

Community Newsletter

Storm & Flood Event June 2021

No. 5 Saturday 19 June 2021

Flood warnings are no longer current for all but the Latrobe River downstream of Traralgon, which remains at minor flood level.

Wet and windy weather on Friday and forecast for Saturday may bring an increased risk of trees falling without warning, due to existing soil moisture and threat of overhanging trees caused by last week's severe weather event.

SES, FFMVic and local council teams, with the support of the timber industry, are working hard to open and maintain safe roads by clearing debris, although there is still significant work to be completed.

Crews are focussing on the Strzelecki range and Baw Baw plateau, including Yinnar south, Budgerie, Mirboo, Dumbalk, Turtons Creek, Noojee and Walhalla. Extra care should be taken on the roads as crews and heavy machinery move around. Local Councils are supporting the community in the recovery process following the storm and flood event.



Support

Recovery centre – Gippsland Regional Indoor Sports Stadium. Garibaldi Street, Traralgon from 10am to 5pm. Connecting community members with a range of services and information on hardship payments that are currently available.

Information centre – Yinnar RSL. Representatives from Latrobe City Council available from 10am to 3pm daily. (This was previously at the Yinnar Memorial Hall). Council officers can register people in the system and refer them for assistance. Please note: this isn't a relief centre, it is a place to seek information, register and receive referrals to relevant services.

All facilities will be following COVID Safe requirements to keep us all as safe as possible.

Next edition Monday 21 June

Virtual emergency relief centre – Bass Coast

www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/virtual-emergency-relief-centre

Facilities are open during normal hours to charge your phone and other devices, or need somewhere to keep warm:

- Phillip Island Leisure Centre, 10-14 Church Street, Cowes
- Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre 41 Wentworth Road, Wonthaggi
- Manna Gum Community House 33 Station Road Foster business hours
- Venus Bay Community Centre 27 Canterbury Rd, Venus Bay
- Inverloch Community Hub 16 Abeckett St, Inverloch

Relief and Recovery Information

Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP) payments are available to people whose homes are damaged or destroyed and are uninhabitable.

A one-off payment is provided to help meet immediate needs, including emergency food, shelter, clothing, medication and accommodation. Contact council or visit the [VicEmergency Relief & Recovery](#) section, or for more information email:

EmergencyHardshipPayments@dffh.vic.gov.au

Australian Red Cross has opened its [Register.Find.Reunite](#) service to assist people evacuated from Traralgon get in touch with their family and friends.

Keep an eye on your neighbour – make sure they are aware of the latest information and offer support to those with any special needs, like the elderly and people with different abilities. **If you have concerns that residences may remain isolated please call 132 500. Always call 000 in life threatening situations.**

Agriculture Victoria can provide support to farmers over 10 acres. Contact via email recovery@agriculture.vic.gov.au or Phone 1800 226 226. Further information can be found at [Agriculture Vic](#)

Insurance

If you have property and/or contents insurance, contact your insurance company as soon as possible. Ask for advice on actions you should take. Do not throw away damaged items without first consulting your insurance company. Make a list of items that have been damaged and take photographs if possible. Keep receipts for any emergency repair work. For assistance with insurance contact the Insurance Council of Australia on 1800 734 621 (24/7 hotline). You can find information on lodging a claim following a disaster here: www.disasters.org.au

Food & Medicine Safety

Medicines that require a fridge, meat/perishables may no longer be safe to eat or use. If unsure, safely dispose of them. If your insurance includes food loss, keep a list or photos of food you throw away.

Showers

If you are impacted by power outages, there are venues open to access shower facilities. We ask that you call ahead, if you can, before heading in for a hot shower.



- **Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre**
Traralgon (Open from 6am, 1300 444 722)
- **Latrobe Leisure**
Morwell (Open from 6am, 5128 6144)
- **Latrobe Leisure Moe**
Newborough (Open from 6am, 5135 8580)
- **Latrobe Leisure**
Churchill (Open from 6am, 5120 3888)
- **Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre**
41 Wentworth Road, Wonthaggi
- **YMCA South Gippsland SPLASH** – business hours
- **Warragul Leisure Centre** – normal operating hours
- **Yarram swimming pool**
Sun 11am-5pm, Mon 12-5pm, Wed & Sat 8am-5pm
- **Yarram Recreation Reserve**
- **Binginwarri Hall**
- **Devon North Hall**

Some facilities may be able to supply towels and toiletries, please confirm with the venue directly.

Rubbish, transfer stations and green waste

Flood damaged goods and materials and spoiled food, will be accepted free of charge at Latrobe City Council Transfer Stations for flood impacted residents only. You will need to provide your name and identification that confirms your address, or Relief Centre case number.

Latrobe Shire Community members who have been impacted by the flood and storm event can deposit **uncontaminated green waste at PineGro, Monash Way, Morwell for no charge** on presentation of their driver's licence or proof of identity that notes their address. PineGro's hours of operation are: Monday–Friday, 8.30am-4pm, and Saturday-Sunday, 9am-5pm.

SOUTH GIPPLAND GREEN WASTE – All transfer stations are accepting green waste from rate payers and residence impacted by the flood and storm until 30 June at no cost.



WELLINGTON SHIRE – Impacted community members can dispose of waste material at the Yarram Transfer station free of charge. Green waste can also be disposed of free of charge at Kilmany, Maffra, Loch Sport, Seaspray, Heyfield, Stratford and Yarram.

Please contact your local Shire for other transfer station operating details.

Donations

There has been an overwhelming amount of people offering support, demonstrating both care and compassion for those who have been affected by the floods.

GERF has launched an appeal to raise emergency funds for our fellow Gippslanders impacted by floods. To donate or register for a GERF grant visit www.gerf.org.au

If you are unable to make a financial donation, but have goods or services you'd like to donate visit www.givvit.org.au

Information for people returning home after flooding

If you are returning home after flooding of your property, remember to stay alert - dangerous conditions caused by flooding remain.

Check for building damage before you enter and if your home has been flooded, have all electrical and gas equipment professionally tested before use.

Tragically there have been two lives lost and police will prepare reports for the coroner. We don't want to see any more, so we implore the community to please take care. Never drive in flood waters – it may be the last decision you make.

Other things to be mindful of:

- Cuts from broken glass and debris may be a problem – wear sturdy waterproof boots and rubber or leather gloves.
- Avoid any areas that remain flooded.
- Flooding can cause excessive mould growth, which must be cleaned up before moving back to your home.
- Flooding may cause sewage to overflow inside your home. Contaminated areas must be cleaned and disinfected. Keep children and pets away until the clean-up is completed.
- If you rely on rainwater or groundwater, your water may be contaminated after floods. Find out what you need to know.
- If you live in a flood-affected area, your septic tank system may be affected.

- **Beware of mould** - Flooding, excess moisture and pooled water can cause mould growth in your home. This may be a health risk for you and your family. When returning to your home after a flood, be aware of any visible mould or a musty smell. High mould levels are likely if the house has been flooded for more than two days. To prevent mould growth, clean up and dry out the house as quickly as possible (within 48 hours).
- **Wild animals, including rodents, snakes or spiders, may be trapped** in your home, shed or garden. Do not approach wild or stray animals. For advice about dealing with animals contact your local council, animal shelter or vet. Store away all food to avoid attracting rats and mice (for example, store food in containers with secure lids). Watch out for snakes. Mosquitoes can breed rapidly in stagnant waters and become a nuisance. Take precautions to control mosquitos around your home. Remove pets and other animals that have died as soon as possible. For advice on safe disposal speak to your local council or vet.

Stay Informed

- www.emergency.vic.gov.au.
- VicEmergency app
- Facebook or Twitter (#vicHAZARD)
- [Latrobe City Council](#) website and social media channels
- [Wellington Shire Council](#) website and social media channels
- [Bass Coast Shire Council](#) website and social media channels
- [Baw Baw Shire Council](#) website and social media channels
- [South Gippsland Shire Council](#) website and social media channels
- SES East Region facebook page
- VicEmergency Hotline free call **1800 226 226** for warnings and recovery information.

To access this information in other languages call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 (freecall) and ask them to call VicEmergency Hotline.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment contact National Relay Service on 1800 555 677 and ask them to call the VicEmergency Hotline.

If you are without power, use a battery-operated radio or car radio to tune in to local emergency broadcasters for the latest information. Charge your phone in the car if needed.

ABC Gippsland and TRFM are your Emergency Broadcasters.

- ABC Gippsland:
- 100.7 FM
 - 828 AM
- TRFM:
- 99.5 FM
 - 99.9 FM

Road closures

Many roads and streets remain closed due to water over roads, timber debris and damage from the floods or storm impacts.

With works to reopen roads well underway, and the situation constantly changing, people are encouraged to always check the VicRoads website before heading out and to avoid any unnecessary travel.



Information on updated road closures is available via 13 11 70 or the VicTraffic website traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Forest and Park Closures

Whilst most State Forest and National Park remain closed due to public risk, a small number are open across the region, visitors need to remain safe, these areas are still storm impacted.



Safety assessments are being undertaken to identify works required to safely reopen Forest and Parks to the public.

A full list of closed Forest & Parks can be found at [FFM Vic](#) and [Parks Vic](#)

Water supply

Gippsland Water is asking customers to conserve water where they can, as it works to restore services following the flooding event.

Widespread power outages, inundation at key sites and raw water quality changes are contributing to reduced treatment capacity.

For more information visit the Gippsland Water website gippswater.com.au

Roadside Wood Collection

An increase in illegal roadside collection of storm damaged timber is causing traffic hazards in affected areas and impacting the safety of emergency workers still trying to make the area safe.

Roads authorities **do not** give permission for the removal of roadside timber.

Authorities will advise of any possible wood collection sites when areas have been declared safe.



Mental health

It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions following a distressing event. There is always help available through:

- Your doctor
- Local mental health professionals
Lifeline - 131 114
- **Beyond Blue** - 1300 224 636
- **MensLine** - 1300 789 978
- **Kid's Help Line** - 1800 55 1800
- **Parent Line** - 13 22 89

Family Violence

There is an increased risk of family violence after an emergency. Help is available. Visit www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence or call 1800 737 732 (1800RESPECT).

COVIDSafe information

If you need to leave your home due to extreme weather or flood, please do so. Follow your normal evacuation or relocation plans in a COVIDSafe way.

If you are currently isolating or quarantining because you have COVID-19, are a primary or secondary close contact, or are awaiting a COVID-19 test result and need to relocate due to an emergency, move somewhere safe as quickly as possible. Then call 1300 651 160 (available 24/7) and press 0 to let operators know that you have relocated.

Power Outages and Powerlines

Ausnet Services advise that clearing works are underway, allowing crews to move closer towards restoring power.

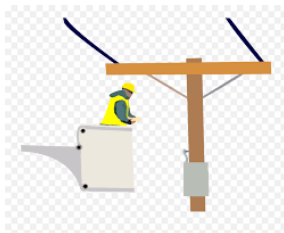
However, some communities and remote properties in areas with more damage to the power network may take more time. To report powerlines down in your area, call 000, Ausnet Services 13 17 99.

If there are fallen powerlines, stay more than 8-10 metres away. NEVER drive over fallen powerlines or stand near fallen powerlines, they can be fatal. Always treat fallen powerlines as live even when they are broken or on the ground.

This includes never driving over the extension cord between your generator and the house.

Latest power info at www.outagetracker.com.au a power outage still impacts your health or safety, or you need power for life support or water supply, travel to accommodation or a friend or family member's house that has power.

Turn off and unplug all appliances to prevent damage in case of a surge when power is restored. If your home or business has been damaged, arrange an electrical safety inspection by a licensed electrician. This includes circuit breakers, RCDs (safety switches) or other switches on your switchboard.



Generators

Never try to connect temporary generators to household wiring unless you have a direct power inlet installed by a licensed electrician.

Do not modify an extension cord to plug into household wiring. Do it yourself electrical work is very dangerous and illegal.

Do not use appliances designed for outdoor use inside a home, basement, garage, caravan or tent. Appliances such as power generators, BBQ grills, camp stoves, or other devices that burn petrol, liquid petroleum gas, natural gas or charcoal should only be operated in a well-ventilated outdoor area away from open windows and vents.

Exhaust fumes like Carbon Monoxide can be deadly.

Ensure fuel is stored in proper safety containers away from ignition sources eg. gas pilot lights.

When power returns

Before switching the power back on, check that all your all electrical appliances and equipment are still unplugged or turned off.

Check that there is no damage to electrical cables, wiring or equipment. If you identify any damaged electrical equipment or cables:

- do not turn on the power
- do not touch the equipment or cable
- call a licensed electrician to make it safe.

If no damage is identified, you can turn on the main power switch.

- If you have an RCD (Residual Current Device), press and hold the test button for 5 seconds. This will turn the power off. The RCD must operate immediately on pressing the test button.
- Reset the RCD and press the test button a second time. If the RCD operates correctly and turns off the power, reset it and you can begin switching on electrical equipment.
- If the RCD fails the testing, it should be turned off and immediately replaced by a Registered Electrical Contractor.

4. Turn on each circuit breaker one at a time.

What if supply has been restored but I still have no power?

- The smart meter will display lights and numbers if supply has been restored to your property.
- If neighbours have electricity and you do not, there may be a problem with the supply to your property.
- If there are continuing power supply problems such as fuses blowing, circuit breakers, safety switches turning off etc, contact a registered electrician.