

Community Information Newsletter

Cobden-Camperdown Peat Fires Saturday 14th April 2018

Important Information

Hazards – Trees and powerlines

The expected winds will impact trees to a greater extent than in previous days. Take particular care and diligence around all trees whilst travelling in the area.

Watch for hanging limbs being dislodged, under-burnt trees falling and boughs breaking.

Strong winds can bring down trees or branches down onto power lines and disrupt power supply. Stay away from fallen powerlines and ensure you have a charged mobile, emergency contacts and a torch. Consider food safety and the storage of food during power outages. <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-safety-information-for-consumers/food-safety-during-power-outages>

Water tanks and rainy conditions on Saturday

With rain expected on Saturday, it is important to remember that your water source may have become contaminated from debris and ash following the fires.

The most effective way to prevent contamination of your water tank if it does not have a first flush diverter, is to disconnect the downpipes to the tank. Take care if using a ladder to do this.

Do not reconnect the downpipes until the roof has been cleaned, either manually or after a flush of rain.

After the rain, if your water looks, smells or tastes unusual, then it is likely to be contaminated. Do not use the water for drinking or food preparation, and do not give it to animals.

Water that is not suitable for drinking can still be used on the garden.

If you need assistance with flushing, cleaning or refilling your tanks – contact your local council (contact details on last page)

Seasonal Algae in water supply

Wannon Water is closely monitoring the levels of naturally occurring algae in water storages. This can affect the taste and odour of both Terang and Warrnambool's drinking water supplies. The water is safe to drink but some customers may notice a temporary change in the taste and odour of their water. This is not related to recent fire activity. For further information call Wannon Water on 1300 926 666

Assistance for small business

If you are affected by the recent bushfires, the ATO can help with your lodgement program and reconstructing records. More information at <https://www.ato.gov.au/tax-professionals/your-practice/tax-and-bas-agents/natural-disasters/> or Call 1800 806 218 to discuss your circumstances and how we can assist.

Where to find community updates

Community Information in relation to the peat fires will be displayed on the front windows of the:
Cobden Civic Hall and
Terang Civic Hall
or further information can be sourced from https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#community_information_newsletters

For any Corangamite Shire Council assistance, or fire recovery enquiries - A community information point will be open **from Monday April 16th** at the Keilambete room located within the Corangamite Shire, Civic Centre, at 181 Manifold Street, Camperdown, or phone the Corangamite Shire Council on ph 5593 7100 during business hours

For any police matters including relocation forms, please contact your local Police Station at: Cobden, Camperdown or Terang

What should I do if I am concerned about my health?

With the improvements in air quality, and very low Carbon Monoxide (CO) levels the need to frequently monitor CO levels is not required. If you have any concerns, free community health assessment services are available at the following locations

Cobden Health, 5 Victoria Street Cobden
Terang Hospital, 13 Austin Avenue Terang
Camperdown Hospital, Robinson Street Camperdown
*A referral from your GP is not necessary

Help is available

It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions following a distressing event. There are many things you can do to cope and recover from trauma, and there are free local support services available to help guide you through this time.

For access to local emotional support services please call Warrnambool Community Health on **5563 4000** or Colac Area Health on **5232 5180**. They are offering 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. Website: <http://www.southwesthealthcare.com.au>

More helpful information is also available here:
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/trauma-reaction-and-recovery>

Helping children cope

For advice to help kids cope, call: Parent line Tel. **13 22 89** or the Kids Helpline Tel. **1800 55 1800**

This information is also helpful for parents
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-primary-school-age-children>

For health advice and support you can call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24, visit your GP for medical advice, visit your local health service or dial 000 (Triple Zero) in an emergency.

Warnings and Advice messages

Currently 2 Community Notifications are in place for air quality in the areas of Cobrico, Elingamite, and Elingamite North, please observe this advice.

There is a current advice message for severe weather for coastal and inland areas within the South West region.

Financial assistance

Emergency re-establishment payments are still available to eligible fire-affected community members.

These payments provide financial assistance to help alleviate personal hardship suffered as a result of the fires.

The Department of Health and Human Services continues to be at the Terang relief centre, to help community members access the assistance.

Questions & Answers

CO levels for the community have been declared no longer dangerous, but I know a few people who have tested with CO in their system. Why are you saying it's not an issue?

Carbon monoxide can build up gradually in the human body over a period of hours. It is also gradually removed from the body after exposure stops.

Carbon monoxide concentrations have been low around the fires and in Cobden for many days.

Is particulate matter now considered no longer dangerous?

PM2.5 in Cobden is considered low, but occasionally you may smell smoke for small durations. Please take any smoke-related health advice issued by emergency services.

I live within the 1 km exposure zone and have relocated my family. Is it safe for me and my children to return home?

Careful monitoring of the conditions in the area have determined that it is now safe for you to return to your home. However, it is still important for everyone to minimise exposure to smoky conditions. This is particularly the case if you or anyone you care for has a chronic health condition, such as a heart or lung condition including asthma.

Spend time indoors when there is smoke, wherever possible. If you feel unwell, visit the Community Health Assessment Centre or call NURSE-ON-CALL. In an emergency, dial 000.

Visit VicEmergency or the EPA's AirWatch website for the most up-to-date information on air quality in the area.

Carbon Monoxide monitors

With EPA confirming air quality levels have improved and are very unlikely to impact people's health, Carbon Monoxide Monitors can be returned to the Terang Community Health Assessment Centre at Terang Civic Hall, 129 High Street, Terang. Community members may also hold onto them if they wish, and return them at a later date.

Schools return

Schools will be open for day 1 of term 2 on Monday. The Education Department will ensure that health and wellbeing support will be offered to staff and students.

Aged care return

With air quality levels improving, the advice from EPA and DHHS is that residents from the Cobden Health Aged Care can begin returning from early next week.

Cobden Health Services will be working closely with the individual families of the aged care residents to plan for their safe return.

It is anticipated that their return will be staggered based on the individual health needs and risks for aged care residents.

Useful Services

After hours Terang Hospital or NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24 or seek medical advice. Call 000 in an emergency.

For Relief and Recovery Information visit <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief#southe>
[west fires march 2018](https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief#southe)

LifeLine: 13 11 14
MensLine: 1300 789 978
Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
1800 Respect: 1800 737 732

EPA Air Watch visit

www.epa.vic.gov.au/epairwatch

Hazardous Trees

Contact: Corangamite Shire Council 5593 7100

Blazeaid:

www.blazeaid.com.au

Agriculture Victoria (affected stock)

Contact: 5336 6721

Wannon Water (to flush, clean and refill your tanks)

Contact: 1300 926 666

Corangamite Shire

Contact: 5593 7100

www.corangamite.vic.gov.au

Moyne Shire Council

Contact: 1300 656 564

<http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au>

Southern Grampian Shire

Contact: 5573 0444

<http://www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au>

NURSE-ON-CALL

Ph: 1300 60 60 24 or visit your GP for medical advice, or dial Triple Zero in an emergency.