

## Community Newsletter – No.9

### Otway Complex Fires

Wednesday 21st January 2026

#### Fire Situation:

##### **Kennedys Creek – King Track Fire**

- Fire is contained.
- There is no immediate threat to the community; however, hazardous tree assessments will continue over the coming days to ensure the area is made safe.

##### **Carlisle River – Pipeline Road Fire**

- Firefighters have been able to slow the spread of the fire and it is now contained.
- Blacking out operations continue.
- Information stand with publications is available at Colac Otway Performing Arts Cultural Centre.

#### **Across the fireground**

- Hazardous tree assessment and removal continues, with priority given to public access routes.

#### **Other fire preparedness works happening in the area**

- CFA advise that CFA crews are mulching, slashing and mowing around Gellibrand, Carlisle River, Kawarren and Colac to reduce fuel.

#### **Community Meeting:**

More than 100 people gathered at the Irrewillipe CFA Station on Monday 19 January to hear the latest on the Otway Complex Fires.

The session covered current fire status, containment work, weather forecasts, recovery support and more.

A recording of the meeting is available on the Colac Otway Shire Council Facebook page.

[www.facebook.com/ColacOtwayShireCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/ColacOtwayShireCouncil)

On Tuesday 20 January, a Community Information Pop-Up was held in Gellibrand, giving locals the opportunity to receive up-to-date information on the current fires and to access preparedness advice ahead of the forecast weather conditions.

#### **Road Closures**

Roads will reopen when they are safe. Please follow all traffic management directions.

Up-to-date road information:

[www.traffic.transport.vic.gov.au](http://www.traffic.transport.vic.gov.au)



*Attendees at Gellibrand Community Information Session*

#### **What people can expect:**

- Over coming days, you may continue to see:
- Smoke from backburning activities
- Helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft
- Emergency vehicles and heavy machinery on roads

#### **Road Closures:**

As of 20 January, Black Bridge Road is open to all except non-essential travellers. Roads will reopen when they are safe. Please follow all traffic management directions.

Up-to-date road information:

[www.traffic.transport.vic.gov.au](http://www.traffic.transport.vic.gov.au)

#### **Wildlife**

If you see injured, trapped or distressed native wildlife, contact the Incident Control Centre on 1300 322 056 or use the DEECA Wildlife Emergency App.

DEECA has deployed wildlife field assessments teams to firegrounds, These teams are made up of trained and accredited individuals from across the veterinary and wildlife welfare sector.

#### **Great Otway National Park**

Check park alerts before travelling:

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

#### **Relief information**

##### **Colac Otway Performing Arts & Cultural Centre (COPAC)**

95–97 Gellibrand Street, Colac

Open during business hours for community information.

### Financial assistance

Emergency relief payments are available for people experiencing financial hardship.

- **VicEmergency Hotline:** 1800 226 226
- **Emergency Recovery Hotline:** 1800 560 760

### Water – Including rooftop collection

Ash, retardant and runoff may affect water sources. Follow Victorian Department of Health advice before using water for drinking:

[www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/bushfires-and-public-health](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/bushfires-and-public-health)

### Emergency Drinking Water Relief

- Eligible households can now get access to emergency relief drinking water if they emptied their household water tank for firefighting or if it now contains ash or other contaminants.
- Emergency relief drinking water up to 20,000L is being made available for communities impacted by the Victorian fires.
- For further information on eligibility and access to emergency relief drinking water visit: <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/about-us/news/news-stories/emergency-relief-drinking-water-2026>

### Support for farmers

Emergency fodder assistance is available.

- Agriculture Victoria: 1800 226 226
- Victorian Farmers Federation: 1300 882 833 or via VFF website
- Mental health support: <https://www.vff.org.au/mental-health-support-available-as-bushfire-recovery-continues/>

### Protect your health

For medical advice:

- **Nurse-on-Call:** 1300 60 60 24
- Virtual Emergency Care (non-life-threatening) [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- **Emergency:** Call Triple Zero (000)
- Smoke can make asthma, heart and lung conditions worse. If it's smoky:
  - Stay indoors, close windows and doors
  - Wear a P2, KN95 or N95 mask outdoors if needed.

### Family Violence

Risk can increase after emergencies. Help is available. Visit [www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence](http://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence) or call **1800 737 732 (1800RESPECT)**.

### Useful information

More information is provided on your local council's website and social media channels:

[www.colacotway.vic.gov.au](http://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au)

[www.facebook.com/ColacOtwayShireCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/ColacOtwayShireCouncil)

[www.corangamite.vic.gov.au](http://www.corangamite.vic.gov.au)

[www.facebook.com/CorangamiteShire](https://www.facebook.com/CorangamiteShire).

### Stay informed ahead of forecast elevated fire weather, and in the Fire Danger Period

- Use multiple sources for warnings and updates
- Leaving early is the safest choice — go before there are signs of fire
- Before you leave, if time allows:
  - Close all windows and doors
  - Move outdoor furniture and doormats away from the house
  - Block downpipes and fill gutters with water
  - Leave gates open for emergency access

#### Stay informed

- [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)
  - VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226
  - VicEmergency app
  - ABC Local Radio (774)
  - Follow #vicHAZARD on social media
- For information in other languages:
- Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450 (ask them to call VicEmergency Hotline)
- For people who are deaf or hard of hearing:
- National Relay Service: 1800 555 677 (ask them to call VicEmergency Hotline)



*The Incident Management Team in Colac Incident Control Centre on Tuesday 20 January 2026*