

Community Resilience Newsletter

Wye River Fire

COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE

WYE RIVER | SEPARATION CREEK

27 APRIL 2017

This newsletter is issued by Colac Otway Shire to provide the community key updates about recovery following the fire.

Communications in renewal phase

As outlined in last month's newsletter, as we move into the renewal phase, Colac Otway Shire has committed to provide project-specific communications and engagement opportunities wherever possible, and keep the community informed through:

- The bushfire recovery email:
Bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au
- Periodic newsletters distributed around key infrastructure milestones, approximately monthly
- Community drop-in sessions in Wye River for feedback on specific projects
- A page on Council's website, which will replace WyeSep Connect:
www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/wyesepp
- Facebook: facebook.com/WyeSepConnect

WyeSep Connect

This Sunday, April 30th, WyeSep Connect will transition to Council's website, at:
colacotway.vic.gov.au/wyesepp

The current page will redirect to the URL above on Council's website. Community members can send meeting minutes, updates and news articles to Yvette Hill: yvette.hill@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Service Charter

To help you know who to contact at Council and to ensure we continue to meet your needs Colac-Otway Shire has produced a **Service Charter**, specifically for the communities of Wye River and Separation Creek, which outlines our service commitment to you.

Service Charter cont...

It also contains key contacts within Council so you know who to call about your issue. From this Sunday, the Charter will be at:
colacotway.vic.gov.au/wyesepp

Wye River CFA Auxiliary Easter Fete

The Wye River CFA Easter Saturday Fete was a huge success, with approximately \$14,000 raised.

The CFA would like to send a huge thanks to the whole community who contributed with donations of treasures to sell, hours spent baking famous cakes that sell out in record time and making delicious produce that people come far and wide for.

All those that assisted with the set up, selling raffle tickets, manning the stalls, dressing up as Easter Bunny and hours spent organising and sorting in shipping container. The whole community can be proud that their fundraising efforts will assist with the Fire Station extension. The station is an integral as part of community infrastructure, which benefits the whole community.

Below: *CFA Easter Fete in full swing*



Construction, Traffic and Environment Management Plan

Thank you to residents and property owners who attended Council's drop-in session on the draft Construction, Traffic and Environment Management Plan on Monday 24 April 2017 at the Wye River Surf Life Saving Club.

Colac-Otway Shire and Coffey developed the draft Construction, Environment and Traffic Management Plan to guide construction during the rebuild phase of renewal.

The extended closing date for feedback is 1 May. Residents and property owners are encouraged to send comments back to the bushfire recovery email:

bushfire.recovery@colacotway.vic.gov.au to help us finalise a document that will work for most people.

The Construction, Environment and Traffic Management Plan can be viewed on WyeSep Connect and www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/wyesep.

Council is seeking community feedback around permitted hours of operation for power tools and loud machinery – should they reflect the EPA guidelines which are generally permitted use between 7am and 8pm Monday to Friday and between 9am and 8pm on weekends and public holidays. Should they be more liberal to allow quicker rebuilding or should they be more restrictive?

We're also seeking feedback on how best to delineate parking restrictions – either area wide or individually signed and if we opt for signed, how we might sign it to avoid the sign-on-pole approach which we know is unpopular.

Finally, our intention is to set a 20km/h speed limit in the construction area and we are seeking feedback on that.

From the feedback provided, Coffey will finalise their report. It will then go to Council in late May for adoption and will be a condition of any planning permit.

Reticulated drainage designer appointed

Colac-Otway Shire has contracted Cardno to design the reticulated stormwater drainage system it is installing across the two townships. Cardno is a professional infrastructure and environmental services company, with expertise in the development of physical and social infrastructure for communities around the world.

Reticulated drainage designer cont...

Cardno will do a catchment analysis and some concept designs. These will be the subject of community consultation before proceeding to detailed design stage and implementation.

The design phase will be completed in the middle of this year, with construction to follow. The project will be completed by mid 2018.

Retaining walls on Council land

Council has been working with landowners to discuss their approach to rebuilding low-risk retaining walls. The contractors engaged to construct the walls, Leprechaun Landscaping, have geotechnical subcontractors conducting borehole sampling within Council's road reserves over the next few weeks.

This needs to be done so we can finalise design drawings prior to commencement of construction. Approximately 21 walls will be rebuilt, and construction is likely to commence early June.



Enjoying the CFA Easter Fete



How do you think the Renewal of Wye and Sep is going?

You can catch members of the Community Resilience Committee at the General Store this Saturday 29th April between 10-11, or on Sunday May 14 between 2-3. Or email us anytime at crcwyesepcommunityreps@gmail.com. We meet with COS and DELWP during the next month, and want to be able to include your views about the ongoing renewal of our area.

Topical right now is the Draft COS Construction, Traffic and Environment Management Plan, tourism at Wye River, Separation Creek and Kennett River, and The Renewal Plan. Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism (GORRT) has been working on an Otway Central Coast Villages Destination Plan to support recovery and growth of tourism - email us if you would like a copy or have a comment.

You can support post-fire revegetation and weed control by joining Landcare - it's not just about farms! Membership only costs \$25 a year. If you are interested in seeing more projects focusing on habitat restoration at Wye River and Separation Creek, please help by joining Landcare and giving SOLN (Southern Otway Landcare Network) the go ahead to apply for grants on our behalf. Contact Libby Riches libby.landcare@soln.org

The Community Resilience Committee met informally at Easter and welcomed representatives from the Kennett River Association, Wye River CFA, Wye River Surf Life Saving Club, and the Progress Association. Our focus is recovery and resilience following the bushfire. Diane Sisely and Joanne Tyler are the co-chairs for the next 12 months.



CFA Easter Fete activities

Rates due

Property owners who are not paying their rates by quarterly instalment or by arrangement are reminded the 2016-17 rates and charges were due to be paid in full on 15th February 2017 (including any arrears from prior years).

Property owners who have not paid their 2016-17 rates and/or have arrears from prior years and are experiencing difficulties are requested and encouraged to contact Council's rates department on ph: 5232 9400 to make a payment arrangement.

Harrington Park

Council has sought quotes for the reinstatement works at Harrington Park, with the process on track for work to be completed by the end of June. We are replacing like-for-like, as per the photo of the Harrington Path prior to the bushfire.

Reinstatement will include repair to the existing concrete pathway and installation of timber handrails.



Harrington Park Pathway

Hazardous tree works

Council is managing and removing dangerous trees on Council-owned land, which will improve safety in the area ahead of winter.

The work follows an independent assessment of hazardous trees on council land at the end of last year, which identified 38 high-risk trees. During April, 23 of the trees have been removed for safety reasons and 15 have been pruned.



Tree works continued...

While completing the recent tree management work, the independent arborists also noticed further deterioration of some trees. We have engaged ENSPEC to reassess the health of all trees within Council controlled areas, which should be completed over the next 2-3 weeks. Council will inform the community if any changes since the initial tree assessment.

We will then engage a contractor to conduct the works as identified in the report. This will be completed by end of June at the latest.

A number of trees have fallen over the last few weeks, including during the storms over the weekend 8-9 April. A tree contractor, Aspect, is currently chipping up logs that have fallen.

Council's objective to retain as many trees as possible has not changed. We will continue to monitor the safety of trees on Council land on an ongoing basis.

Community Intention Survey results

Council undertook a Community Intention Survey over January/February 2017 to seek feedback from the 109 property owners where a house was destroyed in the 2015 Christmas Day fire.

A key aim of the survey was to understand whether owners are intending to rebuild and if so when.

Of the 109 properties, 80 responses were received (73%).

Intention to rebuild: a high proportion of property owners are intending to rebuild – 67.5% of respondents.

- A high percentage of these intend rebuilding within the next two years (55%), with 37.5% proposing to do so in the first half of 2017.
- Only a small proportion of property owners do not plan on rebuilding (11.3%), equivalent to 12 properties. Reasons given included: cost of reconstruction process, underinsurance, complexity of the rebuild process and age of the house – not worth going to effort of rebuilding.
- A reasonable percentage (20.5%) was unsure about rebuilding. Some of these have already listed their property for sale. This could be attributed to: having only recently settled insurance claims, still exploring costs associated with construction and loss of vegetation and uncertainty about whether they want to rebuild.

Status of rebuilding

- Good progress on house commencements, with at least 6 houses completed or under construction, and a further 2-3 having all relevant approvals and sourcing a builder to commence.
- Significantly, there are at least 13 (possibly more) who have a planning permit but are currently seeking further approvals such as the Building Permit or 'Permit to Install' for wastewater treatment system, which means they have been through the bulk of the design and approval processes and are close to commencement.
- There is currently 11 planning permit applications being processed by Council, most of which should be completed in the coming month(s).
- At least 18 have either sought advice from the Council's One Stop Shop service or have then gone on to engage an architect and prepare plans for lodgement with Council. These are likely to result in applications being sought for planning, building permit and wastewater approvals with Council over the coming 6-12 months.

Community forum outcomes

On Saturday 8 April Nous Group (Nous) facilitated a community forum at the Wye River SLSC as part of their independent evaluation of the Wye River Separation Creek fire recovery.

The forum provided an opportunity for community members to test the key lessons and insights identified through the evaluation. Nous presented their preliminary findings and facilitated a discussion on the key themes of community engagement, governance and responding to community needs.

A copy of the forum presentation and preliminary findings is available from Sunday at: www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/wyesep

The information-gathering phase of the evaluation has now concluded and a report will be released by EMV in coming months with the findings.



DELWP update

Separation Creek foreshore fencing is being replaced by the Otway Coast Committee (OCC) as part of a project funded through the Great Ocean Road Economic and Community Recovery Fund 2016.

The project was raised through community engagement in April 2016 and the location of replacement posts and fence line discussed onsite with interested Separation Creek residents earlier this year. The works aim to protect the coastal vegetation and direct access to the beach.

Planning continues on the reinstatement of Paddy's Path with community members providing input into track standards and materials at the recent community meeting on 25 March. A contractor is reviewing the drainage plan prepared in June 2016, to capture changes to the landscape and prepare track options for steep parts of the path.

The weed-spraying program is recommencing and will be guided into the future with a Vegetation Management Plan for the reserve.

DELWP, VicRoads and COS are working closely together to ensure the works program can be delivered as efficiently as possible.

VicRoads April update

The 75m retaining wall on the Great Ocean Road has been completed on schedule and both lanes of the Great Ocean Road were reopened for Easter.

The wall is now fully lined with Gabion rock baskets.

We're happy to report that, work on the upper retaining wall at Paddy's Path in Wye River is well underway and is expected to be completed by the end of April.

To minimise our environmental impact and operate as efficiently as possible, we're now using a crane to lift equipment and materials onto the hillside site.

Soil nailing

Once the Paddy's Path upper retaining wall is finished, we will begin preparation for extensive soil nailing of the hill.

The first stage of these works will involve removing vegetation in the landslide zone only. We expect soil nailing (pinning the surface soil with 4m-8m long metal rods) to begin in late April, and be

completed in June. Once the soil nailing is complete, we will lay erosion control matting and steel mesh to complete the process of locking down the hillside.

This work will cover an area beginning immediately below two Iluka Avenue properties and extend to the bottom of the hillside.



Two lanes are now operating at the base of the Paddy's Path hillside

Stabilisation

New kerb and channel is now being installed along a 300m ocean-side section of the Great Ocean Road at Separation Creek.

Further stabilisation works, including hillside contouring, erosion control matting and coir logs above slip zones to divert sheet water, will begin on more than a dozen minor slip zones along the Great Ocean Road between Wye River and Kennett River. All areas will be hydro-seeded.

Community visits Paddy's Path hillside

Members of the Community Resilience Committee's flora, fauna and beachscape group have joined VicRoads staff on the Paddy's Path hillside to inspect vegetation, the landslide zone and to plan for a mid-year replanting project.

Local flora expert Trevor Blake, Jan Juc ecologist Mark Stockdale, the community and VicRoads environmental officer John Tunn have compiled a plant list to reinstate vegetation following the soil-nailing project on the hillside.





Community members inspect vegetation on the Paddy's Path hillside

Kennett River and Separation Creek works

Stabilisation works are set to begin on a number of small landslips between Wye River and Kennett River.

A long-reach excavator will smooth 10 slip areas and biodegradable matting will then be installed for erosion control. Traffic management will be in place as this work progresses. The project is expected to be completed by late May.

A 300m length of kerb and channel is being installed 500m east of Separation Creek. These works will be completed by the end of April, with traffic management in place.

Road watch

As winter approaches, we're doubling our monitoring and inspections along the Great Ocean Road.

Experienced personnel are now monitoring hillsides and road edges for any change. We will undertake more highly specialist geotechnical investigations and monitoring following any significant rainfall.



Last photo of CFA Easter Fete festivities

