

This Flood Information Update contains information about services available to the community to assist in dealing with the impact of the recent flood event in the Shire. This Flood Information Update is being circulated to local media, local agencies involved in the recovery effort, on the Council website, in Council offices and is also being distributed in affected local communities. Council officers are continuing to update details in this flyer as we receive more information about the needs of the community and the services being offered by other agencies. **The next Flood Information Update will be produced on Thursday 27th of January.**

NEW FLOOD UPDATE INFORMATION

Important electricity and gas safety advice in floods can be obtained from Energy Safe Victoria at www.esv.vic.gov.au

Rate payments: Residents whose properties have been directly affected by the recent floods will be given an extension on their February rate payments (full or instalments) until the 15th March 2011. There is no need for ratepayers to complete a payment arrangement form and as long as they can pay by the 15th March 2011 no interest will be charged. Ratepayers still experiencing difficulty in making payments after this date can contact Margaret Jacka, Council's Revenue Officer on 5471 1700 or m.jacka@mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

Insurance: In the event that your home is damaged or destroyed by a flood, make contact with your insurance company as soon as possible to register your intention to claim and seek advice about the claim process under your policy. All insurance policies vary. You should also contact your insurer to arrange for an assessment. Don't be worried if your insurance papers have been destroyed during the flood, as insurance companies keep records electronically and only require the policyholder's name and address. If you are unable to identify your insurer you can contact the Insurance Council of Australia on 1300 728 228 - 24 hours a day. They will be able to provide advice and assistance with identifying your insurance company.

Animal Welfare: For information about animal welfare after floods please contact Department of Primary Industries on 136 186 or visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au. **Fodder drops** Loddon Mallee - Richard Leitch of Landmark -0428 351 413
Horsham - Phil Norman of Driscoll, McIlree & Dickinson Ph: 0409 812 461.

Dial Before You Dig: Many of the existing underground infrastructure for vital community services potentially could have little or no cover protecting them due to the unprecedented effects of erosion caused by the devastating flooding. Please ensure that you lodge an enquiry via our website www.1100.com.au or call us on 1100 prior to undertaking any form of excavation work involving machinery or hand digging. Lodging enquiries is a free service which will enable a person to receive plans and other information from our members that have underground assets in the area the person is planning to work in.

Electrician Contact List for flood affected residents of Mount Alexander Shire Council

The following electricians based in Castlemaine and Bendigo have been directly contacted by Council and they have advised that they are licensed contractors who are available at short notice to conduct safety assessments on flood affected properties within Mount Alexander Shire.

Electrician	Telephone	Contact
ADS Electrical Services	0438 043 345	Adam
Paul Cochrane	5472 2385	Paul
Stephen Breheny	5472 3003 or 0415 507 777	Steve
De Araugo & Lea	5441 6222	

Please note if you hire an electrician to do work on your property, please ensure that they are a licensed electrician and that they provide you with a Certificate of Compliance on completion of the works.



Property Inspections

Council staff have visited houses that have been inundated with flood water across the Shire. Since Wednesday 19th January, properties affected in Baringhup, Harcourt, Taradale, Newstead, Castlemaine and Campbells Creek have been provided with information and given assistance to assess the damage. Council officers are arranging visits to other affected areas this week. Approximately 51 residences have been fully flooded across the Shire, with a further 17 partially inundated with significant damage. A comprehensive assessment of Shire wide impacts is being finalised, including damage to local businesses and community facilities. If you have experienced flood inundation, please report it to Council by contacting the Flood Information Contact Officer on telephone 5471 1813 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Council is coordinating support and referral to other services to assist in the Recovery process.

Recovery Centre

Approximately 40 people sought assistance today from agencies, services and community volunteer groups who participated in a Recovery Centre at the Castlemaine Town Hall between 11.00am and 3.00pm. Residents were assisted with a range of enquires about grants, financial assistance, counselling and material aid. Agencies in attendance included: Department of Human Services (DHS), Castlemaine District Community Health (CHIRP), Bendigo Health Care and Support Service, Department of Justice – Consumer Affairs, Mount Alexander Volunteer Network, Rotary Club of Castlemaine, Centrelink, St Vincent de Paul Castlemaine and the Salvation Army Castlemaine. Affected residents who were unable to attend, should make contact with these services directly. A list of telephone numbers of organisations available to assist and information about financial assistance is attached to this flyer.

Damage across the Shire

There is a substantial amount of damage to roads, bridges, drains, paths, parks and waterways across the Shire. Council is assessing the damage and undertaking urgent works. Many jobs may take some time to fix and Council asks that members of the community be patient while we try to assess what needs to be done and how the work can be undertaken.

Council is also working with the CFA to assist with the cleanup of damage across the Shire. Works are being coordinated at a regional level with Council to assist in clearing fallen trees, major storm water pits and debris.

Structural assessments of some bridges that have been impacted as well as assessing damage to Community Centres, Recreation Reserves and Community Halls is currently taking place.

Staff from the YMCA and Council are working to get the Harcourt Pool back in operation which is expected to take approximately a week to treat the water.

Residents that require assistance with stock should contact the District Veterinary Officer from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) on 5422 1706.

There have been a large number of offers of assistance from people in the community and the Mount Alexander Volunteer Network is helping coordinate the volunteer effort with the needs of affected community members.

1. Rubbish Removal:

Council is assisting residents and business operators with the removal of damaged goods and materials from houses and businesses that were inundated by the most recent flooding. Homes have been affected in Castlemaine, Campbells Creek, Metcalfe, Guildford, Harcourt, Barfold and Taradale.

If flood waters entered your home or business, Council will arrange for damaged and discarded items to be collected from your nature strip. Fees will occur for residents that take material to the landfill directly.

With Council staff also very busy working on repairs to Council roads, bridges, footpaths and resources, we are also seeking your understanding and patience as our officers yet again work their way through the exceptional and sizeable cleanup program across the Shire.

The service will be provided this week and the need to continue the service will be assessed on Friday 21 January 2011.

Residents that have lost garbage or recycling bins during the flood can arrange for a replacement by contacting Council on 5471 1700. Residents will need to complete a form to request the replacement of bins, which is available on Council's website.

If you have found a garbage or recycling bin, you can report it to be picked up by contacting Council on 5471 1700.

2. Material Aid:

If you need assistance with clothing and food, vouchers to purchase goods can be obtained from the Salvation Army located at 47 Kennedy Street, Castlemaine. St Vincent de Paul in Castlemaine is able to provide assistance with furniture and also assistance with clothing and food.

3. Financial Assistance:

Enquiries for financial assistance should be made to Centrelink (Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy and Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment). Small businesses may also be eligible for payments. Contact should be made with Centrelink on the telephone number attached. Centrelink services to the Shire are provided at the Castlemaine and District Accommodation Resource Group (CADARG) located at the Uniting Church Parish Community Centre, 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine.

The Clean-up and Restoration Grant of up to \$25,000 provides a one-off grant to eligible primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations who have suffered direct damage as a result of the floods between August 2010 and January 2011 or damage caused by hail during November 2010 in Victoria, for clean-up, removal of debris, animal welfare and business restoration. Contact Rural Finance to enquire about these grants on 5448 2600 or www.ruralfinance.com.au.

The Victorian Government is offering emergency grants for those impacted upon by current flooding. These grants comprise up to \$1067 per household personal hardship grants, up to \$8650 grants for temporary living expenses, up to \$8650 grants for structural repairs to households, and up to \$8650 grants for replacement of essential household items. To access these grants visit a relief or recovery centre, contact your council or visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au.

4. Counselling and Support Services:

If you would like to talk with someone about your situation and/or require counselling, please contact Castlemaine District Community Health (CHIRP) at 13 Mostyn Street, Castlemaine or phone 5479 1000 and arrangements can be made to see a qualified counsellor.

The Australian Flood Phone Counselling Services Register for Flood Victims is now active on the ACA web site: www.theaca.net.au. A link to service providers can be found on the home page.

5. Reporting Damage to Roads, Footpaths and Buildings:

If you are having difficulty accessing your property or would like to let Council know about a problem you have observed with any local infrastructure, please contact Council on 5471 1700.

Your request for assistance will be logged and Council will add this information to our database. Council may not be able to attend to this issue immediately as we prioritise the need for repairs across the Shire.

6. Assessing the Impact of Flood Damage on your Property:

If you are concerned about your house structure following the flood and would like an assessment undertaken, please contact Council on 5471 1813. Council assessment and information teams will be visiting flood affected areas of the Shire today.

7. Power, Water, Electricity and Gas:

- Power - If you have any issues relating to your power supply, please contact Powercor on 132 412.
- Water - Any issues relating to drinking water or sewerage should be directed to Coliban Water on 1300 363 200.
- Electricity and Gas - Gas and electricity faults are to be reported to TruEnergy on 132 083 or 133 466.

Important electricity and gas safety advice in floods can be obtained from Energy Safe Victoria at www.esv.vic.gov.au

8. Housing:

Housing enquiries should be directed to Castlemaine and District Accommodation Resource Group (CADARG) at the Uniting Church Parish Community Centre, 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine or contact 5472 4299.

9. Volunteers:

If you would like to volunteer, the coordination of volunteers interested in assisting homeowners in the clean up of their properties or in any other way is being undertaken by the Mount Alexander Volunteer Network. If you are interested in assisting or require assistance, please contact Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns on 0425 323 005.

Teams of SES volunteers are also available to help clean out and hose houses inundated with flood water and they can be contacted on 132 500 if you require assistance.

Mount Alexander Shire Council
Flood Information Contact Officer – Ph. 5471 1813
Customer Service – Ph. 5471 1700

FLOOD INFORMATION CONTACT DETAILS

LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES

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Mount Alexander Shire Council

Flood Information Contact Officer
Customer Service

5471 1813
5471 1700

www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au

State Emergency Service

Flood and Water Damage

132 500

www.ses.vic.gov.au

Red Cross

Bendigo (Clothes and Food)
Information Line (Relief Centres)

5443 7331
1800 727 077

www.redcross.org.au

Castlemaine District Community Health (CHIRP)

Counselling and Health Related Services

5479 1000

Castlemaine Health

Hospital
Housing (CADARG)

5471 1555
5472 4299

www.mtalexhosp.vic.gov.au

Bendigo Health Emergency Respite

1800 068 978

www.bendigo.health.org.au

Centrelink

Financial Assistance
Monday to Friday 8am – 5pm

5430 5802
180 22 66

www.centrelink.gov.au

Department of Human Services

Grant Assistance
Bendigo Office

1300 650 172
5434 5555

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VicRoads

Road Closures and Road Damage

131 170

www.vicroads.com.au

Victorian Farmers Federation

Requests / Offers of Fodder

1300 882 833

www.vff.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society

Furniture, Clothing, Food and Donations
Castlemaine Assistance Centre – 16 Mostyn St

131 812
5470 6091

www.vinnies.org.au
Tues, Thurs, Fri 12-4pm

Salvation Army (Castlemaine)

Material Aid & Donations
Volunteer counsellors

5470 5389
137 258

www.salvationarmy.org.au

FLOOD INFORMATION CONTACT DETAILS – continued.

Wildlife Victoria Injured Sick or Orphaned Wildlife	1300 094 535	www.wildlifevictoria.org.au
Powercor Electricity Faults and Difficulties	132 412	www.powercor.com.au
TruEnergy Gas Faults Electricity Faults	132 083 133 466	www.truenergy.com.au
Coliban Water Water and Waste Water Matters	1300 363 200	www.coliban.com.au
Rural Finance – Bendigo Office Finance Advisors	5448 2600	www.ruralfinance.com.au
Optus Country (Luke)	0434 736 939	www.optus.com.au
Telstra To access an assistance package or report a fault	132 203	www.telstra.com.au
Mount Alexander Volunteer Network Volunteer Registration and Assistance	0425 323 005	
District Veterinary Officer (DPI) Stock Issues	5422 1706	www.dpi.vic.gov.au
Consumer Affairs (Bendigo office)	5444 2038	www.consumer.vic.gov.au
Insurance Council of Australia Insurance identification	1300 728 228	
Carers Support Service Bendigo Health	1800 068 987	

Financial assistance for flood victims

The Victorian Government is offering emergency grants for those impacted upon by current flooding. These grants comprise up to \$1067 per household personal hardship grants, up to \$8650 grants for temporary living expenses, up to \$8650 grants for structural repairs to households, and up to \$8650 grants for replacement of essential household items.

Emergency grants - up to \$1067 per household

Emergency grants of up to \$1,067 per household are available to help people meet the immediate basic needs for clothing, food, personal items and shelter.

These grants will help people manage immediately if they have been affected. The grant is 'needs based', is not means tested and is not affected by the insurance status of the applicant.

To access these grants visit a relief or recovery centre, contact your council or visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au.

Other grants

Temporary living expenses – up to \$8650

- Up to \$865 a week for up to 10 weeks, for those whose main home is unliveable for more than a week.
- The grant is not available immediately. It is income tested and varies depending on household size. It is intended to assist with temporary accommodation and transport costs not covered by insurance.

Re-establishment grants – up to \$8650 for necessary structural repairs and up to \$8650 for essential household items

- The property must be primary place of residence.
- These grants are income tested and don't include items covered by insurance.
- Available to owner-occupiers but not landlords. The essential household items component is available to tenants.

Financial support for affected businesses

\$15,000 clean up and restoration grants are available for eligible primary producers, small businesses and not for profit organisations. Affected people should contact the Rural Finance Corporation on (03) 5448 2600. Low interest loans of up to \$200,000 from the Rural Finance Corporation will also be available.



Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy - Flooding and severe weather

The Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy has been activated to assist employees, small business persons, and farmers who have had a loss of income as a direct result of the flooding and severe weather that began from 29 November 2010 and continued in January 2011 in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

For more information on the Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy call Centrelink on 180 22 66, visit your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre or Centrelink Agent or visit www.centrelink.gov.au

Red Cross Victorian Floods Appeal

The Australian Red Cross has established this Appeal with the Victorian Government to support individuals, families and communities in areas affected by the 2011 Victorian floods. The Victorian Government will provide an initial \$1 million contribution to this fund.

The funds raised will be allocated by the Red Cross. A small allocation panel will be set up for this purpose. All administration costs will be met by the State Government and all interest on donations will be invested back into the Appeal.

Further information

Those affected by the floods can locate their closest emergency relief centre by contacting their local council, calling the SES Flood Information Line on 1300 842 737 or visiting www.dhs.vic.gov.au for a full list of centres.

To run a search for anyone you are looking for, or to register yourself if you live in a flood affected area and there may be people looking for you, contact the Red Cross National Registration and Inquiry System on 1800 727 077.