

Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323

Moorabool June 9-10 Storm Event 2021 – Community Newsletter No. 12

Recent storm and floods — 5-6 January 2022

Moorabool Shire Council, Hepburn Shire Council and The City of Ballarat were all impacted by the heavy rain and winds on Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 of January.

So far, we have determined that our farming communities were hit the hardest. Potato, canola, pyrethrum, cereal, fodder crops and many more have been destroyed and assessments are ongoing.

The towns of Ballan and Gordon saw extensive flooding. There were reports of winds reaching 150km per hour in Fiskville, and further storm damage in Bullarook, Wattle Flat, Clarkes Hill, Claretown, Mollonghip, Springbank, Wallace, Bungaree and surrounding areas.

We are still assessing the full impact of this most recent storm and flood event across the Shire and will keep residents informed as this unfolds.

Our thoughts are with the farmers, community members and homeowners who have had to face a third major weather event since June 2021. Please reach out to our Storm Recovery Team on (03) 5366 1323.

Looking after your mental health in this time of repeated stress is extremely important. Clinical psychologist Dr. Rob Gordon came to speak to our storm impacted communities about social and psychological recovery in December 2021. His talk had many helpful strategies on how to get through a period of disaster. You can watch it back here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuZH-0R6htc>

See below for further mental health support.

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. This hotline can also link you in with a financial counselling service.

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/>



Moorabool's Community Engagement Officer, Rory Thomson-Ball, spoke to impacted Moorabool residents at the Creswick Recovery Centre in the Hepburn Shire.



Gordon's Main Street was completely underwater during the floods on January 5-6.

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

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/>

Recovery grants for primary producers

Are you a primary producer who was impacted by the 9-10 June storm event in 2021? You may be eligible for this grant opportunity.

The maximum amount available for this program is \$25,000 and the money will go towards clean-up and recovery activities needed to reinstate primary production enterprises.

To apply or to see if you're eligible, visit <https://www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/victorian-floods-and-storms-clean-up-and-restoration-grants>

Farm Household Allowance

This program aims to provide targeted assistance that gives farming families practical support to assess their situation and plan a way forward to long-term financial security. It is an Australian Government support package that's available to eligible farmers and their partners experiencing financial hardship.

FHA can be paid to farmers and their partners up to a maximum of four cumulative years (1,460 days of payment) within the specific 10-year period while they take action to address their long-term financial security.

To find out if you can apply, visit <https://moorabool.grantguru.com.au/grant/farm-household-allowance/>

Free fence posts for primary producers

If you are a farmer or primary producer who has been impacted by any of the recent storms, you may be eligible for Rural Aid's free fence post initiative. These fence posts are repurposed from storm-damaged trees, obtained over the course of BRV's Residential Storm and Flood Clean-up program and processed at the Macedon Ranges Shire transfer station.

For more information and to register, visit faa.ruralaid.org.au/fence-post-program/

Thank you for completing our survey - here's what you said

Thank you to everyone who filled in the survey that was distributed to all storm impacted residents across Moorabool. The information you provided will assist us in preparing to support the community through the next six months of storm recovery.

If you didn't receive a visit from The Australian Red Cross or VCC Emergencies Ministry volunteers with a printed survey, you can still complete it online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LTXMLT5>

You told us that you would most like more to receive support in:

1. Property recovery
2. Clean-up
3. Tree/habitat rehabilitation
4. Environmental recovery

We will be reading each survey submission and using your feedback to inform our future recovery planning. Stay tuned for further information sessions, pop-up hubs and other community activities.

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Call for content: attention artists, photographers, creatives, writers

Have you got photos, video footage or artwork depicting the June and October storms?

We'd love you to share them with us. We're planning some content to commemorate one year post the storm, in June 2022.

We would love to use images, video footage, stories and artworks by the community.

Send us content that captures:

- During the storm
- Post the storm
- Your clean-up journey
- Local wildlife and vegetation
- The impact on the Wombat State Forest

Any anything else relating to storm recovery. Be as creative as you like!

Email all content through to our Storm Recovery Communications Officer:
tsass@moorabool.vic.gov.au



Storm and Flood Financial Counselling Program

The Storm and Flood Financial Counselling Program is open to Victorians affected by the June 2021 storms and floods.

The program can connect you to a financial counsellor to help you to:

- Access relief for utility bills and other payments
- Understand your government income and other entitlements
- Negotiate with your bank on debt issues
- Identify if your insurance outcome is fair and appropriate
- Explore your options and advocate on your behalf.

Speaking to a financial counsellor early can help stabilise your finances, reduce stress and allow you to focus on other areas.

The Storm and Flood Financial Counselling Program is available on the Storm and Flood Recovery Hotline, a single state-wide number (1800 560 760).

You can also contact CAFS (Child and Family Services Ballarat) directly and speak to a free, confidential financial counsellor regarding your circumstances. To make an appointment or to discuss your options, call CAFS on (03) 5337 3333 or freecall 1800 692 237. There are no wait lists to access support.

Staying safe throughout fire season

Declared Fire Danger Period

To find out more about how Council prepares for fire season, visit <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/Services-and-support/Fire-and-emergency/Fire-prevention>

We are currently in the declared Fire Danger Period. You are not allowed to light any fires during this period. To find out more regarding the restrictions during Fire Danger Period, visit <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/total-fire-bans-and-ratings/can-i-or-cant-i>

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Fire Access Tracks

Council has been working alongside the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to clear all Fire Access Tracks of storm debris. The recent storms may have caused new debris to fall on previously cleared tracks. If you would like to report a blocked Council managed track or road, call (03) 5366 7100. To contact DELWP, call 136 186.

Clearing public land

The majority of the larger storm debris including tree trunks and limbs will not significantly add to bushfire risk for the upcoming season as they are still green and will not readily burn. In some broadacre windthrow areas, the fuel arrangement will mean that some of the finer debris attached to trunks and limbs will dry out and present a fire risk. These high-risk fuel arrangements are being treated as an immediate priority.

Fire Forest Management Victoria 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.



Preparing for future storms

SES Victoria have some excellent resources online about how to prepare for future storm events.

Find out more: <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe/emergencies/storm>

Here's what you can do to plan and stay safe before a storm hits:

- Plan for what you will do and take with you if you need to evacuate. Find out how to prepare your **home** and/or **workplace**, and consider the advice below.
- Before a storm hits:
 - Park your car undercover and away from trees.
 - Clean your gutters, downpipes and drains to ensure they are not blocked.
 - Check that loose items such as outdoor furniture, umbrellas and trampolines are safely secured.
- Be alert to dangerous road conditions when driving, including low visibility, fallen and damaged trees and powerlines. Avoid travel if possible.
- Be prepared - You may be isolated for an extended period of time. Make sure you have essential supplies prepared to last for at least three to five days, including food, drinking water, medications and pet food.
- Be prepared - You may lose services including power, water, sewerage and gas.
- Stay informed – monitor weather warnings and forecasts at the **Bureau of Meteorology website**, and warnings through the **VicEmergency app** and hotline (1800 226 226).

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