

FIRE RECOVERY UPDATE

NUMBER 14: FRIDAY 27 APRIL



CORANGAMITE
SHIRE

RECOVERY GRANTS FOR FARMERS

Recovery grants of up to \$10,000 and concessional interest rate loans of up to \$200,000 are now available for eligible South West farmers affected by the recent fires.

The grants of up to \$10,000 can be used for recovery and reinstatement activities such as replacing livestock, damaged fences and pasture, buying fodder and repairing damaged equipment.

To apply, contact **Rural Finance on 1800 260 425** or online at ruralfinance.com.au.

The funding is being made available under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements [NDRRA].

Information about disaster assistance is available at emergency.vic.gov.au/relief or disasterassist.gov.au

FIRE SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES

The Incident Control Centre will relocate from Warrnambool to Cobden on Friday 27 April to enable the Incident Management team to be closer to the firefighting operation and affected communities.

Additional portable buildings and infrastructure have been placed at the Cobden Fire Station to enable the Incident Management Team to work effectively from that location. For any information regarding any fire suppression activities, contact the Incident Management Team at the Cobden Incident Control Centre [ICC] on 5559 2345.

WHAT IS PEAT?

Peat is an organic fuel consisting of spongy material formed by the partial decomposition of organic matter, mainly plant material, in wetlands such as swamps, bogs and lake beds.

Dried peat burns readily with a smoky flame and a characteristic odour.

The ash is powdery and light with an orange colour when burnt with a high heat, except for varieties that have a high content of inorganic matter.

Because of this vast accumulation of fuel, once ignited, smouldering peat fires can burn for weeks, months or years, despite extensive rains, weather changes or fire-fighting.

Fire crews are achieving some great results in suppressing the peat fires at Lake Cobrico and Lake Elingamite.

There is still work to be done to fully extinguish these fires, which are mainly confined to a number of hot spots.

FUNDRAISING SALE

There will be a fundraiser sale of surplus donated goods at the Cobden Uniting Church on Saturday 5 May, from 10 am. All proceeds will contribute to the Fire Recovery Appeal.

AIR MONITORING SCALED DOWN

Air monitoring results from the three Environment Protection Authority [EPA] sites at Cobden, Lake Cobrico and Lake Elingamite are returning values well below health trigger levels.

The EPA plans to decommission the air monitoring sites in the coming weeks.

The monitoring site at Cobden, which covers a larger area, will remain and continue monitoring until further notice.

Data from the monitoring stations is available on EPA's AirWatch website www.epa.vic.gov.au/EPAAirWatch

If members of the community are in any way concerned with the proposed decommissioning of the air monitoring sites, please call the ICC on 5559 2345 from Friday 27 April.

With the end of the fire danger period approaching, please consider delaying your burn off to reduce the incidence of smoke drift.

CARBON MONOXIDE MONITORS

Do you still have a CO monitor in your possession?

Please return CO monitors to Betty Robilliard at Cobden Fire Station. Phone: 5595 1395.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP

CASH DONATIONS

SOUTH WEST VICTORIAN COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND

Donate at your nearest Bendigo Bank branch or online at bendigobank.com.au/southwestvicbushfire

SALVATION ARMY GRANTS 5561 6792

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL BUSHFIRE APPEAL

Account: Rotary International District 9780 – Bushfire Appeal BSB: 035 070 Account: 179149

BLAZE AID: www.blazeaid.com.au

FEED AND FODDER FOR LIVESTOCK

Contact the Victorian Farmers Federation on **1300 882 833** or visit www.vff.org.au/support

IF YOU WANT TO DONATE LABOUR

BLAZE AID

For anyone wishing to donate time and skills with fencing please contact **Chris on 0418 745 994 [Cobden] or Vicki on 0437 817 330 [Terang]**.

If you want to donate labour or services, **contact Corangamite Shire on 5593 7100 or AceRadio on 5564 3888.**

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WELLBEING SUPPORT

For access to local emotional support services please call South West Healthcare on 5563 4000 or 5232 5180. There is free, confidential, professional support to individuals or families who have been impacted by the recent fires regardless of where you are located. No GP referral is required.

If you require confidential emotional / psychological support available 'on farm', please contact the Farmer Community Support Workers on 5563 4000 or 5232 5180.

General Practitioners can provide emotional/psychological support and can arrange additional assistance.

If you have urgent concerns about your own, or the mental health of others, please contact **Mental Health Services on 1800 808 284 [24 hours]**.

Other 24 hours Helplines include:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Kid's Helpline: 1800 55 1800

Nurse on Call: 1800 022 222

MensLine: 1300 78 9978

More helpful information is also available here:

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/trauma-reaction-and-recovery

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

A community information point is open at the Keilambete Room in the **Corangamite Shire Civic Centre at 181 Manifold Street, Camperdown**.

You are welcome to call in and find out how Corangamite Shire can help with fire recovery.

Information is also available by **calling Council on 5593 7100** or emailing shire@corangamite.vic.gov.au

You can also go online for the latest information:

www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#recovering_from_a_bushfire

Community information in relation to the peat fires is on display on noticeboards at:

- **Terang Civic Hall, 129 High Street, Terang**
- **Cobden Civic Hall, 53-55 Victoria Street, Cobden**

and at www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#community_information_newsletters

For any police matters, including relocation forms, please contact your local Police Station at Cobden, Camperdown or Terang. For emergencies ring 000. Please contact the **VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 outside operating hours**.

FENCING

To enquire about assistance with rebuilding your fences, call Blaze Aid camp leaders directly.

- **Cobden:** Chris & John Male, 0418 745 994
blazeaid.cobden@gmail.com
- **Terang:** Vicki and Malcolm McIntosh, 0437 817 330
blazeaid.terang@gmail.com

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is available to eligible fire-affected community members.

Please call VicEmergency on 1800 226 226 for more information. www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/

To apply for Clean or Restoration Grants, contact **Rural Finance on 1800 260 425** or visit <http://www.ruralfinance.com.au> for further information. Eligible primary producers are reminded to keep receipts for reimbursement purposes.

ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Contact the Australian Taxation Office with all your queries: www.ato.gov.au/tax-professionals/your-practice/tax-and-bas-agents/natural-disasters/ or call **1800 806 218** to discuss how they can assist you.

Rural Financial Counselling Service – phone 1300 735 578.

ASSISTANCE WITH STOCK & PASTURES

Injured stock – Contact **Agriculture Victoria on 5336 6721**.

Stock feed – contact the **VFF on 1300 882 833**.

Pasture recovery – talk to an extension officer from Agriculture Victoria or WestVic Dairy about your situation.

A quick reference guide is also available at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/firerecovery

Fencing and Control Line Rehabilitation – see www.ffm.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/21283/Repair-of-fences-damaged-by-bushfire-and-fire-control-line-rehabilitation-policy-2015.pdf

TREE ASSISTANCE

Please contact Corangamite Shire on 5593 7100 if you have concerns about trees. We can:

- Provide native vegetation assessments for fence re-establishment
- Undertake the removal of trees overhanging boundary fences where they are adjoining a road reserve or crown land
- Provide advice on other trees and particularly native vegetation on your property, however the removal and clean-up of trees will be the responsibility of the property owner

If you believe a tree on your property is a hazard you should ensure the area around it is avoided until it can be made safe. We can help if you are unsure about any trees on your property.

The removal of trees (particularly cypress and pine plantations on private property) is the responsibility of the property owner.

There is currently no funding for these works, however, we are working with a range of agencies to determine if financial support may be available to landowners for these works.