replace the existing units or assist by providing part or all of the rental costs.

The Authority will deal directly with the Appeal Fund so that only one application system will apply.

People will be able to register to receive a toilet and/or shower under the scheme **from Wednesday 15 July** via www.wewillrebuild.com.au or by calling 1800 240 667.

Clean Up Register Closing.

With the property clean-up largely finalised some two months ahead of schedule, new arrangements will be put in place from August 7 for those remaining people wanting their property cleared or who are seeking a reimbursement for clearing costs.

From that time, the Authority and Grocon will manage any remaining property clean-ups on a case-by-case basis.

To arrange this, people will need to ring the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on **1800 240 667**, rather than registering via the Authority's website.

For more information about these or other forms of assistance available to bushfire affected people: 1800 240 667 / www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

Nesting boxes

A successful wildlife nesting box installation program has just been rolled out with Latrobe City Council distributing 140 nest boxes to 45 land-holders in and around fire affected areas. The program was organised by Latrobe City with the support of Maffra and Districts Landcare Network and a Caring for Country Grant along with ITC Timber in Heyfield who supplied the timber. A variety of boxes including bats, possums, sugar gliders, rosellas, parrots, tree creepers and owls were made with assistance from the Fulham Prison Crews who did a great job in constructing the boxes. On the evening of Tuesday 4 August a Nest Box Information Session was held with guest speakers Rolf Willig (DSE) and Steve Kurek (Landcare) talking about the different animals that rely on hollows and nesting boxes for habitat

and how to maximise the chances of the boxes being used by the appropriate native animals. It was a fantastic forum to learn more about how nesting boxes can be a viable habitat alternative whilst the fire affected areas are recovering.

It is hoped that through the Work for the Dole program that another similar program can be run to further assist in the rehabilitation and recovery of fire affected areas.

Community Service Hub

Community Service Hub
Cats Drive, Traralgon South 3844

Hub Captain: John Worters
Ph: 5195 5011
Mob: 0400 399 024
Fax: 5195 5012
Email: hubtraralgonsouth@bigpond.com
Open Monday to Friday 10.00am to 5.00pm

Traralgon South Relief Centre

Cats Drive, Traralgon South
Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri & Sat: 12pm – 4.30pm
Thurs & Sun: **CLOSED**

Everyone is encouraged to call in during opening hours.
Our wonderful volunteers have asked if anyone has a spare hour or two to come down and assist with sorting out of all the goodies that are available, it would be much appreciated.
New items keep coming in!!

Community Recovery Website Information

Callignee - www.callignee.vic.au

Boolarra – www.boolarralink.com.au

We will rebuild - willwewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

Pakenham Garden Club – Donation of Plants

Pakenham Garden Club extends an invitation for you to enjoy a day with us at 315 Pakenham Rd Pakenham, Melway Reference: M315, E11

When: Tuesday 8 September, 2009

Time: 11am onwards Lunch will be provided

A wide selection of donated plants will be available to you.

RSVP: 1st September (for catering purposes) to Nicole Scott at Latrobe City
nicolesc@latrobe.vic.gov.au or phone 5128 5781

Hazelwood Jeeralang Community Recovery Committee (CRC)

A message from Chairperson, Tony Ferguson

The recovery committee has been operational now for four months.

Our initial meetings identified four key areas that required addressing to accelerate the recovery of individuals and the community. They were:

1. Clean up of fallen and dangerous trees
2. Repair of damaged fencing
3. Repair of the damaged Jeeralang North hall
4. Removal of dangerous trees off road sides.

Our progress on those issues is as follows-

1. We have pursued and received a grant, from VBRRA, to facilitate the cleanup of fallen and dangerous trees. We have assessed the individual properties that have been affected,

mobilised contractors and, to date, have completed the cleanup on some 24 properties. It is expected that the cleanup will be completed by the end of July. We have undertaken and completed many large tasks which have saved individuals several years of work as well as completing those tasks in a safe manner.

2. Fencing rehabilitation is well under way with all properties assessed and work being progressed. It would appear that the support from the VFF will run out soon and there is still a large scope to be completed. Our fencing coordinators will continue to progress that scope.
3. A separate "hall rebuilding" committee has been formed to seek funding to reinstate the hall facilities. To date it would appear that funding has been gained to rebuild the current hall to its former state and the committee is seeking more support to enhance the facility to raise the use and profile of that area. We believe that this is a very important project and are confident that the rebuilding committee will vigorously peruse the rebuilding of this important asset.
4. Many roadsides have been cleaned; however, there are still some minor roads that require addressing. These are being progressed by the committee.

It is the committee's intention to have a community function in the near future to provide some relief to the "grind" that many individuals are still experiencing post the devastating events of February 7. We will provide a notice when the details of the event have been finalised."

Jeeralang North Hall Update

The Jeeralang North Hall lies between Churchill and Koornalla, and was partly destroyed in the February 7 blaze. The origin 'box of the hall' survived, damaged, but all the attached services, including water handling equipment, a kitchen, and toilet facilities were damaged or destroyed, along with all corresponding chattels. The adjacent high conservation value bushland was of course very damaged, and the area around the hall now has many dangerously damaged trees.

The local community has rallied in support of the restoration of the hall's functions, and sees the restoration of the hall as a goal, not only to assist the rebuilding of the fabric of our community following the fires, but as an essential step supporting the rebuilding of our community. Two residences were lost in the immediate vicinity of the hall, and three were lost further away from it in the Jeeralang North area.

Already two of these destroyed properties are for sale; the halls restoration will we hope signal to new potential residents that we are a supportive and vibrant small community worthy of them joining. The residents group who are trying to get the Jeeralang North Hall restored and ready for the needs of the 21st century (after all the hall was built in 1953 for the needs of the 20th century) have been meeting regularly with Latrobe City (who have secured a settlement with the Hall's insurers), a planner and architect, Jason Hall of Lucid Design, and have continuing liaison with interested community groups and local politicians.

We have agreed to a staged redevelopment of the hall, aiming to first secure and restore the Hall structure itself (in as fire secure form as we can) and to restore basic infrastructure (externally accessible toilets). We are hoping to secure some funding to assist with the full restoration of function to the hall, but this is as yet uncertain. To this end, we have begun detailed planning, have consulted with community groups who have indicated their willingness to assist, and have begun discussions with government agencies. We hope to be able to advise of further progress soon.

Information sessions for people bereaved through the Victorian Bushfires

You, your family and friends are invited to attend an information session to receive an update on the bushfire reconstruction and recovery effort, bushfire coronial process and information on support services.

DATE: Friday 21st August 2009

LOCATION: Churchill & District Community Hub
Phillip Parade, Churchill

TIME: 6.30pm to 8.00pm

For further information phone the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority Information Line: 1800 240 667 or visit www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

Questions and Answers

1. Information Session Sponsor details?

This is a joint initiative between VBRRRA, Coroner's and DHS.

2. RSVP process?

Explain that for catering and setting up of venue purposes could we record the caller's name (only if they are agreeable for this to be noted), the numbers of individual/family attendees and intended information session location.

3. Who can attend these sessions?

People bereaved through the bushfires and their family members and friends (i.e. people who have lost someone close to them).

4. If I can't attend any of the sessions, where can I get further information?

- In relation to VBRRRA information, see the website: www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au.
 - In relation to the Coroner's presentation, contact the State Coroner's Office Counseling and Support Service on (03) 9684 4395 or (03) 9684 4396.
 - In relation to the trauma and grief presentation, contact Anne Giljohann on (03) 9265 2111 or 0447 710145.
 - In relation to the presentation about support services, see the attached resource flyer.
 - All other enquiries can be directed to Kim O'Shaughnessy on (03) 9092 2516, Genelle Ryan on (03) 9096 9270, and Anne Giljohann on (03) 9265 2111 or 0447 710145.
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