

Community Newsletter – No.1

Flood-GreatOceanRd-Jan2026
Friday 16th January 2026

Situation

An intense burst of 175 mm of rain hammered the Surf Coast on Thursday 15 January, triggering a Flash Flood Emergency Warning for Wye River, Kennett River, Cumberland River, Lorne and surrounding areas. The sudden downpour caused local rivers and creeks to rise with little warning, creating dangerous conditions across the region.

The rapid flooding forced many holidaymakers and residents to leave homes, campsites and accommodation as water levels surged. Emergency services responded quickly, urging people to move to higher ground and avoid flooded roads, bridges and low-lying areas.

Emergency Relief Centres have opened by both Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire, providing shelter, information and essential assistance. Local volunteers and community organisations have also stepped in, helping travellers and residents navigate the disruption during what is typically one of the busiest holiday periods along the coast.

Surf Coast Shire Relief Centre

📍 Lorne Stribling Reserve, 45 Otway Street, Lorne

Colac Otway Shire Relief Centre

📍 Apollo Bay P-12 College, Pengilly Avenue, Apollo Bay.

Authorities continue to monitor conditions closely, we remind community to stay alert, follow official updates and prioritise safety as clean-up and assessment efforts begin.

SAFETY MESSAGES

- Floodwater is dangerous.
- Never enter floodwater.
- Floodwater can be very deep, rise quickly and move fast.
- Never drive through floodwater.
- Stay away from trees, drains, low-lying areas, creeks, canals, culverts and floodwater.

When planning to go back into homes, holiday accommodation or businesses, it's important to be aware that flood-affected buildings can contain hidden risks. Contaminated water, damaged structures, mould growth, electrical hazards and debris can all pose ongoing threats long after the immediate danger has passed.

For information on returning after a flood visit

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/After-a-flood-returning-home-safely#hazards-and-floodwaters>



Picture: Alan Barber

Impacts to the area

The bridge at Wye River along with the Erskine River bridge will be assessed for damage Friday 16th January, traffic management points are currently in place.

The walking paths on these bridges are currently closed due safety concerns.

Stay informed – monitor weather warnings and forecasts at the Bureau of Meteorology website, and warnings through the VicEmergency app, website and hotline (1800 226 226).

For storm or flood assistance, contact VICSES on 132 500.



Picture 7 News

Useful information

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

Colac Otway Shire Council

www.colacotway.voc.gov.au

www.facebook.com/ColacOtwayShireCouncil

Surf Coast Shire Council

<https://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Home>

<https://www.facebook.com/SurfCoastShireCouncil>

For medical advice:

- **Nurse-on-Call:** 1300 60 60 24
- **Virtual Emergency Care** (non-life-threatening) via www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- **Emergency:** Call Triple Zero (000)

Road Closures And Disruptions

Traffic Management Points are in place along the Great Ocean Road from Skenes Creek to Hird Street Lorne

Visit Vic Traffic for the latest information

<https://traffic.transport.vic.gov.au/>



Wildlife

If you see wildlife that is injured, trapped or distressed due to the fires or flood, call the **Incident Control Centre:**

5233 5552, or report via the **DEECA Wildlife Emergency App**.

Drinking Water After a Flood

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/floods>

<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/floodwater-and-your-health>

Family Violence

The risk of family violence increases after emergencies. Help is available. Visit

www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence

or call **1800 737 732 (1800RESPECT)**.

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)