

Mallacoota and District Community Newsletter

18th June 2020

This local newsletter is created weekly (or as needed) and is available in your Post Box thanks to our local Post Office team, in the Grocery Stores, Pharmacy or available online at: eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/bushfire

News Items

Registrations for clean up close 30th June, 2020: The 2020 Clean-up Program covers the demolition and disposal of buildings damaged and destroyed in the recent bushfires and is free for property owners, whether they are insured or not. This may also include the removal of fencing, trees and vehicles, but only where necessary for the safe clean-up of destroyed buildings. **Clean-up is free** for property owners and funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

The project is well over 50 per cent finished and is complete or nearing full completion in some areas, so register today and don't miss out. Two things that you can do:

- 1) Register today if you require clean-up by calling [1800 560 760](tel:1800560760) or by visiting www.br.vic.gov.au.
- 2) Let your family, friends and neighbours know if you think they haven't registered yet.

Mallacoota District Rebuilding Information Sessions: MADRA in partnership with Council are inviting people who lost their homes in the recent bushfires to attend an information sharing session around rebuilding. The intention of these sessions is to provide an opportunity for people to get together and share their stories, hear from someone who has been through the experience before, hear from Council around the re-building process and support available, and to ask questions and provide feedback. The sessions will be facilitated by Steve Pascoe, a bushfire survivor and community recovery mentor. These initial sessions are targeted at those who have lost homes due to COVID-19 restrictions, limiting the amount of attendees in a room, and because of immediate timing issues such as expiry of rental agreements.

There are currently three sessions you can register for:

- Monday 29th June, 6.30 to 8.30pm
- Tuesday 30th June, 10am to 12noon
- Tuesday 30th June, 2 to 4pm

These sessions will be held at the Mudbrick Hall. Registrations are essential, please register your interest to attend by contacting Amy at amyp@egipps.vic.gov.au or call/Text [0400 092 302](tel:0400092302). Please provide your name, phone number and preferred session when you register.

Please find rebuilding information at:

https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information/Bushfire_planning_and_recovery

Your questions answered on 3MGB by Dr Rob Gordon: What's 'normal' when you've lost your home? How can I and my family deal with the combined disasters of COVID19 and the bushfires? What signs signify family & friends may need more support than I can offer? How am I going to get through this? And how do we as a community heal? Renowned trauma psychologist Dr Rob Gordon answers some of these & other issues facing the Mallacoota & districts community, and how to face this stage of recovery, in two sessions to be broadcast on 3MGB on Thursday mornings. Can't listen then or missed a session? A YouTube link will soon be on the East Gippsland Shire Council website, this community newsletter and free copies available on DVD. To learn more, contact Red Cross recovery officer Louise on [0402 277 550](tel:0402277550) or lbettison@redcross.org.au



Bushfire Support Finder: The Bushfire Support Finder assists in Identify and understand what financial support may be available to you, your business and your community, so you can recover today and rebuild for tomorrow. Please visit <https://au-deloitte.neotalogic.com/a/bushfire-support-finder?productid=94> and check it out!



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Marine Boat & Jet Ski Licence Training: MDHSS are offering a 4 hour course for Victorian boat Licence and Personal Watercraft / Jet Ski endorsement.

- Cost: \$125
- Dates: Saturday 20th June
- Time: 1pm-5pm
- Where: MDHSS Miva Hall
- Trainer: Terry Houge
- Bookings essential

Please call: Mallacoota District Health on [5158 0243](tel:51580243) to secure your spot. All ages from 12 years onwards. No prior knowledge, study experience necessary.

Tell your Story from the Fires: The Mallacoota and District Historical Society is collecting personal accounts from locals in town, outlying settlements and holiday makers who were in the district at the time of the fires in summer. These will be stored at the Bunker Museum for posterity, and may be of value to future researchers. They may form part of a display at the museum but we would seek your permission firstly. We already have some great contributions. Yours can be of any length and style and cover any aspect of your experiences before during and after the recent bushfires. Photos and audio accounts are also sought.

Please email to - secretarymallacootadhs@gmail.com or place in the red post box addressed to M&DHS, PO Box 151, Mallacoota, no stamp needed.

YACVic Rural Project Officer: Do the words 'working with animals' make your ears prick up? Does helping young people learn how to advocate for issues they care about in their local communities make your tail wag? Does making a difference in rural Victorian communities affected by recent bushfires make you yelp in excitement? Then this job may get you jumping... for more info Visit <https://www.yacvic.org.au/about-us/work-with-us/yacvic-rural-project-officer/>

Creative Recovery Coordinator position open for applications! The Creative Recovery Coordinator is a new position created to support Regional Arts Victoria in the delivery of recovery activities and funding across the state following the 2019-20 Victorian bushfires. There are two roles required, one in East Gippsland and one in North East Victoria. It is expected that the applicants will be located in these areas. Regional travel will be expected in this position. For more info and to apply: <http://www.rav.net.au/about/employment/>

Parks Victoria's animal control program giving native species best chance of recovery: The bushfires over summer have impacted large areas of habitat for native species. In these conditions, invasive species are a significant threat to the survival and recovery of native plants and animals. Introduced large herbivores reduce the ability of native plants to regrow after fire, spread weeds, compete with native animals for food and significantly damage native vegetation and critical habitat by grazing, trampling on vegetation, rubbing against trees and wallowing. Burnt landscapes provide less shelter for native animals, leaving them exposed and vulnerable to predation by foxes and feral cats, whose numbers have been shown to increase by five times the normal amount in fire-affected areas. Controlling introduced pest animals after fire is an important immediate action to ensure the survival of threatened native plants and animals at a time when they are most vulnerable.

Parks Victoria is continuing an aerial shooting program which began in February as an emergency response action following the bushfires. Species targeted by this program include large introduced herbivores (deer, goats, pigs) and pest predators (feral cats and foxes). Feral horses are not a target species.

From 10 June to 7 July, areas of the Snowy River National Park and the Croajingolong National Park will be closed while Parks Victoria undertakes aerial pest animal control. The areas of the park subject to shooting will be closed. No main roads will be closed. While the program is underway you may see helicopters and hear gunshots. All Parks Victoria's animal control programs are thoroughly planned and implemented under strict protocols and oversight, to ensure the safety of park users and animal welfare. The program has been designed to ensure it meets the requirements to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

For up to date park information visit www.parks.vic.gov.au. If you require further information or have any questions, please contact Parks Victoria on [13 19 63](tel:131963).

Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants: Funding has been provided by the Victorian Government in response to the impact of the 2019-20 bushfires for Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants. These grants will support bushfire recovery activities for communities affected by fire in the North East, East Gippsland and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Areas. Grants will contribute to the targets in Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037 to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment.

A total of \$900,000 is available. Successful applicants' projects can receive up to:

- \$10,000 for private landholders (Stream 1)
- \$30,000 for environmental volunteer groups (Stream 2)
- \$50,000 for environmental volunteer networks (Stream 3)

For more information visit: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/grants/BBRG>

Bushfire Recovery Hub Update:

Katie Symes, the Bushfire Recovery Hub Services Coordinator, walks alongside the Mallacoota District community to navigate and access the systems of support in recovery and healing, and in so doing to build on the community's greatest strengths – each other, our networks and the connection we all share for Mallacoota and surrounds.



The Hub Coordinator role is supported by the broader Bushfire Recovery Victoria team and is here to support the community led bushfire recovery needs of the Mallacoota District community in partnership with East Gippsland Shire Council, the MADRA Committee, service providers and not-for-profit agencies.

The Hub is temporarily operating out of the rear of 62 Maurice Avenue, Mallacoota (opposite tennis courts and between post office and Lucy's Noodles), and will continue to do so while refurbishments take place in the rest of the building. Works are scheduled to be completed by the end August 2020.

When the Hub is fully up and running and COVID-19 requirements allow, the Hub will open its doors on the street facing side of 62 Maurice Avenue - a welcoming place in the centre of town to drop in and have your bushfire recovery needs supported.

The Hub Services Coordinator makes every effort to respond to individuals and family's needs with support from case support workers and the broader team. We understand that it's sometimes hard to reach out and ask for support. Given current demand, the Hub Coordinator can't always be available to respond immediately but will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible. If you've tried to make contact, please don't be discouraged, we want to hear from you so please reach out.

We just ask that you please call ahead to make an appointment and if Katie is unavailable at the Hub or by phone or email, she will endeavour to respond as soon as possible. **Please call [0407 085 492](tel:0407085492) or email MallacootaHub@brv.vic.gov.au to make an appointment.**

We also welcome community feedback via email or at the suggestion box located in the temporary Hub at the rear of 62 Maurice Ave, Mallacoota, Victoria.

Housing: Bushfire Recovery Victoria is finalising options for a number of individuals and families who lost their primary place of residence in the 2019/20 Victorian Bushfires and who want to return to their properties in housing while they undertake a permanent rebuild.



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The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program will be working directly with eligible households to discuss these options. Case support is available to all Mallacoota District community members, whether or not they were directly impacted by flame. You can reach out at any time to your case support manager, or request a case support worker directly via Bushfire Recovery Victoria and the case support program by calling 1800 560 760.

Land Surveying: The Hub Coordinator understands that there are currently a number of Victorian licensed land surveyors working in the Mallacoota District offering residents a discounted rate. If required, please reach out to the land surveyors directly. There are also other land surveying firms that operate in Gippsland and you can contact them to discuss your requirements.

Mallacoota and District Recovery Association

Your MADRA committee is up and running! Our priority is to put in place the structures we need to be most effective in meeting the needs of our community and balancing all that is coming across our 'desk' and keeping community informed. Some of these includes:

- Finalising the process to make us an incorporated association
- Identifying and putting our communications platforms in place – A Facebook page is now up and running so please jump on and like our page as another way to stay up to date:
<https://www.facebook.com/MADRA-115230233563343/>
- Detailed stakeholder analysis to inform our community consultation
- Commencing a strategic planning process to identify short, medium and longer term community priorities
- Responding to offers of support
- Compiling lists of FAQs
- Letters of Support have gone out so far, for the funding of the Youth Support Co-ordinator at the Sanctuary; and to an arts initiative 'Regenerate: Mallacoota to Maraba'
- We are looking forward to having informal community gatherings soon in order to connect in person and engage with communities within the district and in accordance with Covid restrictions
- We are currently working on the formation of sub committees and ask the community to raise areas of interest they would be interested in MADRA facilitating. Please email your thoughts to: Mallacoota.district.assoc.2020@gmail.com

NOW: Expressions of Interests invited! Penelope Swales and Rowe Morrow are offering a wonderful opportunity for a Recovery and Resilience Permaculture Workshop and we invite any community groups who would be interested in hosting this event to send your EOI to participate or to host this great opportunity to Mallacoota.district.assoc.2020@gmail.com and we can put you in touch or give you further information about this exciting event.

Upcoming meetings:

Darren Chester - Our local Federal MP

Lisa Neville - State Government Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Weekly MADRA committee meetings

Important message regarding COVID for residents, visitors and contractors

Dr. Sara Renwick-Lau

Australia is in a good position with regards to COVID infection rates. These low numbers are result of significant restrictions in activity which allowed for separation of people. This was able to stop the spread of this very, very infectious illness. As restrictions are relaxed, it is important that as individuals we take responsibility for our own role in stopping the spread of this very, very infectious illness.

At the beginning of the restrictions we all diligently practiced careful personal hygiene - With the lifting of restrictions and with the increase in movement of people, the importance of these personal measures becomes EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.

WHO IS AT RISK OF COVID INFECTION? YOU ARE AT INCREASED RISK OF COVID INFECTION if you have spent time, or regularly spend time in close contact with others where physical distancing is not able to be observed. Some examples might include

- employees who are unable to maintain physical distancing from others in their place of work
- travellers staying with others or moving in and out of a single/shared residence or using shared facilities
- people attending mass gatherings outside of current restrictions (protests, parties and pubs)

"These types of contacts - between people who are moving from different social groups and geographical locations - pose a significant risk for the spread of COVID-19" (from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee 5/6/20)

If you are at increased risk of exposure it is important that you practice careful and diligent personal hygiene before mixing with others, especially if you are travelling across different geographical locations and especially if you are in contact with those who are vulnerable to severe disease.

ADVICE FOR THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE TO SEVERE COVID: This includes the elderly, those with chronic heart or lung disease, diabetes or those who are immunocompromised

- stay at home if you can
- avoid gatherings, especially places where it is difficult to maintain physical distancing of 1.5m between people
- ensure that any organised activities that you attend (e.g. PAG groups, committee meetings, social gatherings) have protocols in place for reducing risk of transmission. For example - easy availability of hand sanitiser, cleaning protocols, signage, oversight.
- Avoid staying with others or having visitors in your home

As restrictions are eased the risk to our vulnerable community members increases - please do your part in protecting our community. Wash and sanitise your hands, maintain physical distance from others (including not shaking hands or hugging), cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow, stay at home if you are unwell.

MALLACOOTA MEDICAL CENTRE UPDATE

GPs and practice nurses are available to provide usual medical services either face to face or via phone if you prefer. If you are a new patient or are unwell with respiratory symptoms, please ALWAYS call ahead to book an initial phone consultation.

Visiting Echocardiogram: Echocardiogram Clinic- Sean Priestly from Precision Echocardiography services in Bairnsdale will conduct a visiting echo clinic in July this will prevent the need to travel to Bairnsdale for this test and improve our detection and surveillance of heart disease in the community



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Mental Health Care: Prue, Monica and Jo are providing regular fortnightly mental health care services face to face, please call reception if you require an appointment. We also refer to an liase with other visiting, telehealth and specialist mental health services. Come and see one of our doctors or nurses if you are worried about your or others mental wellbeing and we can discretely and privately assist you to navigate your mental health care needs.

Specialist Telehealth services: Did you know that we can facilitate the majority of non-procedural specialist medical care via Telehealth. Our practice nurse is very experienced at liasing with your specialist. We can arrange an appointment with you, your GP or practice nurse and your specialist online. This is a great way to ensure that you are in control of your health care, allowing your health care team to collaborate, with you at the centre of your care, and while minimising unnecessary travel.

Monthly Visiting Specialist Services: Dr. Sandra Krishnan is a visiting surgeon from Bega, she will be again seeing patients in July - please see your GP for a referral.

Dr. Jenny Schalger will be providing skin cancer treatment in July - please phone for an appointment.

Sapphire Coast Physiotherapy - will be providing collaborative care to patients with complex chronic diseases and disabilities, they will work along-side Emma Anthony our Allied Health Assistant Emma Anthony, your GP and any other health care providers, to ensure a personalised program to maximise your health and quality of life. If you have a chronic disease and are interested in co-ordinated chronic disease care please see your GP.

Dr Craig Clarke is a geriatrician who visits Mallacoota monthly - please see your GP for a referral. Dr Clarke works closely with GPs and any other health care provider of your choice to maximise the health and quality of life of older people.

The Sanctuary – Mallacoota Youth Centre

Donations of Firefighter Toiletry Packs were passed on from CFA available at the Sanctuary, take whatever you want/ need.

Drop in Open

Monday 3.30 onwards

Tuesday 3.30 onwards - Christy Bryar brings architecture skills to re-designing the Drop In. 17th Gathering.

Wednesday 3.30 onwards - Utopian Expectators radio show on 3MGB with Airly and Brodie 4.30-6.30 "Nostalgia Theme"

Thursday 3.30 onwards

Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People (GPHN) and Kofi Annan Foundation Coordination Programs are on the go. We have a lot happening, get in touch to find out more!

Check out our website for more information and if you'd like to see the AIDR webinar: Youth Voice and Agency in Recovery or the NYCA Rogue Q&A panel discussion: Young and Essential both featuring Brodie talking about The Sanctuary's amazing work and the importance of youth led community organising. SanctuaryMYG.Org

We need volunteers and support. Brodie will be taking leave soon and we need members of the community to step in and get involved so that we can keep our projects, drop in, funding applications, media requests and most importantly - the voices and needs of young people - centred and supported.

mallacootayouthcentre@gmail.com or FB and Insta: @sanctuarymy Firefightg



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Financial Support

More Money To Help More People!: Did you lose your home in the bushfires? You may be eligible for up to \$30,000 under the new Red Cross re-establishment grant if you were the owner-occupier, or \$10,000 if you were renting. Previously known as the 'rebuild' grant, it has changed in recognition that many people who lost their homes are not yet in a position to consider rebuilding. It has also increased (from \$20,000 for owner-occupiers) and expanded to include tenants. These funds are in addition to the \$20,000 emergency assistance grant.

To apply, visit www.redcross.org.au/grants. Previous rebuild grant applicants will be sent a link to apply. If you want to know more, please call [1800-RED-CROSS \(1800 733 276\)](tel:1800-RED-CROSS). We want to make sure all who are eligible receive these funds generously donated by the Australian community.

Red Cross has several grants available for bushfire-affected people, depending on your circumstances. You may be eligible for more than one of these grants. They include: emergency assistance, up to \$20,000; primary home repair \$5000; injury \$7500; and the upcoming re-establishment grant, \$10,000 to \$30,000. To learn more or check your eligibility, please call Red Cross on [1800 733 276](tel:1800-733-276), or you can apply online at: www.redcross.org.au/grants

Anglicare Free Financial Counselling: Anglicare is reminding residents of the free financial counselling available to individuals and families affected by the East Gippsland bushfires. Financial counsellors can: • Assist with insurance matters • Assist with access to government assistance programs • Renegotiate loans, payments and access banking assistance • Help sort out how to pay debts, bills, and avoid scams • Provide advice on options due to loss of income • Refer to other services as required Bushfire affected residents can contact the service by email at bushfirefcpgipps@anglicarevic.org.au or call [1800 286 260](tel:1800-286-260). Referrals are also accepted.

Support Services

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health Bushfires Case Support Program: Can provide information, support and assistance to people who have been affected by the 2020 bushfires in East Gippsland. You may be dealing with property loss, financial difficulty, struggling to obtain the services you need, or just feeling the need to talk. The Bushfire Case Support Program works closely with you to apply for financial and resource assistance and can link you with other service providers.

Support provided by the program may include:

- An initial chat about your needs and what steps might be taken next
- Being one point of contact to assist with navigating through systems
- Information about other services and assistance to make contact
- Liaising and advocating on your behalf
- Assisting you to apply for financial assistance

For more information please call [\(03\) 51558300](tel:03-51558300), [1800 560 760](tel:1800-560-760) or email bushfiresupport@glch.org.au

Church and Op Shop Update: St Peter's church services will continue at 9am on 3MGB (101.7 Mallacoota 96.9 Genoa) so that people can participate from the warmth and safety of home. For those who are not self-isolating St Peter's will be opened at 10am Sundays for an opportunity to discuss what was heard on the radio. We are limited to 20 people coming to the discussion session. St Peter's Opshop now open Weds & Thurs 10-3 & Sat 9:30-12:30.

Planning Concierge: East Gippsland Shire Council is committed to assisting our community in its recovery, every step of the way. There is now a dedicated webpage where you can find information about the Bushfire Rebuild and Planning Concierge Service, planning and building requirements as well as helpful links and fact sheets.

https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information/Bushfire_planning_and_recovery

Royal Flying Doctors Service Support: If you know someone that could use some extra support, encourage and support them to seek help from a professional, such as their GP or a mental health professional.

Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria (RFDS) and Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) are offering free and confidential counselling for individuals, families and emergency service workers affected by the recent bushfires in East Gippsland. If you or a loved one need some extra support, Fiona Mitchell from RFDS and Mary Nicholas from RAV are available to assist. During COVID-19 we're providing support via telephone and video, with a small number of face-to-face appointments also available.

Contact us for more information, to make an appointment or to find out more.

T: [1800 001 068](tel:1800001068)

E: bushfiresupport@rav.org.au

This service is funded by the Gippsland Primary Health Network, which is leading the mental health response to bushfire-affected areas of Gippsland.

Salvation Army Bushfire Outreach Program: The Salvation Army Bushfire Outreach Program offers financial assistance and a wide range of services to assist individuals and families affected by the Victorian Bushfires. Lea Davis is your Salvos Bushfire Outreach Worker who will be able discuss eligibility and access to:

- Initial and secondary financial grants,
- special housing grants for assistance with utilities,
- special household/personal grants,
- Personal needs such as medical and pharmaceutical
- Temporary and transitional accommodation relocation grants
- Vehicle grants (registration, insurance and fuel)
- School Assistance (books, uniforms, excursions)
- Financial Counselling
- Advocacy and Referral Services.

You can contact Lea directly via email: lea.davis@salvationarmy.org.au or telephone : [0429 568 961](tel:0429568961).

I will be attending the Recovery Hub soon and look forward to meeting you.

Mallacoota Bushfire Recovery Works - Coastal Walk (closed) Restoration Works: Progress Update 4th June 2020 Summary of Progress

With ongoing beautiful winter weather great progress is continuing to be made on the coastal walk:

- Point Difficult Lookout/s: Both the ground level lookout *"teeming with wildlife"* and the elevated viewing platform (inclusive of new access handrail) have been completed and look magnificent.
- Betka Beach Lookout: The new hardwood superstructure is nearing completion and will offer Substantial improvements in durability and bushfire resistance. Decking is due on site later this week and will be installed soon after.
- Ground Level Lookouts: preliminary works have commenced at Airport Cove, Fishermans Point, Secret Beach, and Poachers Point Lookouts.

Great work by Local Tradies!

