

# Bushfires 2019-20 Community Newsletter 24 March – Edition 31



The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program can provide practical and personal support for people who have been affected by the 2019-20 Victorian bushfires. It is a free service. To access the Case Support Program, call 1800 560 760.

Individuals, families and emergency service workers from bushfire-affected communities can also access up to 10 free and confidential counselling sessions without a GP referral. To access the service in East Gippsland phone 1800 001 068 or email [bushfiresupport@rav.org.au](mailto:bushfiresupport@rav.org.au).

## LifeLine - 13 HELP (13 43 57)

A dedicated support line for people living through bushfire recovery. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Beyondblue information line - 1300 224 636

An information line that offers expert information on depression, how to get help, and how to help someone else.

## Safe Steps Family Violence Centre - 1800 015 188

Confidential support and information for women and children living with family violence.

## Mensline - 1300 789 978

A telephone support, information and referral service, helping men deal with their relationship problems.

## Kids Help Line - 1800 551 800

A 24-hour telephone service that provides phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

## Victorian Government bushfire inquiry – all sessions cancelled

All Inspector General of Emergency Management (IGEM) bushfire enquiry sessions have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on the inquiry go to [www.igem.vic.gov.au](http://www.igem.vic.gov.au).

## Mobile Recovery Service - cancelled

All mobile recovery service sessions are cancelled due to Victorian Government restrictions on non-essential travel and social distancing as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council will work with communities and other agencies to ensure you continue to receive information that would usually be part of this service.

## Bushfire Recovery Centre

In the interest of public health and advice given by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, this centre is open by appointment only.

To arrange an appointment please call the team on 03 5153 9500, and press '1'

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.

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## Mallacoota and District Recovery Association

The association has updated information on the latest work of the association and pre-nomination information for those wanting to nominate for the committee.

To read this new information, visit [www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/CootaRecovery](http://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/CootaRecovery)

## Rates waived 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.
- \$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.

## Grocon clean-up activities

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

To subscribe to the newsletter email [media@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:media@egipps.vic.gov.au). Hardcopies are available at our Customer Service Centres and community centres. See our website for past editions.

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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 – and Orbost Landfill – 5153 9500 – 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.

### 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)

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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
- Omeo: 181 Depot 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.



*The first load of prescribed bushfire waste from Mallacoota is expected to arrive at the purpose-built landfill in Orbost today. Council and its contractors prepared the site, including weighbridge and alternate access, in less than three weeks.*

## 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 our Customer Service Centres (note Paynesville and the Bairnsdale Business Centre are closed) 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.

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

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)

#### More firewood locations announced

Extra firewood collection sites are open 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.

#### Financial assistance

For details of financial assistance available:

- Contact the Bushfire Recovery Centre on 5153 9500, or visit the centre at 24 Service