

Bushfires 2019-20

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Another five fire-damaged bridges are on the road to replacement after East Gippsland Shire Council awarded contracts at the 3 March Council meeting.

A sixth bridge in a remote area outside Genoa, load limited and showing signs of wear, will also be replaced to take advantage of the economic benefit of undertaking this work at the same time as other fire recovery work in the area.

Contracts were awarded for bridges at Sunny Point Road, Buchan; Upper Wingan Road, Karlo Creek; Sandy Creek Road, Tabberabbera; Yalmy Road, Jarrahmond; Harrison's Creek on Fairhaven Road, Genoa; and Little River Bridge, Genoa.

Jarvis Norwood Constructions was awarded the contracts for Sunny Point Road (\$576,675), Sandy Creek Road (\$264,610) and Yalmy Road (\$375,270).

Tambo Constructions was awarded the contracts for Upper Wingan Road (\$330,410), Harrison's Creek on Fairhaven Road (\$304,259), and Little River Bridge (\$323,065).

Mayor Cr John White said it was pleasing to see local businesses supporting Council's rebuilding efforts.

"We are working to rebuild damaged infrastructure as quickly as possible to help our communities in their recovery," Cr White said.

New business support available

A new business support package is available for businesses that have had significant economic impacts from the bushfires.

Announced this week by the Federal Government, \$10,000 will be available to businesses that are 40% down over a three-month period compared to the previous year.

Applications open on 16 March. For more details go to business.gov.au

Planning changes for fire-affected residents

The Victorian Government on Wednesday announced new statewide planning changes for give bushfire-affected residents.

Anyone who has lost their homes or businesses due to bushfire can build temporary residential or commercial accommodation on their land without a planning permit, subject to safety requirements and planning consent.

This allows residents to consider and progress interim accommodation options while further assessments are undertaken to determine the suitability of a permanent rebuild.

In addition to the need for a full planning permit process and specialist advice, the Government will also undertake preliminary bushfire hazard and environmental assessments for affected properties.

These assessments will inform property owners about development constraints and will assist in facilitating rebuilding. They can ordinarily cost property owners up to \$3,000.

The planning exemptions will enable the occupation of temporary accommodation for a maximum of three years after a bushfire giving people time to transition to permanent accommodation.

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Mayor Cr John White welcomed the announcement, in particular the commitment to support the community through the rebuilding process

“We have been advocating for such planning exemptions to ease the burden on our community,” Cr White said.

“It’s particularly pleasing that the Government will be undertaking the preliminary assessments that otherwise each landowner would need to pay for. This includes a report to determine the Bushfire Attack Level based on the surrounding environment - needed to inform home design.”

People considering and preparing for rebuilding will also be able to access a ‘one stop shop’ planning concierge service in person to help them navigate the planning and rebuilding process. Council will be working closely with Bushfire Recovery Victoria in the delivery of the one stop shop for planning and other rebuilding support.

Cr White said Council and its planning and recovery teams look forward to continuing to work with the Victorian Government to identify further opportunities to make rebuilding as simple as possible.

Council suggests that for temporary dwellings and buildings, that residents check in with Council’s planning team on 5153 9500. The new provisions set aside the requirements for a full planning permit, but there is still a planning consent that needs to be done. Council wants to work will work with individuals to make this as easy as possible for landowners.

For more information about clean-up, planning permit exemptions for bushfire recovery and community recovery hubs, visit brv.vic.gov.au.

Fire Danger Period finishes 16 March

The Fire Danger Period will finish at 1am on Monday 16 March in East Gippsland.

The CFA is asking residents who wish to conduct burn-offs to register their burn-off by calling 1800 668 511 or emailing burnoffs@esta.vic.gov.au

You need to provide information about the location, date and expected start and finish times of the burn-off, as well as the estimated size and what you intend to burn.

By registering your burn-off, when somebody reports that they’ve spotted smoke, the incident will be cross-checked with the burn-off register and prevent a CFA crew from having to respond to a false alarm.

The CFA also recommends letting your neighbours know they may see smoke on the dates you plan to burn-off. It is also important to check weather and wind conditions.

For the latest information on Fire Danger Period dates, visit: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/restrictions-during-the-fire-danger-period>

Heap burning and planned burns

DELWP Gippsland’s Orbost Incident Management Team has this week been burning vegetation heaps at Cape Conran, Bendoc and along the Princes Highway between Bellbird Creek and the New South Wales border.

This vegetation has been removed as part of bushfire recovery and road clearing. The community may have seen increased smoke in the air around these locations.

Separate to this work, DELWP / Forest Fire Management Victoria is also be conducting planned burns in some locations across Gippsland.

To find out when and where planned burns are happening near you go to www.vic.gov.au/plannedburns or call 1800 226 226.

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Council prepared for waste

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 before and after the fires. This includes the early 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

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

- Clean up works began this week. Waste from the initial clean-up 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 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. 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.
- Council is working on the approvals and site preparation to open a section of the former Orbst Landfill to accept prescribed waste. This is about four weeks from being available.
- At this 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.

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- 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 Transfer Station – 0427 144 002
- Orbost Transfer Station – 0429 412 833
- Omeo Transfer Station – 0429 865 358
- Buchan Transfer Station – 0419 359 763

Addresses and operating hours for all these sites are available at eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/waste
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 Transfer Station

- Any 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.

Cars with LPG tanks are not accepted.

Fencing wire stockpile locations:

- Buchan: Buchan-Bruthen Road opposite the transfer station
- Wairewa Transfer Station
- More sites are 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. 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 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 is through contacting any Council Customer Service Centre, and can either be posted to landowners or collected in person. Please call 03 5153 9500 and register your name and property details.

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- 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 for the items brought in.
- Vouchers are redeemable until 31 August 2020.

Grocon clean-up program

Clean-up works are commencing this week in Sarsfield.

Grocon is undertaking Bushfire Clean-Up Program works in East Gippsland 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.

In the past week, Grocon inspected 212 properties in East Gippsland. While inspections continue over the coming weeks, clean up works have now commenced.

As at Wednesday 11 March in East Gippsland:

- 585 properties registered for clean-up
- 283 property inspections completed

Offices opening

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

Grocon will also work from Bushfire Recovery Victoria hub in Buchan.

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

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

Clean-up process

Property owners are advised to follow the below steps to participate in the program:

1. Register with Bushfire Recovery Victoria by calling 1800 560 760 or online at vic.gov.au/bushfire-clean-up-program
2. Receive confirmation of your registration from Grocon via telephone or email.
3. Grocon will undertake an inspection of your property where you'll complete a consent form.
4. Grocon will then be in touch with a timeline for anticipated works.

If you wish to confirm your registration, or have queries about the clean-up program, you're welcome to call Grocon on **03 9631 8833** or via email: victorianbushfirerecovery@grocon.com.au

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. 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.

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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.

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.

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 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.

To have your say, please complete the survey before Wednesday 25 March.

Stay in touch with us

Ph: 03 5153 9500. Facebook: @EastGippyShire

Website: eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

BizReBuild



BizReBuild's Lisa Paul is pictured with Shane Kidd (above) and Cherie Draper (below).



Corporate Australia is stepping up to assist small business across Australia in the wake of this summer's disastrous bushfires.

On 27 February, the Business Council of Australia through BizRebuild (their non-government community rebuilding initiative) hosted forums in Lakes Entrance and Mallacoota to hear from business operators about their priority needs to assist communities in recovery.

Acknowledging that indirectly impacted businesses were to date largely ineligible to apply for business grants and assistance packages released by state

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and Commonwealth governments, BizRebuild came armed with \$500 vouchers to provide immediate, local professional services assistance.

Several local ideas were shared by the group with broad support for a Business Support Expo.

Recovery videos



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

Mayor John White and the Great Alpine Gallery's Anne Richardson have featured so far.

View the videos on our Facebook page or You Tube channel 'EastGippyTV' at <https://bit.ly/38Q0qAE>

Council meeting in Cann River

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

Events are:

Community breakfast at Mallacoota Foreshore Holiday Park, Allan Drive, from 7.30am to 9am.

Community morning tea at the Cann River Hall and Recreation Reserve, 24 Tamboon Road, from 10.30am to 11.30am. Followed by the Ordinary Council Meeting at the same venue from 1pm.

Community members are welcome to attend any of these events and can participate in the council meeting in a number of ways, including Public Question Time. The meeting will also be live streamed.

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

Victorian Government bushfire inquiry

The inquiry's local community sessions are:

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.

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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**

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

Mobile Recovery Service

Our mobile recovery service is back on the road
from Monday 16 March, providing general
information and support from Red Cross and/or the
Department of Health and Human Services.
Council's economic development officers will join
the service from 16 March to 26 March, and
planning officers with rebuild advice from 30 March
to 9 April. The schedule for the next month is:

Monday 16 March

Marlo – CFA shed, 11am to 2pm

Tuesday 17 March

Lakes Entrance – Customer Service Centre, 11am
to 2pm

Wednesday 18 March

Anglers Rest – Blue Duck Inn, 10.30am to 12pm

Omeo – community hall, 1pm to 2.30pm

Thursday 19 March

Buchan – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Monday 23 March

Benambra – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Tuesday 24 March

Orbost – Customer Service Centre, 11am to 2pm

Wednesday 25 March

Cann River – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Thursday 26 March

Swifts Creek – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Monday 30 March

Goongerah – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Tuesday 31 March

Sarsfield – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Wednesday 1 April

Gelantipy – CFA shed, 11am to 1pm

Friday 3 April

Club Terrace – the old school, 11am to 2pm

Monday 6 April

Tambo Crossing – “The Rock”, 10am to 11am

Ensay – community hall, 11.30am to 2pm

Tuesday 7 April

Wairewa – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Wednesday 8 April

Clifton Creek – community hall, 11am to 2pm

Thursday 9 April

Mallacoota – community hall, 11am to 12.30pm

Genoa – community hall, 2pm to 3.30pm

Transition to recovery

On Tuesday 10 March the first ‘cluster’ (impacted
communities between Bairnsdale to Bruthen) was
formally signed off for transition to recovery.

This means that control formally moves from the
Incident Controller, to coordination of recovery
jointly by Council and BRV.

While we have been working in recovery this was
an important formal step. Other clusters are
expected to transition to recovery over the coming
fortnight.

Donation for Omeo Region



Trevor and Leslie Bell of Bell Real Estate in Melbourne recently donated a semi-trailer of hay and two smaller trailers of hay and dog food to help farmers in the Omeo Region. The donation was coordinated with Joe and Trudy Connelly in Benambra who are storing the items and will distribute to those in need throughout the Omeo region.

Trevor and Leslie have personal experience how devastating fires can be, having lost their home to bushfires in 1997. They want the community know they are not forgotten even though the fires have passed.

Citizen science opportunities

Pest plant and animal control will be key for biodiversity recovery. You can help by becoming a bushfire recovery citizen scientist and using your mobile phone to monitor the recovery of bushfire-affected plants and animals.

Anyone in fire-affected areas can participate, no matter their scientific knowledge or camera skills.

Some places you can start monitoring recovery include:

Frog ID: <https://www.frogid.net.au/>

Victorian Biodiversity Atlas:

<https://vbago.science/about>

I Naturalist: <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/> and their bushfire recovery project:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/environment-recovery-project-australian-bushfires-2019-2020>

Atlas of Living Australia: <https://www.ala.org.au/>

Feral Scan (pest species):

<https://www.feralscan.org.au/default.aspx>

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.

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

Financial assistance

For details of financial assistance available contact the Bushfire Recovery Centre on 5153 9500, or see past editions of this newsletter at eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/bushfire