



Community Newsletter – Mallacoota, Genoa & District

24th March 2020

This newsletter is available at East Gippsland Shire Service Centre, local shops or online:
eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information/Bushfire_support_and_information

Breaking news!

Grocon: Bushfire Recovery Victoria are working closely with Grocon and all Government agencies to ensure the clean-up continues during these uncertain times. There are up to four crews working full time in Mallacoota. For updates and information on your sites progress you can phone 9631 8833. Grocon now have an office space in the shop next to the Bendigo Bank.

Coronavirus COVID-19 daily update: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-update>
Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

Ambulance Victoria, a message from Sandra Tozer: With every call AV attend a Dynamic Risk Assessment and/or checking for dangers is performed. This typically includes aggression, traffic hazards and the like. We now have embedded POTENTIAL INFECTION Control as part of our risk assessment. You will now see AV utilising their full Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for any potential respiratory related calls. AV have a social and professional obligation to prevent transmission of COVID-19 to ensure they maintain their continued response within the community.

Please do not be alarmed if you see AV staff dressed up in the full PPE outfit. This is an infection transmission precaution, a standard approach across all Victorian communities. For more information around symptoms, risk factors, travel advice and preparation for COVID-19, refer to the DHHS site: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Community delivery service: If you're self-isolating and would like items delivered, (Newspaper, groceries, pharmaceuticals etc..) Please contact MDHSS reception for more information on [5158 0243](tel:51580243) and ask for Janine

Foreshore Camp Park Closed: Due to the recent commonwealth government announcement regarding banning of non-essential travel and services, the Foreshore Camp Park is closed until at least the end of April. Staff at the park have been supporting guests to leave the park as soon as they are able and future bookings have been cancelled.

Mallacoota and District Community Information Meetings: Community information meetings usually held at MDHSS have been cancelled until further notice.

Church Services: All services are now cancelled, and the op shop is closed until further notice. Anyone in the community is welcome to phone Jude for pastoral care or to access the op shop for essential items by appointment 0411 016 470. We are working on a plan to transmit worship services - keep an eye on the Cooperating Parish of Facebook Page and the notice outside post office for more details.

Psychologist update: All future in person appointments are cancelled until further notice. Relationships Australia Victoria and Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria are offering free bushfire counselling and support to residents, workers, volunteers and first responders. Psychologists Mary Nicholas and Fiona Mitchell are available for telephone or video counselling appointments. For more information or to make an appointment contact 1800 001 068 or ring MHDSS reception 5158 0243 9am-5pm.

Kitchen to Compost Program: This important program will resume as of tomorrow, Wednesday the 25th of March

Rob Gordon: We have invited Rob Gordon to connect with us again, to check in how we are going and offer some more of his wisdom, particularly given the new challenges around COVID – 19. He will be running some online webinars or zoom sessions on the 7th and 8th of April – watch this space for more details. We will also create a newsletter version of this information to circulate.

Community led recovery

Community Update: The Association is in uncertain times. We are all struggling to find our way as our world gets closed again, this time at the whim of a virus. Each initiative seems to take infinitely longer than it would have in “normal times”. Despite this, we continue to receive applications for membership and the number of full members has grown to 672.

Becoming a Member: A reminder that Application forms can be downloaded from the Association’s interim web page:
https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information/Mallacoota_and_district_recovery

Communicating with Association Members

By email: A welcome letter has been emailed to all members who provided an email address. We are aware that in the case of some members the message has been detected as scam or has gone through to their junk mailbox. If you provided an email address, and have not received a letter from the association, check your junk mail. If you cannot find any letter, please let us know by emailing Mallacoota.district.assoc.2020@gmail.com

By mail: We plan to post a letter to all members who have not provided an email address this week, subject to people and services continuing to function.

Webpage Access: We now have an interim web page linked to the Council website where all relevant information regarding the community led recovery process will be available (until a standalone website is set up):

https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information/Mallacoota_and_district_recovery

Please check this page regularly to keep up to date with information. Regular updates will also be provided to association members.

Pre-nomination sessions: More than 80 people took part in the informal meetings that were offered to enable discussion of the work of the Association Committee and expectations of committee members. A summary of the issues discussed has been prepared. It will be forwarded by email or post to all members and will be available from the Mallacoota and District recovery web page (see above). An earlier version of this report is already available online.

MADRA Snapshot Survey: A brief survey will be emailed or mailed to members shortly. Its purpose is to provide the elected committee with a snapshot of what the community sees as immediate needs. Responses to the survey will be collated and a report made available to the committee to initiate discussion and support further information gathering. You can return the completed survey either by email or post. Details are included on the survey. The closing date for receiving completed surveys is anticipated to be Thursday 9th April 2020

Association Committee Election: An election is being held to fill twelve vacancies on the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Committee.

Call for candidates: A person who is a full member of the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association and currently resides in the communities of the Mallacoota and Genoa and Wallagarough River Catchments is entitled to nominate for election to the committee. If you are eligible and wish to become a candidate, you must lodge a nomination form with the election manager by 12 noon on Thursday 16 April 2020. Nominations can be lodged either by email, post or hand-delivery as follows: Election Manager Mallacoota and District Recovery Association Committee Election, Victorian Electoral Commission, Level 11, 530 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Email: roger.millar@vec.vic.gov.au Late nominations cannot be accepted.

Candidates may lodge a personal statement of not more than 100 words and a photograph for inclusion with the voting material sent to voters. Personal statements and photographs must be lodged with the election manager by close of nominations if they are to be included with the voting material.

Nomination forms are now being sent to all full members of the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association. Alternatively, you can ring the election manager to obtain a nomination form.

Who can vote: Persons aged 15 years and over who were residents or owned property in the communities of Mallacoota and Genoa and Wallagaraugh River Catchments at the time of the 2019/20 bushfires may apply for full membership of the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association.

If you are not currently a member of the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association and wish to join, an application form can be downloaded from the East Gippsland Shire Council website:

www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/files/content/public/bushfire_information/mallacoota_and_district_recovery/association_membership_form.pdf

Applications for membership must be completed and either delivered to the East Gippsland Shire Council Service Centre, 70 Maurice Avenue, Mallacoota during business hours (Mon, Tue 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Wed to Fri 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm) or mailed to Membership, Mallacoota and District Recovery Association, C/O, East Gippsland Shire Council Service Centre, PO Box 494, Mallacoota 3892. To participate in the election, applications must be received by 12 noon on Thursday 16 April 2020.

Voting: The election will be conducted entirely by post. If the election is contested, voting material will be mailed to all full members of the Mallacoota and District Recovery Association on Tuesday 28 April 2020. Voting will close at 5:00 pm on Tuesday 19th May 2020. Voting is not compulsory at this election.

The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary Youth Centre Opening hours: Brodie will be in the Sanctuary from 3.30pm – 7pm tonight (Tuesday 24th) and Wednesday night answering emails, Facebook / Insta comments, DMs and phone calls /texts on 0492 874 241. If you have left anything in the Sanctuary come and pick it up, as the latest rules from the government advise against (but don't specifically ban) our activities - like we discussed last week, it's probably time to take things online for the next while.

Holy smokes 2020 - what next? There's still a lot of uncertainty, adjusting and creativity is required as we get through the Coronavirus times together (even if not 'together' in the same room). We are grateful that the camp park has been closed and The Sanctuary's request was taken into consideration and put into action. Out of concern for families, community members and ourselves we are glad that the amount of people here and traveling into town has been massively reduced.

We have Lots of questions to discuss in the next couple of days and decisions to make - reach out with your ideas, concerns and suggestions about how we can continue youth led organising and socialising in these tricky times.

DROP IN - Is it time to close the Sanctuary physical space and move on to digital ways of hanging out?

COMMUNICATION - What options do we have? WebX, Zoom, Google Hangouts etc

ACCESS - Does everyone have or need help getting a laptop / phone / internet access or something else?

SAFE SOCIALISING & SELF CARE - Positive examples we can share with each other

Scheduled SKATE PARK MEETING and GATHERINGS - How to continue the great work we've been doing together? It's important we keep it up - what do you suggest?

EVENTS - What will we need to cancel / postpone or find new ways to adapt to new conditions. Postpone / cancel or drastically adapt the Sanctuary Rave?

INFORMATION - How are you hearing about the latest updates and directives? Is it a bit overwhelming? How can we make sense of it together?

Recovery services

Practical support to recover after the Bushfires: a free Bushfire Case Support Program is available to anyone in bushfire effected communities. This service provides information on the next steps in moving forward. To register and be connected to a Mallacoota District case worker please phone 1800 560 760 or go to bushfirerecovery@windermere.org.au

Community Psychologist: Psychologists and a counsellor are available for telephone and skype sessions. Ring MHDSS on 5158 0243 between 9am-5pm to get more information or make an appointment.



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Financial assistance

Red Cross: Red Cross will have a presence daily from 9am to 5pm at MDHSS until this Friday 27th March. It is uncertain whether Red Cross will continue to have a presence in Mallacoota after this due to COVID – 19, however all services are available by calling 1800 RED CROSS (1800 733 276) or go to <https://www.redcross.org.au/grants>

St Vincent de Paul Society: The emergency relief assistance phone number is 13 18 12 during business hours. Cash grants of up to \$5000 are available immediately and will be transferred directly into your bank account. Callers will be asked to provide certain details to verify their eligibility.

Salvation Army Assistance: The Salvation Army's Mallacoota Bushfire Recovery assistance will be changing to a telephone service from Wednesday 25th March. **Please call 0429 616 253 from 9:30am to 4:30pm.** We wish to thank the community, the local council team at the Mallacoota Service Centre and everyone at the Mallacoota and District Health and Support Service for the wonderful welcome and support extended to the Salvation Army Bushfire Recovery Team members over the past 6 weeks. It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work with you all and the other agencies in our joint endeavours to connect with, support and help the Mallacoota Community.

For other support services and information go to Bushfire Recovery Victoria:

Phone 1800 560 760 website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria>

RSPCA assistance: RSPCA Victoria are here to help and provide support to bushfire affected communities, assisting in their recovery through animal welfare initiatives and through harnessing the positive influence that animals have on human health. RSPCA can help with vet care, pet food, pet supplies and more! Please visit this link to apply for assistance: 03 9224 2222 or <https://rspcavic.org/services/emergency-assistance/bushfire-assistance-request>