

Dereel Fire Community Newsletter

Issue 8 – Tuesday 14 May 2013



The work going on around Dereel is evident wherever you look. Thank you and well done to the teams of people working hard to clean up fallen trees, tin and debris around properties. It's a long process but the recovery is on the way.

Welcome to Issue 8 of the Dereel Fire Community Newsletter.

It was exciting to see birds among the trees at the fringes of the fire-affected areas on Camms Road. Life is starting to resume for some, although it is going to be a long process of rebuilding and there will be ups and downs along the way.

The Red Cross saw more than 70 people during last week's visits and were impressed with the community's response to the fire. They have lots of great information about the personal impact of disasters, so have a look under Support Services at the back of this newsletter if you want to read or talk about how it feels.

The phases that communities go through are well known and it is now, as we approach two months after the fire, that there is likely to be a period of anger, mood swings and blaming. This is a normal response and it usually doesn't last more than a few weeks but we need to be gentle with each other and aware that this may happen. The phases of recovery are in the table below for interest.

Phases of Recovery

Heroic	Honeymoon	Disillusionment	Renewal & rebuild
Immediate 1-7 days	Short term 2-4 weeks	Medium term 2-3 months	Long term 4 months onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single focus• Strong altruism• Desire to help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Togetherness• Sense of shared survival• Anticipation of help/return to normal• Highly active, task focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anger• Resentment• Diminished sharing• Mood and level of activity swings• Scapegoating• Awareness of length of process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belief in self and community• Taking responsibility• Long term investment in process

Please contact Centacare or another support service if you are struggling. Calling Centacare Ballarat is free, simply call 1300 303 988 and ask to be put through to Lauren.



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Update – A to Z

There is some important news this week, focusing on the practical side of getting the cleanup work done and starting to rebuild. **If the message is particularly important or time sensitive it is highlighted in red.**

Activities back at Community Centre and Community Hall

Everyone is keen for a return to business as usual at the Hall and Community Centre. The Hall is back to normal! Remember what's on:

- Walking Group 8.30am Tues & Thurs
- Line Dancing 7.30pm Friday nights
- Health Nurse Benita Tues & Thurs at 8am-noon
- Playgroup 10am-12noon every other Tues
- CERT first Wednesday each month
- CFA last Wednesday each month
- Campfire Conversations first Thursday of each month 6-7pm meal then talk.



Be aware: don't pay up front & remember to request quotes

There have been reports of high costs associated with some services that were necessary after the fire. Remember not to pay up front for any services and to request identification and a formal quote for any work on your property. If you are not satisfied with work done you can make a complaint to Consumer Affairs on 1300 558 181 www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Community Hall – donated goods packed up



The goods in the Community Hall are being cleared on Thursday 16 May. The Community Hall will return to normal so come along to any or all activities.

Fire-affected residents who need clothes, tools, furniture or household items can now contact Trish McEntee on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or 5220 7162, to organise a voucher to access free goods from Uniting Care in Ballarat.

Community Recovery Group – stockfeed help needed


Doug Braddy 5346 1073 – contact Doug if you need help or can volunteer to help. Doug's current priorities are fencing, tools and tree lopping.

Julie Donaghy 0400 045 962 – Julie can help coordinate donated clothing and goods for people who need them.

Charlie Munro 0407 045 042 – Charlie has been managing and storing stockfeed donations but is now too busy to continue with this. Thanks to Charlie for great work so far, if you can help with feed please contact Trish McEntee on 5220 7162 or talk to Julie.

Tracey Taylor (bocinder2112@hotmail.com) and Jade Woodall – Tracey and Jade are keeping everyone connected online through the Facebook **Dereel Fire 2013 Fire Help Page**.

Ruth Uren 0400 480 308 – Ruth is managing Hall bookings and sits on the Committee for the Bushfire Appeal Fund, along with Jill Evans from Golden Plains Shire and representatives from the Buninyong Community Bank.



Kim and Ian Stanley-Eyles, Caroline Everett, Justine Fox and Eric and Lesley Dell are also committee members, which meets as a group with the Council every second Wednesday.



Congratulations to people who have rebuilding plans

A couple of local residents have bolted to the lead in the recovery process and are excited with the plans for their new home. Having worked quickly through the insurance process they are on the way to choosing the features of their homelife after the fire. A bath is top of the list! Congratulations and enjoy!

Council contact

Trish McEntee is the dedicated contact at the Golden Plains Shire to coordinate all Dereel fire-related queries. Email Trish on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162.



Dangerous trees

Please note that while Council is responsible for roadside trees and vegetation, it is not responsible for dangerous trees on private property. If you suspect you have dangerous trees on your property please make arrangements to have the trees inspected and if necessary removed.

The following contractors undertake vegetation management works for Council and may be available to assist landowners; A1 Tree Solutions (5331 8029), Bellarine Tree Services (5240 0500), Sky rider Tower Hire (5339 6111), Tree Top Tower Hire (5345 8212), LTW Pty (5289 5330).

Discussing fencing types and timing with neighbours

It is important to understand both sides of the fence when working out how to replace fencing that has been damaged or destroyed by the fire. Neighbours may have different views on the type of fencing, the cost and the timing of putting up the new fencing.

These are important issues and they are not easy conversations. If you find you are having difficulty coming to an agreement about when fencing is replaced, who does the work and what type of fencing to use, please contact the Central Highlands Community Legal Centre on 5331 5999. As your community legal centre they have kindly offered free advice to fire-affected people and can help you with mediation and working out a solution for fencing disputes.

Donations to Bushfire Appeal at Bendigo Bank



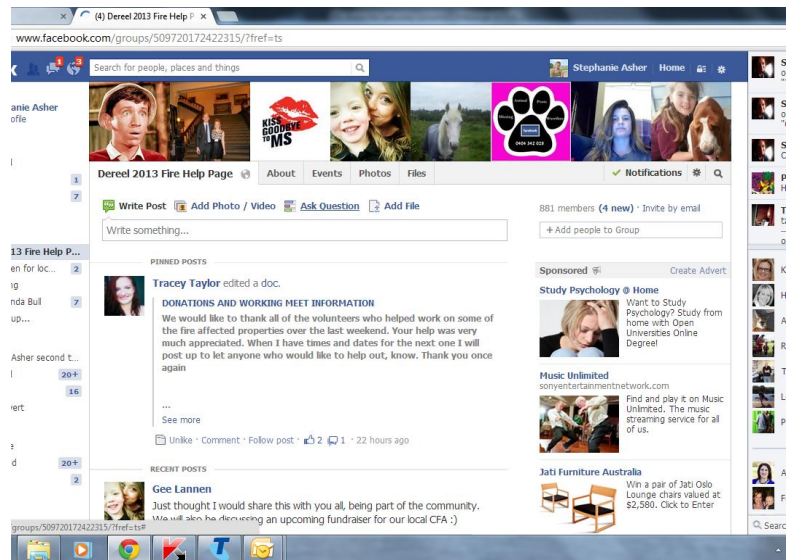
The Dereel Bushfire Appeal is being managed by an Advisory Committee with representatives from the Dereel Community Recovery Group, the Council and the Buninyong Community Bank.

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



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.



Fencing

If you have fire-affected fences, you should first contact your insurance company to establish if fencing is included under your cover.

Replacement fencing on private land or adjacent to Council land is the responsibility of landowners, who also need to cover the cost of the materials. If your property is next to Crown land, you can contact the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 and ask for Recovery Services to access help with replacing fences.

If you don't know who owns the property next to yours, Council can assist but needs the form attached at the back of this newsletter to be completed. Enquiries can be directed to Trish on 5220 7162.

As mentioned at the start of this newsletter, it is important to work together with neighbours and decide on a solution that suits both parties. Help is available.

Community members who wish to volunteer for fencing work on fire-affected properties or wish to donate fencing materials should contact Doug Braddy.



Fire Break Remediation on Private Land

During the Dereel fire fighting effort, fire breaks were made through forest and paddocks using dozers and graders to create a mineral earth break around the edge of the fire. After the fire, these breaks can be remediated to return them to reasonable condition to help minimise soil erosion and prevent unwanted access onto your land. Remediation of fire breaks on private land is carried out by the CFA.



Reinstatement of firebreaks in open paddocks, generally involves grading the soil/grass windrow back over the break. In forested areas, an excavator is used to pull felled trees, and shrubs, rock and soil piles

back over the break. Remediation of fire breaks created during the fire is not compulsory and landowners may prefer to retain the break that was created.

If you have a fire break created during the Dereel fire on your property that you would like remediated, please contact Trish on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or 5220 7162 to record your request which will be passed on to the CFA for action.

Firewood – this year and next year

There has been a generous offer of firewood that is ready to be cut up and used by anyone needing wood. Please contact Trish on 5220 7162 if you need firewood and she will organise woodcutting and delivery until it's all been taken.

For next year's firewood supplies, Council has engaged contractors to cut up the timber on roadsides as a result of the fire. A single truckload is available for fire-affected properties in Dereel for firewood for next year (it is too green now).



If you want a load of this firewood, email Trish on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162 and Trish will coordinate the delivery.

The plan is for the Community Recovery Group to sell the excess firewood to raise funds for ongoing recovery activities.

Help is available for property work

Doug Braddy is coordinating the volunteers with the landowners who need help. If you have any work to be done on your property please let Doug know.

Insurance

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.

If you experience any problems with your insurance provider, you can contact the Financial Services (Insurance) Ombudsman on 1300 78 08 08 between 9am-5pm weekdays or visit the website http://fos.org.au/centric/home_page.jsp


Loans and 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.

Planning Permit Requirements and Building Notices

If you have any questions about Planning Permits, Building Notices and Minor Works Orders please email Trish tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162.

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 all the relevant information to assist you in making an application.

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>

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 call Trish on 5220 7162.

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

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

The windy weather in the past couple of weeks has blown ash, dust and debris onto rooftops and gutters. Residents are advised to check the quality of the water in their tanks and contact Central Highlands Water if you have concerns. There is a cost for cleaning water tanks, typically several hundred dollars. Contact your insurance company if you are insured, to see if tank cleaning is covered.

Red Cross visits 3-6 May

Thank you again to the Red Cross volunteers who visited more than 70 people in early May. If you wish to contact Red Cross or any other support service, details are on p10.





Replacing essential 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, email Trish on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162. There is a form attached to this newsletter that needs to be completed.

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. This may present a risk if disturbed while cleaning up. Dust should be wetted down and dust mask, gloves and overalls should be worn. If asbestos-containing materials have been burnt on your property, a licensed asbestos removalist should be arranged to clean up. 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.

Rubbish, recycling and waste

The Rokewood tip is now open for two extra days each week and residents are encouraged to make use of the extended hours. All waste should be separated into: general waste, metal/steel waste, brick/timber waste. The tip is open Wed & Fri 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 9am–12 noon. This will continue to Saturday 1 June, at which time the need for extended hours will be reassessed.

This service will be provided at no cost to fire-affected residents. Persons delivering waste to the tip will need to provide proof of identification that he/she is an owner of property within the fire-affected zone. Any contractors working for locals will need to supply some form of identification illustrating that the waste has come from the fire-affected zone, otherwise tipping fees will apply.

All vehicle registration numbers, volume of waste and type of waste will be recorded. Please note that all asbestos on properties is to be removed and disposed of by licensed contractors and will not be accepted at the Rokewood tip.

Please email Trish on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162 if you need replacement rubbish or recyclables bins (wheelie bins).

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. Report suspicious behaviour to the police.

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 Trish on 5220 7162 to organise an assessment.

Stockfeed

If you require stockfeed or can donate hay or grain, please email Trish on tmcentee@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7162.



Street numbers on your property

It is important that your property is identifiable for many reasons, for example insurance assessors and other individuals looking to provide assistance. If the street number, letterbox or other signage to your property was damaged in the fire, please make sure to put a clear sign up on the gate, fence or nearby tree.

Telstra – Telecommunications

Residents who have lost mobile phones, modems or other Telstra telecommunication devices as a result of the fire, or have any fire-related connection issues, 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, so pose a 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 caters for landowners who like to visit and stay on vacant land, 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 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. 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 swallowed by 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 Trish on 5220 7162.

Volunteer Workers

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

The most important issues are working safely and making sure volunteers are covered by insurance in case of injury. Injury risks need to be managed, so people must wear appropriate protective clothing and use safe practices.



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 (Jacinta is pictured right) 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. You may have questions about your rights.

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre can assist with free legal advice for:

- 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 affected by fire. These 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.

Forms and letters (see over page)

Water Replacement Request / Authorisation Form

LANDHOLDER	
Name:	
Address:	
Contact Phone Number:	
Fire Name:	
Municipality:	

Water Required

Location of Water Source	Type of Water Source Dam or Tank	Quantity of Water Required	Units of Water (Litres or Gallons)	Date(s) water was used for fire fight

Submit this form to your local municipality

Signature:				
Date:				
*It is a fraudulent activity to put in a false claim for replacement of essential water				
OFFICE USE ONLY				
Key Questions	Decision	Name	Signature	Date
Was the water used for fire fighting?	Yes or No			
Is the water essential?	Yes or No			

Date of Request Submission	
Name of Water Supplier	
Name of Water Carter	
Date of Delivery	

Confirmation of Delivery	Name	Signature	Date
Yes or No			



Golden Plains Shire Council
2 Pope Street
P.O. Box 111
Bannockburn VIC 3331
Telephone: 03 5220 7111
STD Toll Free Within Shire: 1300 363 036
Facsimile: 03 5220 7100
www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au

Request for ownership details for fencing purposes only

Name: _____

Address: _____

Property Number: _____ Property Address: _____

Description of land for which information is requested: _____

I, the adjoining owner OR agent of the adjoining owner*, hereby request Council to provide the ownership details of the abovementioned property.

This information is requested solely to facilitate a fencing matter between my land and the adjoining land owner. It is requested under Section 9(1) (b) of the Fences Act 1968. The land owners details will NOT be retained, copied or disseminated for unrelated purposes and will be kept secure and only used for advising and serving of fencing matters.

I acknowledge having been advised by Council of the Information Privacy Principles relating to personal information.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

Telephone: _____ **Facsimile:** _____

Email: _____

***An agent will be required to provide proof that they are authorized to act on behalf of the adjoining owner.**

The Golden Plains Shire considers that the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance, and is strongly committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. Council will comply with the Information Privacy Principles as set out in the Information Privacy Act, 2000. The personal information required on this form will only be used by Council for the purpose of property related issues. The information will not be disclosed to any other party unless Council is required to do so by law. You can view and change the information by contacting Customer Service on 5220 7111.