

# Otway Complex Fires Recovery Newsletter

Issue 7 – 9 June 2026

## Kindness is the key

### Kindness and generosity reign.

There was an amazing community-led flood rescue during last week's wet weather. Seven locals rallied around one of the residents who nearly lost their caravan to the breaking banks of Charleys Creek.

The generosity of spirit and willingness to support continues to shine through.

The Recovery Team are continuing to reach out to communities across the Otways.

Contact George on 0400 978 356 and Bridie on 0477 642 079 if you want information on available resources and support.



*Reece Group Foundation's Warren Eames is pictured with Otways resident Ron Grace and plumber Chris Mihicinac.*

## Water tank donations welcomed

### Reece Group Foundation will donate water tanks and plumbing services to fire impacted residents who experienced loss or damage.

Warren Eames from Reece Group Foundation and volunteer plumber Chris Mihicinac visited the Otways on Wednesday 3 June and Thursday 4 June to assess the need and meet residents.

The foundation will return in July to replace tanks and undertake plumbing works.

Contact Warren directly on 0488 111 455 for further information.

## Colac Area Health at Birregurra

### Need support after the recent fires? We're here to help.

The Emergency Recovery Support Program (ERSP), delivered by Colac Area Health, offers free, practical support to help you get back on track.

Work out next steps

Access financial, legal and government supports

Get help with forms, calls and follow-ups

We'll be at Birregurra Community Health Centre on Wednesday 17 June from 9am to 12 noon.

Come and chat with us - no appointment needed.

Can't make it at that time? Call us on 5232 5325 and ask for the Emergency Recovery Support Team. Leave your number and we'll call you back to arrange a time to come and visit you.

You don't have to navigate this alone.



*The ERSP team will be at the Birregurra Community Health Centre on Wednesday 17 June from 9am to 12 noon.*



## Are you a parent living in a rural or regional area?

Take part in new research aiming to better support rural and regional families in Australia

### Rural and regional life brings resilience, and real challenges.

- Families living in rural and regional areas can face unique stresses, from bushfires, droughts, and the ongoing threat of natural disasters
- We are inviting families with children aged 0-12 years to join important research aimed at strengthening family wellbeing and support in rural and regional communities

Scan the QR code or visit <https://lifespan.deakin.edu.au/our-research/project/family-foundations-trial> to find out more

Join us to shape better supports for rural and regional families



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Ethics Approval: RCH HREC Reference Number - 117878

## Financial assistance

### Financial assistance is available to help fire-affected farmers with recovery.

- Primary Producer Bushfire Recovery Grants of up to \$75,000 to assist with clean-up and reinstating enterprises. Funding can be used for essential recovery activities such as disposing of stock, rebuilding, or replacing damaged on-farm infrastructure and restoring operations.
- Primary Producer Bushfire Recovery Concessional Loans of up to \$250,000 are available for those who have suffered major asset damage or loss of income, while loans of up to \$100,000 will support those experiencing a major loss of income. This assistance can help cover essential costs such as repairing or replacing damaged equipment, rebuilding infrastructure, purchasing livestock and meeting working capital expenses like wages, rent, and fodder.

These supports are administered by Rural Finance on behalf of the Victoria Government, for grant guidelines and to apply visit [www.ruralfinance.com.au/grants](http://www.ruralfinance.com.au/grants)  
Applications are open until 4 pm Wednesday 21 October 2026.

For more information about financial assistance, technical information and recovery support, visit [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/bushfires](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/bushfires)

## Was your property damaged by the January 2026 bushfires?

Free clean up help is available.

You may be eligible for free clean up support if you live on, or run a business from, a property that:

- ✓ has structures that were damaged by the January 2026 bushfires
- ✓ is uninsured or underinsured



Call 1800 560 760  
[vic.gov.au/register-for-clean-up](http://vic.gov.au/register-for-clean-up)

## Clean-up help is available

### The State Coordinated Clean-up is in full swing across the state.

We know how important clean-up is to recovery. It is often the first step in people's recovery journey.

Works are scheduled, underway or complete for more than half of eligible registered properties.

If you need help to clean up after the January 2026 bushfires, call 1800 560 760 to register or visit [www.vic.gov.au/register-for-cleanup](http://www.vic.gov.au/register-for-cleanup)

## Waste disposal program extended

### The FREE waste disposal program has been extended to 30 June 2026.

Following an announcement from the Minister for Environment extending the Gate Free Rebate Program, residents in fire-affected areas can dispose of non-hazardous waste at Council transfer stations in Alvie, Apollo Bay and Birregurra for FREE until 30 June 2026.

Proof of address within the fire-impacted zones is required.

## Fire Recovery Hub

### The Fire Recovery Hub is established in Gellibrand to support people affected by recent fires.

Get practical advice, learn about available resources and connect with services to support your recovery.

No appointment is needed.

The Gellibrand Recovery Hub is open on Monday (10am-4pm), Wednesday afternoon and Thursday (10am-4pm).