

# BUSHFIRE RECOVERY NEWS

*Budgeree, Jumbuk & Yinnar South*



## WELCOME

This newsletter goes out to our communities in Boolarra, Boolarra South, Budgeree, Jumbuk, Jeeralang Junction, Yinnar South and parts of Yinnar by Australia Post delivery. Extra copies are available from the Yinnar General Store. The newsletter is to let you know that work on the long term recovery continues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this edition we take a look at a couple of important tourism gems – the new Recreational Vehicle Stop in Yinnar that opened on 29 January, and the Grand Strzelecki Track with a variety of short easy walks to a challenging two-day hike from Billy's Creek in Jeeralang Junction through to Balook. We also check out the Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish, which is at risk of becoming extinct in the wild. There is also a great opportunity to learn about how bees can help with the revegetation across bushfire affected and drought impacted land. First let's start with the amazing work being done by ex-military personnel who volunteer with Disaster Relief Australia. Read on for all the details.





## *Volunteers offer disaster relief*

Volunteers are helping Latrobe City recover from the impacts of the Yinnar South bushfire that struck in March 2019 and also revitalise a popular tourism attraction.

The members of relief organisation Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) will remove fallen trees from private property and clear a section of the iconic walking route, the Grand Strzelecki Track. DRA volunteers visited a property at Budgeree on Wednesday 9 December to train in chainsaw use ahead of undertaking clean-up works, which will contribute towards their chainsaw certification. They plan to return in January to complete more work.

The Yinnar South bushfire brought down large trees on private land that are beyond the scope of landowners; most of these trees are on slopes and at risk of rolling. DRA volunteers will cut and retrieve this timber, reducing the fire risk on these properties this summer.

DRA members will also return in early February to clear the Grand Strzelecki Track between Billy's Creek at Jeeralang Junction and Tarra Bulga National Park at Balook. The track has been a popular tourism attraction, linking Morwell National Park with Tarra Bulga National Park and having over 27km of trail that can be experienced in two days. However approximately two kilometres of track are now impassable due to fallen trees and blackberries.

"Latrobe City Council appreciates the assistance of Disaster Relief Australia volunteers in undertaking such vital works that will bring relief to our landowners and also re-open a section of the Grand Strzelecki Track to visiting hikers again," Latrobe City Council Mayor, Cr Sharon Gibson said.

"Tourism will help restore our economy after the COVID-19 pandemic and the track is a unique tourism opportunity for our municipality and surrounds."

Annette Deppeler, Chair of the Budgeree, Jumbuk, Yinnar South Community Recovery Committee, said since the fire in March 2019, work has been focused on cleaning up fallen trees from roadside reserves and private properties.

"Unfortunately many property owners have not had the resources to remove or do anything with the many very large fallen trees," she said.

"This has been a major issue for the Community Recovery Committee and property owners, and it is very pleasing to have Disaster Relief Australia come into our area to assist in the clean-up."

DRA Team Manager Kyran Byrne said the visit enabled the organisation to train eight new chainsaw operators and provided an opportunity for experienced chainsaw operators to refresh their skills.

"In addition, we were able to check out some areas where we can collaborate on projects for the near future. Our guys and girls are excited about coming back real soon," he said.




Missed an Edition? Catch up here -

[www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Community/Emergencies/Yinnar\\_South\\_Bushfire\\_Recovery](http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Community/Emergencies/Yinnar_South_Bushfire_Recovery)



# WELCOME TO

# The Grand Strzelecki Track



*Come and stand in awe under forest giants. Step into a lost world of ancient temperate rainforest equal to any on Earth...yet not hear a sound except the serenade of lyrebirds. Come and walk in solitude through a different rainforest so rare, most people have never heard of it, and far fewer will ever see it. Come and discover peaceful, beautiful places far from the beaten track, and away from the parks all the tourists visit.*

As the tallest flowering hardwood trees on earth, the majestic Mountain Ash makes the Strzelecki Ranges of Gippsland like no other place. See massive trees and prolific jungle-like undergrowth that cloaked these ranges when white settlers first arrived.

While many parts of the Grand Strzelecki Track are graded easy to medium, other parts are challenging and require a degree of fitness and experience. Overall, the Track is Class 4 under the Australian Standard which means that some parts are narrow foot track with minimal infrastructure provided, requiring self-sufficiency, navigation skills and responsibility for your own safety.

The Grand Strzelecki Track, totalling 110 kilometres, comprises one and two-day hiking loops and a two-day hike one-way, linking Tarra Bulga and Morwell National Parks. Hikes range from approximately 18 to 27 kilometres and have choices of free and paid rest areas for camping. Do one hike or do all hikes, offering up to five days of serenity and beautiful distant vistas.

The Grand Strzelecki Track helps to sustain the viability of the small communities through which it passes, as well as the wider Gippsland area. This is achieved by opening up the Strzelecki Ranges to visitors from Australia and overseas who are looking for an extended walking experience in a unique part of Australia.

The Track is entirely managed by an incorporated body of volunteers (The Grand Strzelecki Track Inc.) who undertake all fundraising, maintenance, promotion and development.

In 2012, the Track won a 'Parks and Leisure Australia Award of Excellence' at the national level category of 'Inclusive and Connected Communities'. This was subsequent to winning the award for the Victoria/Tasmania region.

Visit the website for a range of printed and digital planning and topographical maps to purchase, and a photo gallery, videos and stories to help you visualise what lies ahead for your experience.



Come and discover the Grand Strzelecki Track!  
[www.grandstrzeleckitrack.org.au](http://www.grandstrzeleckitrack.org.au)





## NEW RECREATIONAL VEHICLE STOP

*In April 2018, at a meeting of the Yinnar and District Community Association, a proposal was put forward to establish an RV/Caravan stop in Yinnar.*

In the three years since that meeting, after finding a suitable location, having plans drawn up and making a planning application to Latrobe City, the Yinnar RV/Caravan stop opened on 29 January.

Works on the access road began in late December 2020 by Lawlex Excavation and Earthworks and were completed prior to the Christmas break. Over January the sites for the caravans were laid out and mulch spread on what will become garden beds between the caravan sites. Native plant stock is being sourced for planting in these areas. Signage for the site has been produced by Youngs Signs of Morwell and once installed, the stop over site will be open for business.

Funding for the project so far has been sourced from grants from Latrobe City Council and the Bendigo Bank branch of the Mirboo North Community Bank.

There will be space for up to eight caravans to stay a duration of 48 hours. A second stage to the stop is planned, with the installation of a waste collection pit.. It is hoped that once the waste site is operating, the length of stay may increase to a maximum of five days.

The RV/Caravan stop is located on Main Street directly opposite Webster's Butchers, behind the bus stop.



# MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

*Understanding how to talk about mental health and help someone in need is an important skill. Many people feel uncomfortable and unprepared when thinking about starting a conversation with someone they are concerned about.*

Part of the Recovery Plan following the Yinnar South bushfire included face-to-face sessions on understanding and supporting mental health issues. Now that COVID restrictions have eased, the course will run over 12 hours duration and can be delivered either in two days or four, three-hour sessions.

This valuable course teaches people the skills to feel confident about what to do when they are concerned that someone they care about may have a mental health problem. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training will teach you practical skills to support someone with a mental health problem. Make a real difference at work and in your personal life.

Following the successful completion of the course, participants will receive a three-year accreditation as a MHFAider. It is anticipated that as soon as we can fill a course of 12 participants we will book in the sessions in March/April.

This accredited course valued at over \$300 is offered free of charge to ABN holders and community members involved in groups or clubs in Budgerie, Jeeralang, Jeeralang Junction, Jumbuk and Yinnar South.

Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. This is a 12-hour educational course, not a therapy or support group.

[www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Mental\\_Health\\_First\\_Aid\\_Training\\_Expression\\_of\\_Interest](http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Mental_Health_First_Aid_Training_Expression_of_Interest)





# YABBY DABBY DOO - A YABBY OR A CRAYFISH?



## *Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish - Recognising & Protecting Crayfish Habitat*

*Common name: Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish*

*Scientific name: Engaeus rostrigaleatus*

*Conservation status: 'Endangered' in Victoria*

The Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish (SBC) is a small species of burrowing crayfish that inhabits boggy seepages, springs and banks of shallow creeks in the ferny gullies of the high altitude regions of the Eastern Strzelecki Ranges. Due to the limited size of the area where SBC is known to occur, and the range of threats faced by the species, the SBC is at considerable risk of becoming extinct in the wild. The long term survival of the SBC is likely to be dependent on careful management and improved protection of existing and potential habitat areas throughout its range.

### **What Do They Look Like?**

The Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish belongs to a group of crayfish in the genus *Engaeus* that have bodies adapted for burrowing in soil. This includes their small size, a reduced swimming tail, small eyes and antennae. Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish are smaller than your typical 'yabby' (smooth shelled crayfish that often live in open water) reaching lengths of about 90 mm. Their often vibrant colours include dark purple and olive hues, through to bright orange and reds. Others are lighter yellow with blue hues. Like all crayfish, they have two large claws. These claws may be the same size (isomorphic) or different in size and shape (dimorphic).

### **Distinguishing Features**

The Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish can be distinguished by the shape of its rostrum (the pointed extension of the carapace shell at the head of the crayfish) which: is tuberculate (lumpy), ends in a blunt tip, and projects downward.

### **Other Crayfish in the Area**

Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish can often be found living closely to the more common Gippsland Burrowing Crayfish *Engaeus hemicirratulus*. Although they can build burrows close to each other, the Gippsland Burrowing Crayfish often builds large, fan shaped chimneys away from the water, sometimes high up on slopes at a great distance from water where it relies on run-off to fill its large chambers. The Gippsland Burrowing Crayfish can be distinguished by its bright orange or pale hairy body and upturned rostrum.

### **Join the Hunt**

Join us on a hunt for information about fascinating threatened burrowing crayfish. Learn how to identify them and help protect their habitat so we can continue to see their earthen totem poles standing tall across the landscape.

### **Get in touch**

[www.burrowingcrayfish.com.au](http://www.burrowingcrayfish.com.au)

Find out more Strzelecki Burrowing Crayfish - [www.burrowingcrayfish.com.au/sitefiles/strz-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.burrowingcrayfish.com.au/sitefiles/strz-fact-sheet.pdf)



# Gippsland Pollination Aid Program

**\$40**  
/person

Has drought or fire effected your community?

In conjunction with **phn Gippsland**, the **LVBA** is proud to offer heavily subsidised training to individuals from drought or fire effected communities within Gippsland.

The **Gippsland Pollination Aid** program is a uniquely designed training course with a focus on personal wellbeing and increasing pollination in recovering communities.

The **Gippsland Pollination Aid** program includes both theory and practical components, giving you the knowledge and confidence to begin keeping bees. This is a full day course running from 9am until 4pm that includes morning & afternoon tea and lunch.

Courses will be held in **Latrobe City** and **Wellington Shire**.

Places are limited. To check eligibility and register your interest please visit <https://lvba.wildapricot.org/events> or contact us via [LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com](mailto:LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com) or call **0409 015 237**.



**phn**  
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#### Any suggestions?

Do you have other suggestions for the recovery program? Please email [BJYScommittee@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:BJYScommittee@latrobe.vic.gov.au) or call Linda Snell, Yinnar South Recovery Officer on 0400 828 685 for a chat.