

Community Newsletter – No.12

Otway Complex Fires

Wednesday 28 January 2026

Fire Situation:

Carlisle River – Pipeline Road Fire

- The bushfire at Carlisle River breached containment lines on Saturday 24 January and continued to grow on Sunday and Monday from 5293 hectares to 11,305 hectares.
- Due to forecasted extreme bushfire weather on Tuesday 27 January, Vic Emergency asked residents to evacuate (leave) bushfire areas covered by warnings in daylight hours of Monday. Victoria Police supported by 150 SES volunteers door knocked in these areas.
- On Tuesday 27 January, the fire breached containment lines in the southeast corner which impacted areas around Gellibrand, Lovat and Kawarren
- The fire crossed the Colac-Lavers Hill Rd south of Gellibrand and there were impacts to major power lines in the area.
- While some communities around the fire may have regained power, it will be some time before power in the fire effected areas is fully restored.
- Firefighters continue to be focused on protecting houses and property.
- The bushfire remains not yet under control. Our goal is to reopen roads and restore property access as quickly as possible. However, safety is a priority, and we cannot grant access until fire-damaged areas are cleared of hazards such as hazardous trees. These zones must be thoroughly assessed and treated before they are deemed safe for entry
- Make sure you monitor the Vic Emergency app/website and/or ABC radio for effected areas, evacuation routes, relief centres and further details.

Kennedys Creek – King Track Fire

- Fire is currently contained. The fire remains at 3437 hectares in size.

Emergency Relief Centres

- Three Emergency Relief Centre has been set up for anyone displaced by the Otway fires.
 - **Colac Showgrounds:** enter via Bruce Street - This is the only centre that you can take large domestic animals
 - **Colac Blue Water Leisure Centre:** 118-134 Hearn St, Colac
 - **Grovedale Community Hub at 45-47 Heyers Road has closed for now**
- Domestic or large animals including horses can be brought to the Colac Show Grounds. Pets must be self-

managed, kept on a leash or in crates, there's no pet food available at this time.

- Information drop-in centre open at the Colac Otway Performing Arts Cultural Centre during business hours.
- Let friends, family and emergency services know you are safe with Red Cross Register.Find.Reunite. You can do this if you left your home, or if you are staying.

<https://register.redcross.org.au/>

What people can expect:

Over coming days, you will continue to see:

- Active bushfire in the landscape
- Smoke
- Helicopters and -aircraft
- Emergency vehicles and machinery on roads



Road Closures:

There are road closures that will reopen when they are safe. Please follow all traffic management directions.

Up-to-date road information:

www.traffic.transport.vic.gov.au

Great Otway National Park

Check park alerts before travelling:

www.parks.vic.gov.au

- Campgrounds including Aire River, Dandos Lake Elizabeth and Stevensons Falls are closed.

Heatwave

- A low intensity heat wave will continue until the end of Thursday
- Heat is more dangerous for people over 65 years old, the very young and those with a pre-existing medical condition.
- Continuous high temperatures with little to no relief overnight, can stop the body from cooling down normally. It can cause heat illness and even heatstroke, which is life-threatening.

Protect your health

For medical advice:

- **Nurse-on-Call:** 1300 60 60 24
- Virtual Emergency Care (non-life-threatening)
<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 or call **1800 737 732 (1800RESPECT)**.

Plan & Prepare for Bushfire

Don't leave things until the last minute. If you know a hot, dry, windy day is coming, start getting your property ready:

- Remove doormats from around the house
- Move combustible outdoor furniture and other items from decks, up against, or under the home
- Move pot plants a few metres from the home
- Double check that gas bottles are anchored securely with the relief valves pointing away from any flammable materials
- Mow your lawns. On bigger properties, a clearing of about 10 metres of well-mown grass around your home is advisable
- Walk around your home and remove piles of from fuels such as leaves. It will probably be where embers will land
- Check your gutters to make sure leaves haven't built up
- Make sure you remove any fuels from around your windows and doors. These are the most vulnerable parts of your home

Before and During a Fire

Find out the importance of leaving early, and how a well thought out bushfire survival plan can help you.

- Use multiple sources for warnings and updates
- Leaving early is the safest choice — go before there are signs of fire

More information: www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare

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.

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

- Barwon Water advised the Gellibrand system has been impacted by the fire, DO NOT DRINK the tap water. Supply and quality of water cannot be guaranteed. Use bottled water or safe alternative supplies for drinking, preparing food and baby formula, and brushing teeth.
- 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

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>

Financial assistance

Emergency relief payments are available for people experiencing financial hardship.

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

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/>

Useful information

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

www.colacotway.vic.gov.au
www.facebook.com/ColacOtwayShireCouncil
www.corangamite.vic.gov.au
www.facebook.com/CorangamiteShire.



VIC
EMERGENCY



Stay informed

- 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)

**Download the
VicEmergency app**

App Store



Google Play

