

Bushfires 2019-20

Community Newsletter

10 March – Edition 27



The East Gippsland bushfires have generated a significant amount of waste, from building materials, green waste, metal and waste related to the response effort.

Council has been proactive in preparing our waste facilities prior to the event and post-fire. This includes the earlier-than-anticipated opening of Cell 3B at the Bairnsdale Landfill.

To prepare Cell 3B for an influx of 'hard' bushfire building waste, we have been adding a layer of soft waste to the bottom of this new cell.

Our staff have put in a considerable amount of work to accommodate bushfire waste at other sites, and the collection of material that can be kept out of landfill, such as metal and wire.

The extra influx of waste is likely to take some years of the life of our landfills.

Council is working with agencies such as the Victorian Government, Environment Protection Authority, Bushfire Recovery Victoria, Grocon and contractors to ensure the community has access to safe and timely waste disposal with the smallest amount of financial impost on fire-impacted residents.

We understand the clean-up is paramount to the community recovery process and the steps we are taking are to make this as easy as possible for our customers.

Grocon clean-up program

- Grocon is undertaking the Bushfire Clean-Up Program works in East Gippsland Shire and across Victoria on behalf of the Government.
- The Bushfire Clean-Up Program is free of charge for all property owners, regardless of whether they are insured, and is jointly funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments.
- Clean up works will commence the week of 9 March 2020. Waste from the initial clean-up works will be taken to the Bairnsdale Landfill.
- All bushfire waste is classified as asbestos contaminated. Only Class A subcontractors / supervisors are certified and licensed to handle this waste.
- Partially burnt houses and structures may be eligible for Grocon clean up or may need to be cleaned up by other suitably qualified contractors. It is recommended that property owners register with Grocon to assess their eligibility for clean-up. Call 1800 560 760- or visit brv.vic.gov.au.

Prescribed waste – houses and structures

- Houses and structures (prescribed waste) can only be removed by Grocon or private contractors. Private contractors must be licensed asbestos removalists and in Environment Protection Authority registered vehicles.
- Waste must all be treated as contaminated and triple wrapped.
- Cost of prescribed waste is \$286 per tonne.
- 24 hours' notice must be given to nominated sites. The Bairnsdale Landfill – 5152 6535 – is the only site in East Gippsland accepting this waste at present.

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- Council is working on the approvals and site preparation to open a section of the former Orbost Landfill site to accept prescribed waste. This is about four weeks from being available.
- At this point in time only the Bairnsdale Landfill is accepting prescribed waste.

Green waste

- Burnt green waste can be taken for free to the sites listed below until further notice.
- Tree prunings / branches / grass cuttings / stumps and logs less than .3m diameter can be taken to waste site for free.
- Pine posts, treated pine and chipboard can be taken to waste sites but will need to be separated and will be charged for at our normal landfill rates unless presented with a bushfire waste voucher.

Metal

- Burnt metal waste can be taken for free to the sites listed below until further notice.
- Clotheslines, white goods, trampoline frames, play equipment, water tanks, scrap metals are all accepted.
- Boats - no fibreglass boats accepted.
- Trailers with melted fibreglass are not accepted as scrap metal but will be accepted into landfill at the normal charge.

Green waste or household metal as described above will be accepted at:

- Bairnsdale Landfill – 5152 6535
- Lakes Entrance Landfill – 5155 2148
- Mallacoota Waste Transfer Station – 0427 144 002
- Orbost Waste Transfer Station – 0429 412 833
- Omeo Waste Transfer Station – 0429 865 358

- Buchan Waste Transfer Station– 0419 359 763

Full addresses and hours of operation for all these sites are available on the East Gippsland Shire Council website. Please note that normal operating hours for all these sites still apply.

Green waste and / or metal as described in this newsletter will not be accepted at:

- Bruthen Waste Transfer Station
- Any other site not listed above, due to limited space.

Wire fencing, cars and tractors

Council has negotiated with a private contractor to collect waste metal from stockpile sites.

Farmers/landowners with agricultural waste metal Farm fencing wire / metal, including cars, tractors, plants can dispose of this waste at stock sites.

Please note: Cars with LPG tanks are not accepted.

Fencing wire stockpile locations:

- Buchan: Buchan-Bruthen Road opposite the waste transfer station
- Wairewa: Waste Transfer Station
- More sites are currently being finalised and will be advised soon.

Stockpile collection points will be ongoing until further advised. Please do not leave fencing wire in road reserves or other public land, as this is considered illegal dumping which is a fineable offence.

Free bushfire waste vouchers

- Council will be offering extra free waste vouchers to properties within the bushfire areas that have burnt items that are not

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included in the categories covered in this newsletter.

- These vouchers can be used to dispose of any bushfire waste, excluding prescribed waste as per the Grocon / private contractor clean-up requirements.
- Access to vouchers will be via our waste unit and can either be posted to landowners, collected from East Gippsland Service Centres or made available for collection from the nominated waste transfer station. Please call our waste unit on 03 5153 9500 and register your name and property details.

Please note that the vouchers can be used at any nominated landfill or waste transfer station site during the normal operating hours of individual sites.

Those presenting bushfire waste without a voucher will be expected to pay the normal fees and charges for the items brought in.

Clifton Creek School rebuilding survey

The Victorian Government is committed to rebuilding Clifton Creek Primary School, and it wants to hear from you.

A survey has been launched this week at www.engage.vic.gov.au/clifton-creek-primary-school-rebuild where you can have your say.

This is a chance to recapture all the great things about the school and develop an asset that will serve the Clifton Creek community into the future.

The questions in the survey are:

- What are the places or spaces at the old Clifton Creek Primary School that you value/like the most?
- What would you like to see in the rebuilt school?

- Is there anything else for the school architects to consider when designing the rebuilt school?
- A school building is a vital part of the community. What other roles in the community do you see this new facility being able to perform?

To have your say about the future of Clifton Creek Primary School, please complete the survey before Wednesday 25 March.

Tambo River debris removal



East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority has removed approximately 4,000 cubic metres of debris material from the Tambo River at Battle Point.



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Update on Grocon clean-up

Bushfire Recovery Victoria has indicated Grocon clean-up works will commence the week of 10 March (today).

Grocon is undertaking Bushfire Clean-Up Program works in East Gippsland and across Victoria on behalf of the Government. The program is free for all property owners, regardless of whether they are insured, and is jointly funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments.

The program will continue to take registrations. In the past week, Grocon has inspected 212 properties in East Gippsland.

As at Wednesday 4 March:

- 570 properties registered for clean-up
- 268 property inspections completed

Information on safe clean-up works

BRV and Grocon have been working closely with Worksafe to ensure the clean-up will occur in a safe manner for residents, workers and communities. Getting the clean-up underway is a priority, but so is the need to make sure workers and locals aren't exposed to danger from contaminated waste and air.

All bushfire waste is classified as asbestos contaminated. Only Class A subcontractors / supervisors are certified and licensed to handle this waste.

Grocon received over 400 expressions of interest from local subcontractors to work on the program. Under Victorian law, only Class A licenced subcontractors/supervisors can be engaged by Grocon to handle bushfire waste.

Local subcontractors will be advised on how they can be employed as part of the clean-up process. We are confident that many of the clean-up crews

(including Class A subcontractors / supervisors) will be locally based.

Every day before works commence, sites will have undergone air monitoring for asbestos particles. Grocon is engaging the closest available air monitoring services for this requirement.

Offices opening

In the coming weeks Grocon will open project offices at 15 Hosie Street, Bairnsdale, and 57A Maurice Avenue, Mallacoota.

Community members are encouraged to call the team on 03 9631 8833 should they wish to discuss the clean-up with Grocon.

BRV has held community meetings in Omeo, Cobungra, Buchan, Bonang, Cann River, Genoa and Mallacoota.

Local subcontractors

As the clean-up program is funded by Commonwealth and Victorian governments, there are a range of qualifications and compliance requirements to ensure the safety of contractors, property owners and the environment.

Grocon is working with Class A certified contractors to engage local people and contact contractors who have registered to be part of the cleanup.

If you wish to confirm your registration, you can follow-up with Grocon by calling 03 9631 8833.

Contractors are encouraged to register their interest by visiting grocon.com/bushfire-recovery-2020, emailing victorianbushfirerecovery@grocon.com.au or calling 03 9631 8833.

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Bushfire Recovery Centre

24 Service Street, Bairnsdale. Monday-Friday 8.30am to 5pm, Saturday 8.30am to 1pm. Phone: 03 5153 9500 – please press 1 for recovery assistance.

A place for all your bushfire-related enquiries. Please bring identification and bank details for assistance payments, if applicable.

We will advise of a new mobile service schedule soon.

Council meeting in Cann River

Cann River will host East Gippsland Shire Council's next Council meeting next Tuesday 17 March from 1pm.

The Mayor, Councillors, CEO and council staff will meet community members in both Cann River and Mallacoota to discuss projects and issues of interest to those communities.

Following the bushfires, Council changed its meeting schedule, in part to bring forward the meetings scheduled for Mallacoota district, Omeo district and Orbost district.

The first event of the day will be a community open breakfast at Mallacoota Foreshore Holiday Park, Allan Drive, from 7.30am to 9am.

This will be followed by a community morning tea at the Cann River Hall and Recreation Reserve, 24 Tamboon Road, from 10.30am to 11.30am.

An Ordinary Council Meeting will be held in the same venue from 1pm. Community members are welcome to attend and can participate in the meeting in a number of ways, including Public Question Time. The meeting will also be live streamed.

RSVPs are requested for the Mallacoota breakfast and Cann River morning tea by Thursday, March 12 at 12pm by phoning 5153 9500.

Senior staff and councillors will also spend the day meeting with community members and business leaders on Monday, March 16 in the Far East.

Recovery videos

Today we launched the first in a series of short videos featuring local community members, Council and other agencies talking about their bushfire and early recovery experiences.

View the videos on our Facebook page or YouTube channel 'EastGippyTV'.

GIVIT – online charity portal

East Gippsland relief agencies and communities were overwhelmed with generous offers of support and donations during and after the bushfires.

An online charity is now managing all offers of donated goods, services and funds. This includes corporate offers of assistance.

GIVIT matches the offers with people who need assistance – ensuring those most in need get exactly what they need, where and when they need it most.

GIVIT has a virtual warehouse and encourages donors to pledge their donations. This removes the need for frontline services to receive, sort, and store items. It also means unwanted items won't create a disposal headache in the future.

The way it works is:

Charities and organisations registered with GIVIT can search through the list of donated items and accept donations needed by the people they are supporting.

Donors then get an email with the organisation's contact details and they can connect with each other to organise delivery or pick up of the donation.

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GIVIT also accepts cash donations. 100% of funds received are used to purchase essential items as requested by local charities and services. GIVIT is committed to purchasing locally wherever possible to aid economic recovery of affected communities.

For more information, go to givit.org.au

Victorian Government bushfire inquiry

The inquiry's local community sessions are:

Bonang: Tuesday 10 March, 2-4pm

Bairnsdale: Tuesday 17 March, 6-8pm

Wingan River: Wednesday 18 March, 11am-1pm

Genoa: Wednesday 18 March, 2-4pm

Mallacoota: Wednesday 18 March, 6-8pm

Tamboon: Thursday 19 March, 11am -1pm

Orbost: Thursday 19 March, 6-8pm

Cann River: Monday 30 March, 6-8pm

Bemm River: Tuesday 31 March, 11am-1pm

Lakes Entrance: Tuesday 31 March, 6-8pm

Buchan: Wednesday 1 April, 11am-1pm

Bruthen: Wednesday 1 April, 6-8pm

Thursday 2 April as follows:

Tambo Crossing 9.30-11.30am

Ensay: 12-2pm

Swifts Creek: 2.30-4.30pm

Omeo: 6-8pm

Cobungra: Thursday 3 April, 9.30-11.30am

For details on venues, etc and other opportunities to have input, go to www.igem.vic.gov.au.

Stay in touch with us

Ph: 03 5153 9500.

Facebook: @EastGippyShire

Website: eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

Emergency water assistance

Anyone seeking emergency water assistance from the bushfire affected areas should contact South East Water on 131 851.

Eligible permanent residents in the declared bushfire affected areas of East Gippsland will be provided a tank water flush and top-up of 5,000 litres. For information on ash and tank water contamination see

<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/what-we-do/emergency-information-and-support#factsheets>

Community bores

Southern Rural Water is working with Council and others who manage community bores. Swifts Creek Recreation Reserve has a connection point for people to fill up a water 'cube' for transport for emergency livestock relief. Please limit use to 1,000 litres each so resources are not depleted.

For more information visit

www.srw.com.au/east-gippsland-fires/ or phone 03 5139 3100.

Financial assistance

Budget Direct: is offering grants of up to \$20,000 for community groups or organisations to repair or replace damaged facilities and or equipment that aren't covered by insurance.

To find out if your organisation or group is eligible and to apply, visit

www.budgetdirect.com.au/landingpages/bushfire-recovery-fund.html

Emergency water assistance: if you need emergency water assistance contact South East Water on 131 851. Eligible permanent residents in

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Red Cross: People can now apply for three kinds of immediate assistance at

<https://www.redcross.org.au/grants> or 1800 RED CROSS (1800 733 276).

- A \$20,000 payment to support people whose homes were destroyed.
- \$7,500 for people who were hospitalised for more than two days as a result of the fires, with grants helping to cover out of pocket medical and other related expenses
- \$5,000 for homeowners whose homes have been structurally damaged and require repairs.

Emergency re-establishment assistance: is available if your primary place of residence is uninhabitable for more than seven days because of an emergency. It provides up to \$42,250 per eligible household experiencing financial hardship.

Re-establishment assistance is available to people who do not have building or contents insurance.

If you think you may be eligible call 1800 961 054.

Small business relief package: The Federal Government will provide top-up grants to eligible small businesses and non-profit organisations. The program is uncapped, so businesses and organisations that have sustained damage from the fires can access up to \$50,000 in tax free funding.

Concessional loans: of up to \$500,000 are also available to support small business, primary producers and non-profit organisations who have suffered significant damage to assets or significant loss of income as a direct result of the bushfires. Further eligibility criteria apply. To apply, visit ruralfinance.com.au or go to brv.vic.gov.au for a

direct link to the application page. Applications must be submitted by 31 July.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment: To receive this payment, you need to have been adversely affected by the fire. For example, your principal place of residence has been destroyed or must be demolished.

The fastest way to claim is over the phone. Call 180 22 66, or visit

www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment#a4

Disaster Recovery Allowance: Support for people who can show they have lost income as a direct result of the bushfires. Claims close 30 June 2020. For more details call 180 22 66 or visit the website, www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-disaster-recovery-allowance