

# Bushfires 2019-20 Community Newsletter 20 March – Edition 30



Orbost Landfill is on the way to accepting bushfire waste after Council awarded Goldsmith Civil and Environmental the contract to maintain the temporary site at its meeting this week.

The EPA approved the previously rehabilitated and non-operational part of the landfill site as suitable to accept the bushfire waste from the state government clean-up program.

Council has also received all necessary approvals from the Minister for Local Government.

The opening of the site has been a focus for Council as it supports the community in the clean-up.

More than 50,000 tonnes of waste is estimated to be generated by the bushfire clean-up program. The Orbost facility is expected to receive 35,000 tonnes of prescribed waste with Bairnsdale Landfill to take 15,000 tonnes.

Works to ready the site are being undertaken and include access, temporary facilities and installation of a temporary weighbridge.

It is planned to have the site operational by the week starting March 24. It will operate for duration of the clean-up program and will be accessed only by licensed contractors.

The transfer station will remain open for all other waste.

## Council waives rates for bushfire victims

Council adopted a plan on Tuesday to provide additional rate relief to two groups of ratepayers - bushfire impacted property owners and commercial/industrial properties. Council will allocate \$3.62 million for rate waivers and other measures to support the community.

This will be funded by the Council Assistance Fund provided by the Victorian Government to councils affected by the bushfires. East Gippsland is receiving \$3.62 million from the fund.

Council resolved that three years' rates - 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, will be waived for all properties where the main dwelling has been destroyed or is assessed as needing demolition as a result of the 2019-20 bushfires.

For years 2020-21 and 2021-22, the waiver applies until the date that the property is sold, transferred to new owners, or a new dwelling is rebuilt on the land, whichever comes first.

All properties classified as commercial/industrial will receive a rate rebate, as a percentage reduction, for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 rating years. The rate rebate will not apply to telecommunication, gas and electricity infrastructure and vacant land properties. It excludes any municipal or waste charge.

The allocations will total:

- \$1,082,000 allocated over three financial years for fire impacted properties
- \$1 million for commercial/industrial properties in 2019-20 and a further \$1 million in 2020-21
- \$475,000 to support the loss of Council's rate base for a three-year period.

# Bushfires 2019-20

## Community Newsletter

### 20 March – Edition 30



- \$63,000 for services for bushfire fencing collection to address illegal dumping of the material

This rate support follows Council's decision last November to provide \$1.51 million rate assistance for drought-affected farmers.

The proposed rate rebate for all properties classified as commercial/industrial in Council's rates data base, would provide a similar percentage rebate amount over a two-year period as the rate rebated applied to farm properties through the Local Government Services Support Payment in January 2020.

Ratepayers who are to receive a rate waiver or a rebate will be issued with amended rate notices soon. If any ratepayer requires further information on the proposed rate waivers and rebates, please contact Council on 5153 9500.

### Parks opening update

With the school holidays coming up, Parks Victoria has updates on some of East Gippsland's popular parks.

**Cape Conran Coastal Park:** Works are being prepared for the West Cape day area, including Salmon Rocks, where temporary access will be built.

Banskia Bluff campground and cabins will be closed for Easter and the school holidays.

**Snowy River National Park:** Raymond Creek Falls day visitor area has re-opened. The rest of the park remains closed.

**Croajingolong National Park:** Limited access is being restored to the popular Narrows Walking Track.

A short stretch of track extending north from Bucklands Jetty is open, providing access to fishers.

Other camping and accommodation: The Peachtree Creek Reserve campground and jetty has re-opened, except for the Tamboon Inlet remote camping sites.

Gabo Island Lighthouse Reserve and cottage accommodation is open for bookings.

Point Hicks Lighthouse Reserve, along with the cottage accommodation, will not be accessible until the bridge at Thurra River is rebuilt.



*Marking a milestone in the region's early recovery efforts, Council's newest landfill cell, Cell 3B at Bairnsdale Landfill, has started accepted bushfire waste. The cell was opened earlier than planned due to the large amount of waste generated by the fires. However, Cell 3B first needed a layer of soft waste on the bottom to ensure the cell's lining would not be damaged by the 'hard' bushfire waste.*

### Grocon clean-up activities

This week clean-up is continuing in Sarsfield and will begin in Buchan and Mallacoota. Property consents and inspections are continuing in Omeo, Nowa Nowa, Genoa and Cann River.

In the past week, Grocon inspected 10 East Gippsland properties. In addition, six crews began work.

Next week, clean-up will begin in the Cobungra, Bete Belong, Goongerah and Club Terrace areas.

# Bushfires 2019-20

## Community Newsletter

### 20 March – Edition 30



Also next week, important pre-clean-up works will take place in the Gelantipy area.

As at Monday 16 March, 799 property owners have registered for the clean-up program. Site inspections have taken place at 430 of these properties.

In the previous week up to Friday 13 March:

- 10 properties registered for clean-up, taking the total to 595
- 29 property inspections were conducted, taking the total to 312
- 2 property clean-ups began

#### **In your community**

Community members are encouraged to call Grocon on 03 9631 8833 or via email at [victorianbushfirerecovery@grocon.com](mailto:victorianbushfirerecovery@grocon.com) if they have any clean-up enquiries.

Grocon project offices will open in coming weeks at 15 Hosie Street Bairnsdale and 57A Maurice Avenue, Mallacoota. Recruitment is currently underway. Dedicated Community Liaison Officers will be at these locations to provide information and answer any questions you may have.

#### **Clean up process**

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

- Register with Bushfire Recovery Victoria by calling 1800 560 760 or online at [vic.gov.au/bushfire-clean-up-program](http://vic.gov.au/bushfire-clean-up-program)
- Receive confirmation of your registration from Grocon via telephone or email.
- Grocon undertakes an inspection of your property where you'll complete a consent form.

- Grocon will then be in touch with a timeline for anticipated works.

#### **Waste disposal**

##### **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.
- All waste must be 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 Orbost 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.
- 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.

# Bushfires 2019-20

## Community Newsletter

### 20 March – Edition 30



#### **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

For addresses and opening hours, go to [eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/waste](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/waste)

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.

#### **Farm fencing wire waste**

Sites have been set up by DELWP and Council to stockpile agricultural metal/wire only waste.

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

These 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.

Fencing wire stockpile sites:

- Newmerella Recreation Reserve (western side of the showgrounds near highway, away from horse yards)
- Buchan: old sawmill, 2286 Bruthen-Buchan Road
- Wairewa Transfer Station, Carl Smith Road
- Nowa Nowa: old railway station
- Cann River: old gravel pit off Cemetery Track
- Ensay: recreation reserve, Doctors Flat Road

Other sites are also being identified and will be publicised when available.

Please do not leave fencing wire in road reserves or other public land. This is illegal dumping and attracts a fine.

#### **Free bushfire waste vouchers**

- Council will be offering extra free waste vouchers to properties in the bushfire areas that have burnt items that are not included in the categories covered in this newsletter.
- These vouchers can be used for 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.
- Please note that the vouchers can be used at any nominated landfill or transfer station.

# Bushfires 2019-20

## Community Newsletter

### 20 March – Edition 30



- Those presenting bushfire waste without a voucher will be expected to pay the normal fees.
- The vouchers expire on 31 August 2020.

#### More firewood locations announced

Extra firewood collection sites will open this Saturday in State forest areas around Lindenow, Bullumwaal, Lakes Entrance, Buchan, Nowa Nowa, Wairewa, Cabbage Tree Creek, Cann River and Mallacoota.

Use the interactive map to find the exact locations, [www.ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood/find-a-firewood-collection-area](http://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood/find-a-firewood-collection-area)

Some of the new collection areas will have small stockpiles of wood relocated from fire-affected areas, as well as unburnt wood leftover from when firebreaks were made.

Around Mallacoota, previously inaccessible areas between State forest and local roads where hazardous tree work has been completed are now also accessible for collecting firewood.

Forest Fire Management Victoria said it hoped the new sites closer to communities will make it much easier for people to stock up their sheds for next winter. As work continues, more sites will be made available in late April.

The limit on firewood collection is two cubic metres per person per day, and a maximum of 16 cubic metres per household each financial year.

For further information on firewood collection or to report illegal or suspicious behaviour in public land areas, contact DELWP on 136 186.

#### Victorian Government bushfire inquiry

The inquiry has confirmed these sessions will go ahead in light of coronavirus arrangements:

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 more information on these sessions, go to

[www.igem.vic.gov.au](http://www.igem.vic.gov.au).

#### Mobile Recovery Service

The mobile recovery service provides information and support to bushfire-affected residents and businesses.

Council's economic development officers will join the service up to 26 March, and planning officers with rebuild advice from 30 March to 9 April.

The schedule is:

##### 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

# Bushfires 2019-20 Community Newsletter 20 March – Edition 30



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

## **Bushfire Recovery Centre**

The Bushfire Recovery Centre is the place where you can find out about the many avenues of support and assistance available. To help you do this efficiently, the centre has a number of support agencies in one place.

As well as visiting the Bushfire Recovery Centre in person, you can also call the team.

The centre is a welcoming and supportive space where we can support you to understand and engage with services.

The centre is also the referral office for the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund.

Through the Bushfire Recovery Centre, you can access financial and legal support services, financial and personal counselling, and business support.

Red Cross and Salvation Army representatives are available on weekdays. Referrals can be made to the following organisations: Disaster Legal Help Victoria, Windemere, Anglicare, and Rural Financial Counselling Service.

Businesses can also be referred to council's Economic Development team and Rural Financial Counselling Service for assistance.

You can also call the recovery centre on 5153 9500.

## **Financial assistance**

For details of financial assistance available:

- Contact the Bushfire Recovery Centre on 5153 9500, or visit the centre at 24 Service Street, Bairnsdale. Monday-Friday 8.30am to 5pm, Saturday 8.30am to 1pm.
- See past editions of this newsletter at [eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/bushfire](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/bushfire)

## **Small business grants now open**

Small Business Bushfire Support Grants of up to \$10,000 to support small businesses who have experienced a significant loss of income due to the bushfires are now open.

These grants are provided to support eligible small businesses to recover from the bushfires and rebuild resilient businesses.

Applications to Rural Finance close by 30 September 2020. Information about the grant - including the application form - can be found at: <https://www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/small-business-bushfire-support-grant>