

Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323

Moorabool June 9-10 Storm Event 2021 – Community Newsletter No. 10

Community BBQs

Moorabool's Storm Recovery Team held three roving community BBQs in November, with representatives from Council, The Salvation Army Australia, Australian Red Cross, Central Highlands Rural Health, The Salvation Army Australia, Child and Family Services, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Bushfire Recovery Victoria, VCC Emergencies Ministry and Telstra in attendance. We visited communities in Blackwood, Dales Creek, Blakeville, Korweinguboora, Bolwarrah, Barkstead, Springbank, Spargo Creek and Gordon. Thank you to everyone who attended – it was very beneficial for our Storm Team to hear directly from you as a community.



Council's Storm Recovery Case Support Officer Linda Cole with volunteers from The Salvation Army Australia at the Spargo Creek Community BBQ



Locals Heather Bullen and Peter Bullen with volunteers from The Salvation Army Australia at our roving Community BBQ at the Moorabool Reservoir.

Six Months on with Dr Rob Gordon OAM



Please join us for a live talk with clinical psychologist Dr Rob Gordon, as we mark exactly six months since the June major storm event. Rob has worked to assist communities to recover following almost every major disaster in Australia and New Zealand for the past 30 years, including the 2015/16 Scotsburn Fires in Moorabool as well as the Black Saturday Fires and Port Arthur shootings. He will bring a wealth of knowledge to our Shire's storm recovery.

Thursday 9 December
Blackwood Hall
6pm doors open, 6.30pm event starts

Please note: There will be no need to book for this event. As per Government health guidelines, you will need to show proof of double vaccination to attend this event, as well as check in via the QR code provided and observe social distancing.

Outreach and surveys for recovery planning

During December 2021 and January 2022, you may be visited by volunteers from the Australian Red Cross or the VCC Emergencies Ministry. The volunteers will listen to your storm experience and stories and leave you with an information pack and a survey to complete. This survey will inform the Storm Recovery Team's future planning on how to work alongside the community as we continue the recovery journey over the next 6 months. We thank you in advance for your participation.

If you have any questions, you can call the Storm Team on (03) 5366 1323.

DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) November Update



The Wombat State Forest and surrounding areas have been significantly impacted by the severe weather event that occurred on June 2021 and then again by storms on the 28 and 29 October 2021. As a result, more than 80,000 hectares of forest and 1,500 km of the main road network managed by DELWP has been impacted.

Following the storm event in October, the Public Safety Zone was temporarily extended across the entire Wombat State Forest to protect people from the risk of unstable, hazardous trees continuing to fall and to allow our crews to safely undertake assessments of the damage and use any heavy machinery or equipment.

DELWP crews undertook an assessment of the impacts caused by the storms and have reviewed the size of the Public Safety Zone in the Wombat State Forest.

From 12 November, the size of the Public Safety Zone in the Wombat State Forest has been reduced and areas that had been open prior to the October storm will again be accessible to the public. This includes Werribee River Picnic Area and six designated firewood collection areas in the Wombat State Forest.

DELWP will continue to review any closures in the Wombat State Forest, with additional areas expected to be open from 1 December. Crews are working to open as many visitor and recreation sites as possible to coincide with the summer school holidays.



Fire season preparations on DELWP land

DELWP would like to note that larger debris including tree trunks and limbs will not significantly add to the bushfire risk for the upcoming season as they are still green and will not readily burn.

DELWP crews are working closely with other agencies, including VicForests, to remove fallen trees and debris from the forest to ensure this doesn't contribute to bushfire risk in future years.

As we approach summer, FFMVic crews have been engaging with local CFA units to prepare and plan for the upcoming fire season.

FFMVic is planning and undertaking works to open roads and tracks to enable an effective fire response to occur over the summer month. DELWP work closely with the CFA to share important information such as updated road and track access maps and discuss operational planning in the lead up to summer.

FFMVic also have access to large earthmoving plant and specialist equipment, including aircraft, that can be used to support our fire response over the summer months if required.

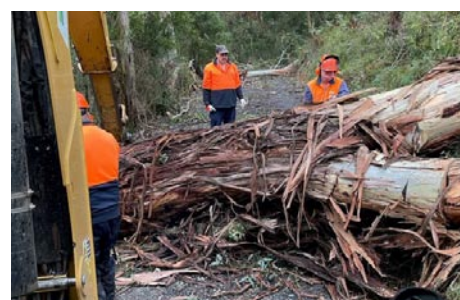
DELWP are also using bushfire modelling to help identify priority areas for recovery to reduce future bushfire risk.

FFMVic and DELWP planned burning program and fuel management

In the 2021/22 planned burning program, FFMVic have 16 burns identified within the Wombat State Forest area. Four of these have been postponed due to storm damage with others currently being assessed. Some suitable future burns have been brought forward to ensure bushfire risk is appropriately managed in storm affected areas.

As we have had a wetter than average spring this year, it has been challenging for FFMVic crews to undertake the required preparations for a planned burn in storm affected areas. Planned burns will be conducted whenever conditions allow.

In addition to planned burning, we also use a number of other operational tools to help reduce the fuel load and manage fire risk, including slashing and mulching, alongside creating and maintaining fuel breaks.



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Arborists and fencing contractors

Council's Storm Recovery Team have been compiling lists of fencing contractors and arborists who would like their details shared with residents impacted by the June storm events.

Please Note: These lists are provided as a courtesy and for community members to contact directly if they require these services. Council does not accept any liability for the standard of work. It is the landowner's responsibility to ensure that the contractor that you engage undertakes the work satisfactorily. Please allow a sufficient lead time to enable them to organise work schedules.

Fencing contractors: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/files/content/public/emergencies/storm-emergency/assistance-and-support-following-the-storm/fencing-contractor-list.pdf>

Arborists & tree crews: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/files/content/public/emergencies/storm-emergency/assistance-and-support-following-the-storm/arborist-contractor-list.pdf>

More information here: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/Emergencies/Storm-emergency/Assistance-and-support-following-the-storm>

Fire Danger Period

The CFA have announced that the Fire Danger Period for Moorabool Shire will begin on Monday 13 December.

Council's Fire Prevention Inspections have now commenced. These will run throughout the fire season.

For more information on Council's Fire Prevention: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/Services-and-support/Fire-and-emergency/Fire-prevention>

Council's Roadside Slashing will begin on Wednesday 1 December.

Plan. Act. Survive.

Did you know an ember can travel up to 30km ahead of the main bushfire front?

Taking steps to get prepared before the fire season means you know what to do when you're at risk of fire. It's important to prepare your property for fire, but you also need to plan and prepare for your safety. Pack important documents, photos, medications, money and clothes so you can leave easily before a fire starts. Understand your risk and plan ahead. Know what to do on hot, dry, windy days and plan for all situations. Talk to your family and friends about how you'll know when to leave, where you'll go and how you will get there.

For more info visit vic.gov.au/knowfire



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How to access Mental Health Support

Storm and Flood Recovery Support Hotline

Call 1800 560 760 and a Recovery Support Worker can assist you in accessing mental health support through Central Highlands Rural Health.

Partners in Wellbeing Helpline

Free and confidential wellbeing coaching for businesses and individuals. This service is available 7 days a week via email, chat or phone call. Find more info at: <https://www.partnersinwellbeing.org.au/>

Australian Red Cross

Support and resources to look after yourself and your family when disasters happen. Visit <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/looking-after-yourself>

Beyond Blue

Provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live. Call 1300 22 4636 or visit <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Lifeline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention. Call 13 11 14 or visit <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Storm and Flood Recovery Support Hotline

Call 1800 560 760 and a Recovery Support Worker can assist you in accessing mental health support through Central Highlands Rural Health

Free financial counselling for storm and flood recovery

CAFS (Child and Family Services Ballarat) Financial Counselling is a free, confidential support service available to Moorabool residents. The CAFS team are here to help you recover from the impacts of a natural disaster and there are no wait lists to access support. They focus on helping you find a solution that works best for your financial circumstances.

CAFS Financial Counselling Team can assist you with:

- Reviewing your options if your insurance company won't pay your claim
- Providing financial and paralegal options to manage bills and debt, including:
 - Making affordable payment plans
 - Negotiating payment deferrals
 - Variations to contracts
 - Assessing financial capacity
 - Advocacy and support
 - Debt resolution through bankruptcy
- Providing general advice on matters relating to financial hardship
- Providing specialist support for people who have experienced family violence
- Providing specialist support for people who have experienced gambling harm (either through your own gambling or someone else's)

To make an appointment or discuss your options, call CAFS on (03) 5337 3333 or freecall 1800 692 237.

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Storm Stories & News

Every resident our recovery team talks to has their own experience of the June storm event to share. We have been collecting these stories to share with you, in order to highlight the resilience and togetherness of our wonderful Moorabool community.

We met Daryl from Barkstead, who has lived at his property for 65 years. We spoke to Mary from Blackwood who has made a shrine in her front yard to the 100-year-old trees that were destroyed. Andrew from Korweinguboorra told us that despite the destruction, his property is getting sunlight for the first time in years.

Read their stories here: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/Emergencies/Storm-emergency/Storm-Stories-and-News>

Would you like to share your own storm story? Email our Storm Recovery Communications Officer: tsass@moorabool.vic.gov.au

“I’ve never seen nothing like this,”
- Daryl from Barkstead



“We never used to get sunlight in winter”
- Andrew from Korweinguboorra



“It’s not just trees that have come down. It’s our oldest trees, and that for us is heartbreaking.”
- Mary from Blackwood.



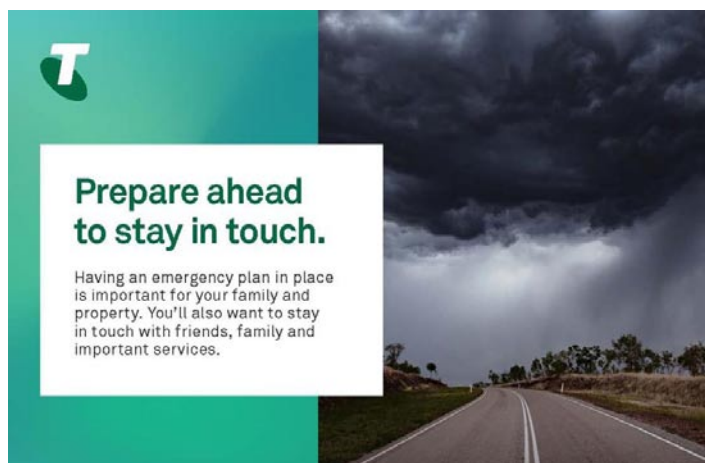
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Free firewood collection

Bookings opened for Moorabool residents to collect 1 cubic metre of free firewood, processed from storm debris, on Tuesday 16 November and sold out within hours. Thank you to all residents who booked and are now collecting their firewood. We have kept aside a portion of firewood for vulnerable residents, and the Storm Recovery Team are in the process of arranging a delivery program.

Apologies to those residents who missed out. We unfortunately only had a small quantity of split unseasoned firewood to offer. Bookings for free mulch will resume in the coming weeks.



Here's what you can do to prepare ahead to stay in touch:

Mobile phones:

- Get an alternative phone charger
- Do regular data backups
- Know your essential numbers
- Consider a satellite phone
- Have Wi-Fi calling and messaging enabled on a compatible phone or tablet.

Fixed-line phones:

- nbn™ customers keep a mobile or satellite phone handy
- Have a spare battery
- Keep a spare plug-in phone handy especially if you use a cordless phone

Social Media:

- Co-ordinate in advance a virtual meeting place with family and friends
- Download emergency service apps
- Stay in touch with local information services
- Keep a battery powered radio and know your emergency broadcaster

To find out more about emergency preparedness and how Telstra can assist during emergency events, visit:
www.telstra.com.au/disasterassistance

Did you miss our previous Storm Community Newsletters?

Read them all on our website: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/Emergencies/Storm-emergency/Storm-event-newsletters>

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