

**Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323**

## Moorabool June 9-10 Storm Event 2021 – Community Newsletter No. 13

### Recovery Hubs



The Storm Recovery team with local Barkstead residents Mark and Geoff.

We are bringing our roving Recovery Hubs to storm impacted communities once again this year. These are community BBQs that give storm impacted residents a chance to chat to Council's Storm Recovery team as well as others from the community who also experienced major storm and flood events.

Earlier this month our Case Support Officers set up the roving BBQ in Korweinguboorra and Barkstead, to share a free snag with local residents and have a chat about how Council can continue to support the recovery journey.

Please join us at the next Recovery Hub on Saturday 26 March as we take the BBQ to Gordon and Mollonghip.

**Saturday 26 March 2022**

**11am - 12:30pm: Gordon Public Hall, 68 Main St, Gordon**

**1:30 - 3pm: Mollonghip, CFA Fire Station, 506 Dean-Mollonghip Rd**

### Free firewood for vulnerable residents

On Saturday 26 February, we delivered approximately 30 cubic metres of free firewood to vulnerable residents across the Shire.

A silver lining following the recent major weather events, storm debris was processed into firewood to service 19 vulnerable households.

These vulnerable residents were identified by the Storm Recovery Team in late 2021, and were delighted to receive their free firewood recently. This firewood was allocated specifically for residents in need, as opposed to the firewood that was offered to the general public via a "first come first served" booking system last year.

**"I just wanted to say thank you very much for the wood and also how lovely the driver and two beautiful families that came and stacked were."** – Ballan resident.

Another Ballan resident, Graham Noon, said he and his wife were grateful for the Council initiative – **"it's just terrific!"**. The Noon's are in a vulnerable age bracket and had to receive assistance from their neighbour to clear a large tree that blocked their driveway during the October storm event.

Volunteers from the 1st Ballan Scouts Group assisted in stacking the firewood at each property. Scouts, Cubs and Joeys as young as six and seven helped to move the firewood deliveries into resident's woodsheds.

**"We weren't expecting the Scouts at all! My neighbour next door said – the Scouts are coming tomorrow to move the wood! I was really pleasantly surprised,"** said Graham.



A young Ballan Scout helps stack free firewood for our vulnerable residents



Graham Noon has the Ballan Scouts stack his delivery of free firewood made from storm debris

## Community Leadership Program

Council's Community Leadership Program is open for applications until Thursday 31 March 2022.

This free program is available to all Moorabool residents or anyone with a connection to the Shire who is over 16 years of age.

No prior knowledge is expected, and participants are supported in their learning and development throughout the program. Prospective applicants who are interested in enhancing their community and enjoy interacting with others would thrive in this program.

### What will you learn?

Council's Community Leadership Program covers a range of topics and provides valuable opportunities for community networking. You will learn about:

- Leadership and communication styles
- Civic participation
- The function of local government
- Community Development theory and principles
- Action planning for projects

The Program will run for 18 weeks between 28 April – 3 September 2022.

Visit [moorabool.vic.gov.au/CLP](https://moorabool.vic.gov.au/CLP) for further information and to apply.

## 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/>

### 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>

**Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323**

## 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/](http://faa.ruralaid.org.au/fence-post-program/)

### Free fence posts help 98-year-old Korweinguboorra farmer on his recovery journey

Eligible Moorabool residents with severe and lasting damage to their properties following the June storm were identified by the Storm Recovery Team last year and invited to take part in the program to receive up to 1km worth of fence posts.

The fence posts and droppers are made from wind-blown timber that was collected by Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) during their residential storm clean-up program. The collected storm debris was then turned into usable fence materials at Macedon Ranges Shire's green waste site in Romsey.

Not a single piece of timber is wasted at the facility, with all debris or green waste turned into either fence posts, firewood, mulch, tree stakes, sawdust and even materials for fish habitats.

Thomas Hedges is 98 years old and lives on a 100-acre farm in Korweinguboorra. He and his son Douglas run the farm but have not been able to keep cattle or grow crops since the June 2021 storm.

*"I got up in the morning and I looked at that big tree that's over in the paddock there. It's 10 foot deep and 20 feet across and we'd often thought we'd have to take it out one day, but there's not a bulldozer ever made that could've pushed it out, it's that big," Douglas said.*

*"I thought, no it couldn't be down. You wouldn't believe a storm would've taken it down."*

The Hedges' received their delivery of free fence posts in early March.

*"They're good and they're sawn posts, we weren't expecting that," said Douglas.*

Douglas and Thomas need about three times the amount of fence posts provided but are very pleased that they now have a good start.

Fallen trees had flattened the Hedges' fence lines all the way around the property, and it was a slow and steady task for Douglas to remove them, one tree at a time.

*"From the bottom of the property right to the very top, flattened the whole way. I'm talking trees, on top of trees, on top of trees," he said.*

Thomas has lived on his Korweinguboorra farm for 66 years, and has never seen a storm like the one Moorabool experienced in June 2021.

*"Normal storms will blow trees over, but this lifted them out of the ground. And it stacked them. I've never seen anything like that," Thomas said.*

It's been a long recovery journey and it's far from over, but the Hedges' are looking forward to getting cattle back in their paddocks.

*"We can't use the farm as a farm, for cattle since last June. Or for crops because of the kangaroos until I get those fences back up," Douglas said.*

*"Every paddock has areas flattened with the trees, there wasn't one area or paddock that you could do anything with – have stock in or anything. We had to shut everything down, stop everything, get rid of everything," Thomas said.*



Douglas Hedges with the delivery of free fence posts for his Dad's property



Douglas Hedges inspects the delivery of free fence posts for his Dad's property



Douglas and Thomas Hedges, from Korweinguboorra

**Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323**



## 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 a book and video 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](mailto: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.



**Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323**

## 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:
  - o Park your car undercover and away from trees.
  - o Clean your gutters, downpipes and drains to ensure they are not blocked.
  - o 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. 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).

## Inspect your dam to avoid failure after storm and flood events

Agriculture Victoria are encouraging farmers to undertake a detailed inspection of their dams, following significant storm and flood events in recent months.

Ag Vic's farm water supply specialist Clem Sturmfels said the risk of dam failure has increased significantly, due to the rapid rise in dam water levels, overtopping of dam walls and blocked spillways.

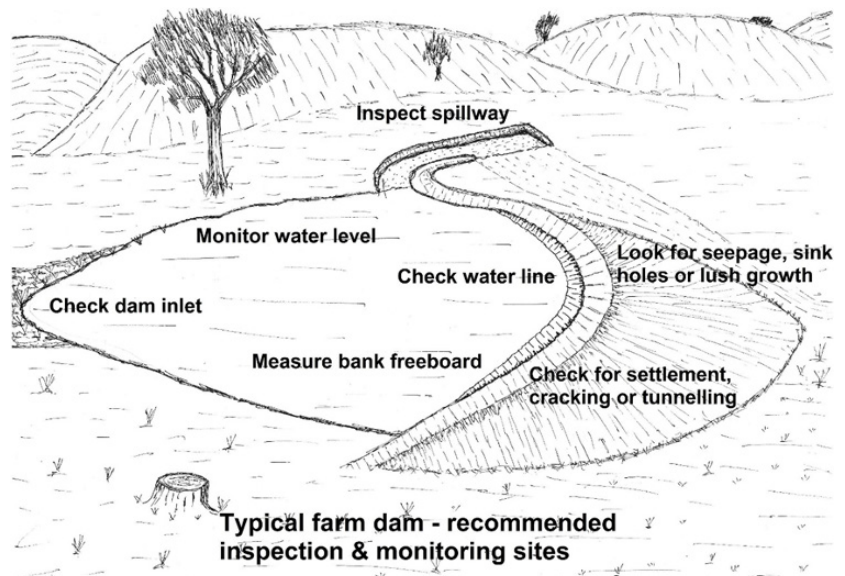
If you have a gully dam, monitor it on a regular basis to look for signs of bank subsidence, cracking, leaks and/or tunnelling.

Also check dam spillways and outlet pipes to ensure they have ample capacity and are free of sediment, debris and excessive vegetation.

The sudden failure of a gully dam can pose a major safety issue to individuals and communities downstream, as well as resulting in the loss of the water and added cost of repairs.

Landholders should contact their local Water Authority and Council Planning Officer prior to undertaking repairs or maintenance activities.

For further information on managing dams visit the Agriculture Victoria website [agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/managing-dams](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/managing-dams)



Typical farm dam – recommended inspection and monitoring sites.

**Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323**

## Using barley straw to prevent algae in farm dams

Barley straw is successfully used in Australia and overseas for the control of algae and green slime. Floods and erosion bring nutrients to dams, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus, that feed algae.

Barley straw works more effectively and for longer periods than wheat or other straws. If barley is unavailable, other straws, including wheat, linseed, oil seed rape, lavender stalks and maize can be used as a substitute. If other straws are used, it is likely that the quantities applied, and frequency of application may need to be increased.

### How does barley straw work?

When barley straw is put into water, it starts to decompose. During this process, natural compounds are released which inhibit the growth of algae.

Once the straw has been consumed, further additions of straw should be made to prevent a recurrence of the algae or green slime.

### How much barley straw is recommended?

In ponds, lakes and other still-water bodies, the most important measurement in calculating the quantity of straw required is the surface area of the water body. Most of the algal growth takes place in the surface layers of the water so it's not necessary to measure the depth or volume of the water body.

In still waters, the initial dose rate of straw should be between 25 and 50 grams per square metre of surface water (gm/m<sup>2</sup>). A 20 metre by 25 metre dam is 500 square metres which equates to between 12 and 25 kilograms of straw is required. This is close to the weight of a small straw bale.

### How to apply the straw?

You can get advice and kits from commercial straw sellers or you can follow these recommended steps with your own barley straw:

1. Break the straw bales apart in small biscuits
2. The loose straw should be placed in some form of netting, such as onion sacks
3. Use floats to suspend the straw-filled netting at or just below the water surface. It is recommended that floats be inserted inside the netting at the same time the netting is filled with straw. The netting is then anchored into place using rope attached to bricks or concrete-filled buckets. Water movement near the surface will keep the straw well oxygenated and move the algae inhibiting compounds throughout the upper portion of the pond or dam
4. To improve the effectiveness of the barley straw it is recommended placing several small quantities of straw nets around the dam, roughly equal distance from other nearby nets and the shore.

### Where to buy barley straw?

Barley straw can usually be found locally, ordered through farm supplies.

Onion bags can be harder to find. They can be ordered through online shopping sites, or you can try one of these suppliers:

<https://www.popes.com.au/locations-australia/>

Phone: (03) 9322 1444

Email: [vicsales@popes.com.au](mailto:vicsales@popes.com.au)

<https://www.polesy.com.au/contact/>

Tel: (03) 9310 1300

Email: [packagingvic@polesy.com.au](mailto:packagingvic@polesy.com.au)

If you are concerned that you already have blue green algae blooms, Central Highlands Water commercial laboratory can test your water for you. For more information visit <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/blue-green-algae-in-water/managing-bluegreen-algae-in-farm-water-supplies>

**Council Storm Recovery Number: 5366 1323**