

FIRE RECOVERY UPDATE

NUMBER 8: WEDNESDAY 4 APRIL



CORANGAMITE
SHIRE

Emergency management agencies are exploring a number of different tactics on peat fires at Cobrico, Lake Bullen Merri, Lake Elingamite. Incident Controller Graeme Armstrong said techniques were being explored to suppress the smoke affecting communities.

“We know peat fires are extremely difficult to extinguish and we need a lot of water to do that. We are exploring the best ways to be able to pump large amounts of water into the peat area,” he said.

“Specialist Compressed Air Foam System [CAFs] trucks from Tasmania will assist with minimising smoke and carbon monoxide around the main peat fire.

“We are also trialling a new partnership with firefighting trucks that are usually stationed at airports which have capacity to pump larger quantities of water from a further distance.”

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Personal protective kits are available for people returning to properties affected by fire. They can be picked up at the Terang Health Assessment Centre at Terang Civic Hall, 129 High Street.

These kits should only be used for personal protection during property inspections. They are not for asbestos removal, property clean-up, or other labour.

Before returning to your property, check with your local emergency services that it is safe to do so.

Where possible, try to avoid taking children onto fire-damaged properties. If you do, ensure they remain protected at all times.

The personal protective kits include:

- disposable coveralls
- a disposable P2 face mask
- sturdy gloves
- a garbage bag to dispose of used protective equipment
- information sheets

It is also recommended that you wear sturdy footwear.

The information sheet *After a Fire: Returning Home Safely* is included in the kit, which details the health and safety considerations that you should know before re-entering your property.

CARBON MONOXIDE TESTING

Community members within 1km of the fire are encouraged to get their carbon monoxide levels tested regularly.

Anyone who feels unwell, or is concerned, should visit the Terang relief centre and speak with paramedics or visit your GP.

Health assessments are being provided by Ambulance Victoria at the Terang relief centre. The Camperdown Hospital now has a carbon monoxide monitor and can then test patients on site rather than sending them to Terang or Warrnambool.

WATER

Wannon Water will be inspecting all water meters on properties in the fire-affected areas to ensure that water is available to customers and to replace any fire damaged water meters.

It will automatically waive the rural water usage surcharge for the final two accounts of the 2017-18 financial year and will automatically apply a \$250 credit to the account of rural customers who had a water meter within the fire area.

Where customers have higher than normal water use either due to water being used for firefighting or due to a water leak, Wannon Water is able to provide a once-off adjustment to the account, on a case-by-case basis.

Customers requiring additional financial assistance are encouraged to contact Wannon Water which can offer assistance such as suspending account payments or establishing a regular payment arrangement. For further information, call 1300 926 666.

IF YOU NEED HELP

COMMUNITY INFORMATION POINTS

There are two Community Information Points operating in Corangamite Shire for people affected by the fires and severe weather. These centres are operating from 10 am - 4 pm every day.

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

Services available include, Department Health and Human Services [DHHS], Red Cross, Victorian Council of Churches and Rural Financial Counselling Service [Terang only]. Carbon monoxide testing is being done at Terang. Anyone with health concerns can access the Terang relief centre 24 hours a day.

IF YOU NEED FOOD OR PERSONAL ITEMS

If you need food or personal items, contact your local charity.

DHHS ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Emergency Relief and Re-establishment Assistance is available to eligible fire-affected community members.

- **Personal Hardship Assistance Payments:** up to \$540 per adult and \$270 per child (up to \$1890 per household) to help meet immediate needs, including emergency food, shelter, clothing, and personal items.
- **Emergency Re-establishment Assistance:** up to \$40,700 per eligible household affected by fire at their primary residence, for clean-up, emergency accommodation, repairs, rebuilding [a principal place of residence], and replacing some damaged contents.

DHHS staff are available at the relief centres or you can call **VicEmergency on 1800 226 226** for more information.

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FENCING

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

- **Cobden:** <http://blazeaid.com.au/cobden-2018/> Chris and John Male, 0418 745 994, blazeaid.cobden@gmail.com
- **Terang:** <http://blazeaid.com.au/laang-2018/>, Vicki and Malcolm McIntosh, 0437 817 330, blazeaid.terang@gmail.com

Fencing Disputes

Where boundary fences need replacing, normally each neighbour pays half, except on roads where the landowner is fully responsible.

If one neighbour wants a higher or better standard of fencing they pay the extra amount.

Ideally people sort it out themselves but if there is a dispute, there is a legal process that can be followed that involves issuing the neighbour with a fencing notice.

In the worst case a magistrate determines this.

For more information go to www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/justice+system/laws+and+regulation/civil+law/fencing+law+in+victoria or www.disputes.vic.gov.au/information-and-advice/fencing/frequently-asked-questions-fences

MOBILE SERVICE CENTRE

Australian Government Mobile Service Centres travel to rural and regional communities to provide personalised, face-to-face services.

Staff from the Department of Human Services travel with the Mobile Service Centres and can help with Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support and Australian Hearing payments and services.

- **Camperdown:** opposite the post office, Manifold Street, Tuesday 10 April, 9 am – 4 pm
- **Cobden:** adjacent to the Senior Citizens Hall, Parrott Street, Wednesday 11 April, 9 am – 4 pm; and 12 April, 9 am to 4 pm
- **Timboon:** Council car park, Main Street, Friday 13 April 2018, 9:30 am – 4 pm
- **Terang:** Terang Civic Hall, High Street, Monday 16 April, 9:30 am – 4 pm and Tuesday 17 April, 9 am – 4 pm
- **Skipton:** opposite Skipton Hotel, Montgomery St, Tuesday 24 April, 9:30 am – 4 pm

TOURISM AND VISITORS

Travellers are encouraged to continue visiting the South West of Victoria. It's important to continue to stay informed of warnings and incident information by checking www.emergency.vic.gov.au

FIREARMS INFORMATION

Firearms destroyed by fire to the extent of being unrecognisable, can be presented to a police station, along with a statutory declaration containing details of the firearms, the registered owner and the location where the firearm was destroyed.

HAZARDOUS TREES

As well as the risk of branches falling from fire-damaged trees, recent localised heavy rain may lead to ground instability and trees may become uprooted and fall. If people require hazardous tree removal as a result of the recent fire call Warrnambool Incident Control Centre on **5559 2500**.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP

PLEASE NO MORE FOOD OR WATER DONATIONS - WE ARE AT FULL CAPACITY.

IF YOU WISH TO HELP IN OTHER WAYS - PLEASE SEE BELOW.

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

Online at 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**.