

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

Redesdale Fire Community Recovery Update No 24

Thursday 20th August 2009

INFORMATION for communities of Barfold, Baynton, Glenhope, Redesdale and Sidonia

Chair of VBBRA at Barfold: The Community Planning Day on 15th August was a great success. 60 residents crowded into Barfold Hall to hear Christine Nixon talk about the role of the Victorian Bushfire Recovery and Response Authority. A great lunch was enjoyed by all, and 25 community members stayed through the afternoon to produce a plan as required by VBBRA. Thanks to everyone who took part in the day.

The day built on work already done by the Community Recovery Working Groups. The Plan was adopted by the Community Recovery Committee on 19th August and will be sent to VBBRA shortly.

New grant [up to \$10,000] for primary producers: a change to legislation will allow grants to primary producers from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund. This is for primary producers to make repairs on-farm and includes re-fencing. There are also discretionary payments of up to \$15,000 for people in temporary accommodation. Bill Shorten, Federal MP, who met with residents in April has pursued ways that the tax office can allow these payments. Mr Shorten said: "*Australians gave incredibly generously in the aftermath of the bushfires to help their fellow citizens. This decision ensures their intentions can be put into practice.*"

Men's Health Matters: an informative, interactive and fun session of men's rural health, Monday 24th August, 6.00pm - 8.00pm, Redesdale Hall. A free meal will be provided. Meet one of Australia's leading experts in rural men's health - Peter Strange. **Bookings essential** (for catering purposes) **on 5434 6464**. There will be an opportunity on the night to book in for a free health assessment to be held in the following weeks.

Elmore Field Day – 7th October – the Well-being Working Group is organising a family day out at the Elmore Field Day. All welcome. Transport, entry costs and meal will be provided free of charge. Contact Kirra to book – details at end of this newsletter.

Donated Holidays Available: donated holiday accommodation options are still available to bushfire affected people. Tourism Victoria is co-ordinating the offers, which include two nights stay in caravan parks, B&Bs, motels and hotels suitable for couples or families in popular holiday destinations. Contact your Case Manager or local Donations Coordinator to register your interest through the Donations Management System. Holidays can be taken from now until 20 December 2009, subject to conditions and availability. To view the accommodation offers available, visit <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/bushfireoffer/accommodation/>

Counselling Services: there are two new counselling and support options for people who want to talk over any issues with a counsellor. Details follow:

1. The Bushfire Psychological Counselling Voucher Program gives residents six free counselling sessions if you have received grants paid by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund. This program includes children over five years of age and operates for the next two years. You



can use your vouchers at any stage. You will need to apply for the vouchers and make an appointment with a counsellor of your choice from a list of service providers. Individuals, couples or family counselling will be available and you can choose to see psychologists, social workers or occupational therapists. The service will be available through your local community health services and other private service providers. Please talk to your case manager or www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal If you have not received any Victorian Bushfire Appeal Grants you are still be eligible for this voucher program if you were directly affected by the bushfires. Please visit the DHS website for application forms or talk with your case manager.

2. Free counselling support is also available through ATAPS (Allied Psychological Services) for people affected by the bushfire. Counsellors are working from Castlemaine District Community Health Service (CHIRP) and Cobaw Community Health Service in Kyneton. You can access this service through the Case Managers at CHIRP (5479 1000) or Cobaw (5421 1666) or direct from a GP referral. The Bushfire ATAPS program gives you access to unlimited free sessions.

WORKING GROUPS and COMMUNITY RECOVERY COMMITTEE

Fencing Volunteers: currently the community has two wonderful volunteers, who have donated their time and energy to the fencing effort, staying in the caravans at the Barfold hall. Bruce Hays and Rob Blake, both NSW. Bruce is a retired fencing contractor with a multitude of skills. Community members should make an effort to say 'hi' and thank them for their efforts, time and contribution to the fencing effort. Anything you can provide to help support their efforts [such tea and scones] would be appreciated. If you would like to help out, please call Kirra on 0429 388 167.

Fencing Working Group: the next meeting is at Barfold Hall at 12.30 on Tuesday 25th August. If you need **help with fencing**, please call Karl Metcalf on 54 234 132 or 0437 27 40 50. A tractor and post driver from Department of Primary Industry is now in use, and teams from CVA, Corrections and other volunteers are making good progress.

Community Well Being Working Group: next meeting is at Barfold Hall at 12.30 on Thursday 27th August. This meeting will consider many of the proposals from the Planning day and look at how to organise and funds these events and activities. For more information, contact Kirra on 54 711 821 or 0429 388 167.

The next CRC meeting is at 6pm at Barfold Hall on 9th September and will then be monthly on the second Wednesday of each month. Please note later starting time as some residents have requested the chance to make use of day light as spring is approaching. Refreshments available from 5.45pm.

ASSISTANCE and INFORMATION:

REFERRAL CARD: fire-affected households should have by now received the new referral card for accessing material aid. Some people have been seeking duplicate cards for family members. Any queries are being handled by key contact workers/case managers, or by emailing: referral.card@dpc.vic.gov.au or by calling **1800 240 667**.

Barfold Hall drop in: Case Managers will be available on Thursdays from 10-12. Centrelink will not be at these sessions for the next three weeks. The VBRR Donations Co-ordinator - Stephanie Wigan, will be available on most Thursday mornings by appointment – but call first on 0400 350 808, or stephanie.wigan@dpc.vic.gov.au.

Fire-recovery staff at Mount Alexander: land line: 54 711 821; **Mobiles:** Ian: 0417 147 058, Kirra - 0429 388 167. **Email:** i.lillington@mountalexander.vic.gov.au ; k.litchfield@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Back copies of these newsletters are now available on the following web-pages:

http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=754&h=0 and

http://www.macedon-ranges.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=1961&h=0

