

Dereel Fire Community Newsletter

Issue 5 – Monday 22 April 2013



Jeff from the SES handing over 70 pairs of donated workboots to Doug Braddy for the cleanup effort. Boots, clothes, food, tools and household items are available at the Community Hall for people affected by the fire. If you need anything, please visit between 10am-12 noon.

Welcome to Issue 5 of the Dereel Community Fire Newsletter.

We are delighted to announce that the **Dereel Community Recovery Group** has been formally established to lead the community's recovery from the fire. The group will act as the central contact point for local residents and landowners.

There are several key issues that members of the group have taken responsibility for managing and resolving. Below is the list of group members and the areas of concern that they are leading:

Doug Braddy – volunteers, fencing, tools, tree lopping
Julie Donaghy – management of donated clothing and goods
Ruth Uren – hall bookings, Relief Fund
Tracey Taylor – Facebook **Dereel Fire 2013 Fire Help Page**
Jade Woodall – Facebook **Dereel Fire 2013 Fire Help Page**
Charlie Munro – stockfeed
Kim Stanley-Eyles
Ian Stanley-Eyles
Caroline Everett
Justine Fox
Eric and Lesley Dell

Once again, we thank all the members of the community who have assisted in the recovery operations so far and also for the patience and concern shown by so many people. The support from agencies continues and we are all grateful for their care and services.

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Update – A to Z

In newsletter 4 we said future newsletter updates would be shorter, however we recognise that there are still people who may need the comprehensive update. Below is an A-Z update of the fire recovery effort, with red headings highlighting requests for assistance and offers of support.

Assistance

The Community Hall is open from 10am-12 noon Monday to Saturday and Julie welcomes anyone who needs food, clothes, shoes or any other items. The latest information will also be available at the Hall, so please come and help yourself to whatever you may need if you have been affected by the fire.

Note that Recovery Centre operations continue from the Golden Plains Shire Council office at 2 Pope Street, Bannockburn. If your query is not answered by this newsletter or information on our website, please call us on 5220 7111.

Trish McEntee is now the dedicated single point of contact at the Shire to coordinate all Dereel fire-related queries. Trish will assist with Council and community liaison. If you want to contribute to this weekly update, please email Trish tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162.

Bins and waste disposal

Rubbish bins (green-lid wheelie bins) have been ordered and delivery details will be provided as soon as the dates are known. Please call Trish on 5220 7162 if you require replacement bin/s.

The Rokewood tip is open for an two extra days until 1 June and residents are encouraged to make use of the extended hours. For details on waste separation and service costs, see Council's website. Extended hours of the tip are: Wed & Fri 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–12 noon.

Building Notices

If you have any questions about Building Notices and Minor Works Orders please contact Customer Services on 5220 7111 or call Trish on 5220 7162.

Bushfire Appeal at Bendigo Bank

Cash donations can be made to the Dereel Bushfire Appeal at the Bendigo Bank or online at: www.bendigobank.com.au/foundation/dereelbushfireappeal

Community Facebook Page

Tracey and Jade from the recovery group are managing a Facebook page **Dereel Fire 2013 Fire Help Page**. This is where people can ask for assistance and arrange to borrow items or donate items. Please log on if you can either offer assistance or require personal support items.

Contact Directory

A list of contacts has been circulated to help with immediate enquiries and a quick reference guide is being developed to provide a comprehensive list of services and suppliers that can assist with the recovery. As soon as this is available it will be posted on the Council website and the community Facebook page.

Donated goods

Huge thanks to the generous people who have donated food, clothes and household items, the Hall is filled with donated goods. From this point, only fencing materials are urgently needed. Rather than goods, cash donations to the Bendigo Bank Bushfire Appeal are preferred so the community can purchase specific tools and recovery items.

Events – paper bags and wrapping needed!

There are several community events coming up, organised by locals who want to have some fun, do some fundraising and just provide an opportunity to get together. The first is a Girls Time Out on Saturday 4 May at Corindhap Memorial Hall from 4pm. Lee-anne Henriksen is putting together 100 free goodie bags and she needs 100 white paper bags with handles. She would also appreciate donations of cellophane and curling ribbon to wrap the prizes. If you can help please let us know via the Facebook page **Dereel Fire 2013 Fire Help Page**, contact Lee-anne directly or call Trish on 5220 7111.

Fencing – materials needed, help available

Replacement fencing on private land is the responsibility of landowners, who also bear the cost of the materials. Residents with fire affected fences should first contact their insurance company to establish if fencing is included under the cover.

Community members who wish to volunteer for fencing work on fire affected properties or wish to donate fencing materials should contact Doug Braddy. Visit the Community Hall to register your offer. (see below under 'Help with fencing')

Financial assistance

The government is making low-interest concessional loans of up to \$200,000 available to eligible small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations affected by the Dereel fire.

The low-interest loans are in addition to the Victorian Personal Hardship Assistance Program, which provides:

- Emergency relief assistance; payments of up to \$480 per adult and \$240 per child up to a maximum of \$1,200 per household to cover emergency shelter, food, clothing, or personal items.
- Emergency re-establishment assistance, including up to \$30,000 per household for cleanup, emergency accommodation, repairs, rebuilding and replacing some damaged contents. It is available to eligible Victorians in extreme hardship whose homes have become uninhabitable due to the current crisis, and whose insurance won't be sufficient to make their homes habitable again.

People seeking emergency support or advice about their eligibility for financial assistance under the Victorian Personal Hardship Assistance Program should contact Council or the Victorian Emergency Recovery Information Line on 1300 799 232. Information about the Personal Hardship Assistance Program is also available at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency.

Information on low interest loans is available from Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or at www.ruralfinance.com.au.

Information regarding the range of assistance that is available in Victoria can be found on the Australian Government's Disaster Assist website at www.disasterassist.gov.au.

Free agistment

For free agistment with individual paddocks and quality care and conditions, please contact Margot Brulotte, 1010 Telegraph Road, Sailors Falls 3462. Email margotbrulotte@yahoo.com or phone 5348 6615 or mobile 0418 523 301.

Help with fencing – and other property work

Doug Braddy is coordinating the volunteers with the landowners who need help. The first priority is fencing not least because a team from the Toyota Land Cruiser Club has kindly offered to help out in Dereel this weekend 28-29 April. Doug needs to know which fencing needs to come down so the team can get straight to work. They have promised to return and rebuild fencing when fencing materials are available.

If you have any work that needs to be done on your property please visit the Community Hall and register what you need.

Insurance check

The documentation required by insurance companies can vary. If you are making an insurance claim, remember to check what paperwork is needed and whether photos or other evidence needs to be supplied.

Planning Permit Requirements

A planning permit may be required to re-build a dwelling or outbuilding that was lost in the fire, particularly where a property is located in the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

In the process of pre-planning to rebuild, your first step should be to contact the Planning Team at Golden Plains Shire Council to determine whether or not you need a planning permit. The Planning Team can also provide you with all the relevant information to assist you in making an application.

A planning permit application in the BMO will most likely require a Bushfire Management Statement (BMS). The BMS requires a property owner to address a number of issues in response to the threat of wildfire attack. The Planning Team has a list of qualified consultants available to assist in the preparation of a BMS. It is also necessary to refer any application in the BMO to the Country Fire Authority (CFA). The Planning Team will provide you with the relevant CFA contacts.

Further information, including a template for a BMS, is available on the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) website: <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/plansandpolicies/bushfire-planning-and-building-resource>

Please contact Council on 5220 7111 if you have any queries or require assistance.

Post Impact Assessment Inspections

Council officers and other support agencies will continue to conduct assessments on the impact of the fire. If you require further information about this process call Council on 5220 7111.

Postal redirection

Residents who have lost their house in the fire can apply for a mail redirection service to a temporary address at no cost. Make applications at a post office.

Power

Powercor advises that residents should first contact a Registered Electrical Contractor (REC) for meter damage and/or reconnection. REC electricians know the Powercor process for fire damaged properties and will be able to restore service and provide advice.

Rainwater Tanks

If you live in a bushfire-affected area you should be aware that your water source could become contaminated from debris, ash or small dead animals. If the water tastes, looks or smells unusual do not drink it or give it to animals. Also, you should not source water from a creek that has been affected by bushfire as the water may be contaminated. Water drawn from deep bores or wells should continue to be safe to use.

Signs that your water may be contaminated include: cloudiness, floating particles and unusual smell and/or taste.

Residents who were not able to clean their roofs before the recent heavy rain will now need to:

- dump the water currently in the water tank
- arrange for cleaning of the water tank
- arrange for refilling of the water tank.

Red Cross Personal Support Volunteers to visit Dereel

Red Cross is working closely with Golden Plains Shire and Centacare to help link those affected by the recent bushfires in the Dereel area with their community and other support agencies.

Red Cross personal support volunteers will be visiting people to see how they are doing and to provide information about local services they can access for support if needed. The volunteers are trained in providing personal and emotional support and referring people to specialist agencies and support services as required.

Pairs of Red Cross personal support volunteers will visit during business hours on week days and on weekends from Friday 3 May to Monday 6 May. The volunteers wear Red Cross uniforms and carry official identification. If no one is home, they will leave a calling card with contact details. Residents can contact Jill Evans or Trish McEntee by calling 5220 7162 if they would like to request that they do not receive a visit.

Removing asbestos

During a fire, the amount of asbestos fibres released into the air is relatively low, however, asbestos clumps and some fibres may remain in the ash and may present a risk if disturbed while cleaning up after a fire. Dust should be wetted down and protective personal equipment (dust mask, gloves and coveralls) should be worn. In the event of asbestos-containing materials being burnt on your property, a licensed asbestos removalist should be arranged to perform the cleanup work.

It is illegal to dispose of asbestos waste at other sites, in household rubbish bins, or skips. Asbestos must be disposed of at registered facilities.

Safety first

Remember that the most important thing in all recovery work is safety. If you are helping out or working with volunteers, please ensure everyone is briefed on safety practices and wearing appropriate clothing.

Scammers

Unfortunately there are people who use unexpected disasters as an opportunity to try and trick people into giving away money. If anyone approaches you asking for money in return for services of any kind, make sure to check identification and do not pay for services in advance. If you note any suspicious behaviour let the Recovery Group know by visiting the Community Hall Mon-Sat at 10am-12noon.

Septic Tanks

Be aware that your septic tank may have been weakened in the fire so do not drive or walk over it. If you suspect your septic tank has been physically damaged, contact Council's Senior Environmental Health Officer, Michelle Newman on 0400 942 110 to organise to have it assessed.

Telstra – Telecommunications

If residents have lost mobile phones, modems or other Telstra telecommunication devices as a result of the fire or have any fire-related connection issues, they can contact Jim Boag of Telstra Country Wide on 0427 833 172 or email jim.boag@team.telstra.com.

Temporary accommodation

In December 2012, in response to Black Saturday Bushfire Commission, Council introduced a new local policy about sheds and temporary residences on vacant land. Landowners and residents of Golden Plains Shire are no longer permitted to live in sheds or temporary residences. These structures do not meet safety standards in regards to water and power supplies and often do not have safe structural foundations, so pose a very significant risk to those who reside in them.

Council has also made a change to the Local Laws to permit camping on private land for up to 60 days per annum. This Local Law caters for landowners who like to visit and stay on vacant land, it offers them flexibility to camp regularly and enjoy their blocks. However, this Local Law prevents people from permanently living in sub-standard accommodation without a certificate of occupancy.

For further information about how these changes may affect you or your land, please contact Council on 5220 7111.

To see if your property is affected by the Bushfire Management Overlay, obtain a 'Planning Property Report' from www.land.vic.gov.au or view maps online at www.planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au.

Treated Timber

Copper chrome arsenate (CCA) is a wood preservative that is fixed into timber and used to protect wood from rotting, fungi and insects, and resist leaching. Freshly treated CCA timber can be identified by its yellow/greenish colour which fades to grey over time.

CCA-treated timber has been commonly used in private and public recreation areas for pergolas, decking, cubby houses, claddings, posts, gates, fencing and landscaping purposes.

If you know that you had structures made from CCA-treated timber, when cleaning up the ash, remember that:

- it is not possible to tell if ash contains arsenic just by looking at it so you should treat the ash as containing copper, chromium and arsenic
- this ash may pose a health hazard if it is swallowed by young children or grazing animals.

For concerns about CCA ash contaminating stock water supplies or dams, phone the Department of Primary Industries on 136 186.

For further advice on the disposal of CCA treated timber, please contact Council on 5220 7111.

Trees on roadsides and property

Council will contract companies to remove the timber on roadsides as a result of the fire. The timber will be cut up and a single truckload delivered to nominated properties in Dereel to be used as firewood (next year as it is too green now). The plan is for the Community Recovery Group to sell the excess firewood to raise funds for ongoing recovery activities.

If you have a need for firewood, please register your property details with Doug Braddy.

Please note that while Council is responsible for roadside trees and vegetation, it is not responsible for dangerous trees on private property. Landowners who suspect they have dangerous trees on their property should make their own arrangements to have the trees inspected and if necessary removed.

The following contractors undertake vegetation management works for Golden Plain Shire Council and may be available to assist landowners;

- A1 Tree Solutions (5331 8029)
- Bellarine Tree Services (5240 0500)
- Skyrider Tower Hire (5339 6111)
- Tree Top Tower Hire (5345 8212)
- LTW Pty (5289 5330)

Volunteer Workers

Fire affected residents who do not have insurance cover can register with Doug Braddy to access volunteer workers that become available.

Water

Water taken for fire fighting by the CFA or DSE can be replaced where the water is essential for the health of residents and the health and productivity of stock. If water was taken from your water supply (dams or tanks) for fire fighting by the CFA or DSE and you need the water replaced, contact Council on 5220 7111.

Central Highlands Water (CHW) is offering all residents affected by the Dereel fire a free refill of up to 23,000 litres of potable water.

CHW is not able to guarantee that the residential tanks will be free of bacteria and will therefore only fill tanks of property owners who have signed a 'water delivery consent form'.

Copies of the letter received from CHW and the consent form are attached to this newsletter. The contact person at CHW is Michael Tickner on 5320 3197.

Support Services and Information

Centacare Ballarat

Centacare Ballarat is able to assist you and your family with information about resources available to you, including practical support, counselling services and referral to other support services and organisations.

You may have already talked to one of the Centacare staff at the Dereel Recovery Centre over the past few days, or you may have seen staff at the Centre. If you haven't had the opportunity to talk to Centacare staff or would like to follow up on a previous discussion, you can telephone Centacare Ballarat on 1300 303 988 and ask to be put through to Lauren.

Centrelink

Priority treatment will be provided on all services at Ballarat Centrelink to those affected by the Dereel fire. Please mention on arrival at Ballarat Centrelink that you are a fire affected resident to receive priority treatment.

Visit Ballarat Centrelink at 12 Albert Street, Ballarat or 1800 050 004.

Centrelink can also be contacted on 132 850 for Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help. This number can be accessed Monday to Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm.

Bushfire Legal Help

Do you need legal help? In bushfires people may have lost property, pets and livestock. In this difficult time it is important to understand your legal rights.

There are many things to sort out. We are here to help with your legal issues. You may have questions about your rights. Central Highlands Community Legal Centre can assist with free legal advice in the following areas:

- Dealing with insurance companies-house and car
- What to do if you are uninsured, underinsured or denied a claim
- Tenancy
- Dealing with electricity, phone and water companies
- Money problems, paying your excess, mortgages and other debts
- Getting your superannuation
- Sticking to Court Orders (ie family court)
- Your identification and documents
- Replacement of Wills or Powers of Attorney documents
- Fencing Issues

A Community Lawyer can talk to you about how the law applies to your legal problem and what you can do about it.

For enquiries about free legal assistance please call Lisa Buckland at the Centre on 5331 5999 or email lisa_buckland@clc.net.au

Red Cross – resources available online

Red Cross has many online resources for families who have been affected by fire. Resources include 'Coping with a Major Personal Crisis', 'After the Emergency' and other useful booklets and brochures. Visit www.redcross.org.au to access these resources.

Council News and Updates

Golden Plains Shire Council has a Facebook page Golden Plains Shire, as well as Council's website goldenplains.vic.gov.au where important updates and information will be posted.



Central Highlands Letter

Free refilling of private water tanks by Central Highlands Water

Following the recent Dereel fires, Central Highlands Water (CHW) is offering residents affected by the fires a free refill of up to 23,000 litres of private household water tanks.

You do not need to be a Central Highlands Water customer for this free refill service.

While the water provided by CHW is a drinking water supply, we cannot guarantee that your tank is free of bacteria. Because we cannot confirm that your tank has been cleaned and disinfected, the water supplied to you does not meet the Safe Drinking Water Act (2003) and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2011) once it is delivered to your tank.

Unless you have had your tanks cleaned and disinfected following the bushfire, Central Highlands Water recommends that **the water is not used for drinking, food preparation or ice making**. The water may be used for washing clothes, watering the garden, toilet flushing or any other non-drinking purpose.

If you would like to receive a delivery of water please contact Michael Tickner at CHW on telephone 5320 3197 or email mtickner@chw.net.au by close of business on Monday 22 April. Central Highlands Water will contact you to confirm the delivery date and an approximate time. Someone must be home to accept the delivery.

Delivery will be undertaken using a large, heavy water tanker. Please note that CHW, and its contractor, will not be held responsible for any damage caused to driveways, lawns and gardens as a result of gaining access to your property or in the process of delivering the water. Where possible, please ensure easy access to your property.

For more information contact:

Michael Tickner at CHW on telephone 5320 3197 or email mtickner@chw.net.au



CHW Consent Form

DEREEL BUSHFIRE WATER DELIVERY CONSENT FORM

In accepting the free refill of water to my tank/s, I understand that:

- Whilst the water is of drinking water standard, once it enters my private tank, Central Highlands Water cannot guarantee its quality
- **Unless your tank has been cleaned and disinfected following the bushfire, Central Highlands Water recommends that this water is NOT used for drinking, cooking or ice making purposes**
- Should I, or others in my household, choose to drink this water we will be doing so at our own risk
- I will not hold Central Highlands Water, or its contractor, liable for any illness which may be caused should I consume this water
- I will not hold Central Highlands Water, or its contractor, liable for any damage caused to my driveway, lawns, garden or other areas as a result of accepting this delivery.
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Name	
Address	
Contact number	
Signature	
Date	