



Ararat Rural City

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

GRAMPIANS NATIONAL PARK, BELLFIELD FIRE UPDATE

TUESDAY, 12TH MARCH 2024

DEMOLITION OF BUSHFIRE-DAMAGED HOMES

If your home was damaged by the bushfires in late February 2024 and it is not covered by insurance, we can demolish it for free. This means that you can focus your efforts and resources on rebuilding.

You can register for demolition if:

- your home or rental property is in an eligible council area (see list below)
- your home or rental property was affected by the bushfires in late February 2024, and
- you don't have bushfire insurance or you are underinsured for bushfire.

What happens after I register?

A member of the team will call you to complete your registration and book in a site inspection.

A qualified contractor will visit your property to assess the site. They will make a plan to undertake any work that is eligible under the program. This plan could also include work to:

- allow access to the site if needed
- remove damaged trees or other hazards that could make it unsafe for the contractor.

If parts of your property are important to you, it is important that you let the contractor know early. They can then consider this in their planning. Due to safety on site and the scope of the program, they may not be able to accommodate all requests.

The program does not include partial demolition, or any rebuild or repair work.

The contractor will submit their plan to us. They will meet you on site again to agree the scope of works. If you want to go ahead, you will need to agree to the scope of work in a timely manner, including making time to meet the contractor on site.

REGISTER FOR DEMOLITION

Fill out the form below or call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 to register.

EMERGENCY WATER

Seeking support for tanks and troughs for emergency water?

There is two options to try, however both options will require names and addresses and an indication of sizes needed. These processes are not guaranteed but worth a try.

- Lodge a request on www.GIVIT.org.au
- Salvation Army - email Adam.clark@salvationarmy.org.au

Chat with our team at the Recovery Centre for more information.

MEDIA COVERAGE & ADVERTISING TRIGGERING TRAUMA

If you witness a traumatic and distressing event like the images in the advertising, you may have a strong emotional or physical reaction. This is completely normal and there are things you can do to recover.

If you have lived through a major catastrophe or disaster, you are more likely to re-experience grief and strong emotional reactions when you are reminded of it.

Seeing images in the media and in advertising can be an emotional trigger and remind you of the traumatic event – even if the subject matter is different.

Signs you may still be affected can include you reliving the traumatic event, or feeling angry, afraid or even numb. Or maybe you will find yourself struggling at work, with study or in your personal relationships.

Please do not ignore the warning signs. The sooner you receive treatment, the better the outcome is likely to be. See a doctor for a mental health assessment.

If you are concerned about someone you know, you can encourage them to seek help or make your own appointment with a doctor to discuss your concerns and find out what help is available.

Visit the Better Health Channel for more information about dealing with trauma.

General telephone counselling services can also provide advice:

Lifeline - 13 11 14

GriefLine - 1300 845 745

BeyondBlue - 1300 224 636



BOB'S ARMY

(Lions Club volunteers)

SATURDAY 23 MARCH

Teams of volunteers will be deployed with chainsaws to properties who have registered prior to this date.

Please register your interest via the ARCC Pomonal Recovery Centre or 5355 0200.

The teams will work for the morning and then return to the rec reserve for a BBQ.





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HOW TO TELL IF BUSHFIRE HAS CONTAMINATED YOUR WATER SUPPLY

The signs of water contamination include your water looking, smelling or tasting unusual. Do not use the water for drinking or food preparation. Do not give water to animals.

Boiling water does not remove fire retardants or other chemicals from your water.

- Do not reconnect tanks until:
- the rooftop is clean
- the bushfire has passed
- the smoke has subsided.

You can also get general advice from the Department of Health in relation to the following:

- bushfires and your private drinking water supply
- using rainwater as drinking water
- After a fire: private drinking water and water tank safety - translated information.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ASBESTOS DURING AND AFTER A FIRE?

During a fire, the amount of asbestos fibres released into the air is relatively low. Air monitoring during and after fires has confirmed this.

After a fire, pieces of asbestos cement materials can become brittle and may release fibres if they are disturbed while cleaning up.

Where it's suspected that materials containing asbestos are likely to be present, cleanup should be conducted in line with WorkSafe requirements.

My home burnt down. How do I know if the building rubble contains asbestos? What should I do to protect myself while inspecting building rubble?

Asbestos cement used to be commonly used in the construction of residential buildings. As a result, approximately a third of Australian homes may contain some form of asbestos.

A total ban on the manufacture, use, reuse, importation, transportation, storage and sale of all forms of asbestos came into force in 2003. Houses built after 2003 should not contain asbestos.

We recommend you do not inspect burnt building rubble. If you do decide to inspect building rubble you should wet it down to prevent dust. You should also wear personal protective equipment (called PPE, it typically consists of dust mask, gloves and coveralls).

More information is available from asbestos.vic.gov.au

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO PROTECT YOUR WATER TANK AFTER A BUSHFIRE

If you did not disconnect your downpipes before the bushfire passed, disconnect them as soon as possible. You can also: activate the first flush diverters block the inlet to the downpipes with waxed cardboard boxes or thick plastic.

Before reconnecting or opening the inlet to your downpipes, you should either: hose off your roof catchment area clean or wait for a good period of rain to flush and prevent contaminants from entering your tank.

Always take care when cleaning your roof manually. Finding a professional cleaner is a good option.

Before reusing your water for drinking purposes, contact your local council for advice.

PERSONAL WELLBEING

It is normal to have strong reactions following a distressing or frightening event and people can experience a range of physical, mental, emotional and behavioural reactions.

There are a number of support services available (listed below) to assist you and your family recover from the strong emotional or physical reactions you may be experiencing.

If at any time you are worried about your mental health or the mental health of a loved one, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or contact:

- your doctor, local community health centre
- a counsellor or psychologist
- Parentline 13 22 89 or the Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- Nurse-On-Call 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)

Australian Psychological Society Referral Service 1800 333 497

For information about symptoms associated with stress following an emergency, visit https://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#current_events

Pomonal Fire Recovery Update

Pomonal Recovery Centre opening hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9am - 3pm
The council recovery team is available via
phone outside these hours
on 5355 0200

BLAZE AID BASE CAMP AT BUANGOR

www.blazeaid.com.au/buangor

blazeaid.com.au

**VOLUNTEERS HELPED
REBUILD THIS FENCE**



BlazeAid
Helping Communities Rebuild
After Natural Disasters



About Us


BlazeAid is a volunteer organisation that helps rural property owners clear and rebuild fences after damage by natural disasters.


- We deploy teams of volunteers to work with property owners to clear and rebuild rural fences
- Team leaders are experienced fences
- We have our own equipment and fencing trailers
- Property owners supply materials, BlazeAid supplies the labour

Contact Us

Melissa Jones CEO 0436316955

Debbie Buttler National Business Manager 0418990267

 admin@blazeaid.com.au

 www.blazeaid.com.au

 PO Box 73, Kilmore Victoria 3764

To register for assistance, please email admin@blazeaid.com.au or call into your local basecamp



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TRAUMA AFFECTS THE WHOLE FAMILY IN DIFFERENT WAYS

When a family is affected by a crisis, everyone in the family will react in a different way. Understanding distress reactions and their effect on family dynamics can help the family to cope. Don't hesitate to seek professional help if you think your family is struggling to recover.

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-families

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-children-two-to-five-years

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-teenagers-common-reactions

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-teenagers-tips-for-parents



**NATIONAL
DEBT
HELPLINE**
1800 007 007
ndh.org.au

get back on track with **free** financial counselling

I'm feeling
overwhelmed!

How can I pay
these debts?

Speak with someone

Call us for **FREE** advice on how to manage your debts.



1800 007 007



Project of Lions Clubs



SINCE 2006
15 Years

Need for Feed
AUSTRALIA

needforfeed.org

Supporting
our farmers and
rural communities in
times of need since 2006

FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION: VISIT arat.vic.gov.au/pomonal-fire-recovery

SOCIALS





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MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS

Partners in Wellbeing is a free and confidential helpline available seven days a week. Speak to trained financial counsellors, business advisers and wellbeing coaches for confidential 1:1 support. Call 1300 375 330.

www.vic.gov.au/Mental-health-and-wellbeing-support

Partners in Wellbeing

Support for your mental health and wellbeing.



If you are not coping or have been feeling distressed, anxious or down over several weeks, help is available through Partners in Wellbeing service.

The **FREE SERVICE** offers one-on-one support to help you improve your wellbeing, develop strategies to cope and provide emotional support when and as you need it.

Work out what is wrong

Working with a Wellbeing Coach, you explore what is causing your stress or anxiety and help you gain clarity on your thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Get things under control

Through coaching and practical advice, your Wellbeing Coach will help you find strategies to manage stress, anxiety and improve your wellbeing and resilience.

Get on with life

We help you to identify people in your life, support services, and other resources to draw on during times of stress. If required, a Wellbeing Coach will assist you in linking with other support services in your local community.

Keep Connected

We keep in regular contact with you to provide emotional support, practical assistance and help you use the strategies you have identified to manage your stress, anxiety and improve your wellbeing.

Small Business Support

If you're a small business owner, you can receive FREE and confidential specialist support which includes business advisory and financial counselling.



Eligibility

To be eligible for this service, **you need to be 16 years or over** and:

- experiencing increased life stressors and your usual coping strategies are not working
- noticing signs of anxiety and/or depression that have lasted more than a few weeks, such as:
 - low mood i.e. feeling down
 - feeling overwhelmed and unsafe
 - low energy
 - feelings of hopelessness
 - fear, nervousness or worrying
 - avoidance of social situations
 - thoughts of self-harm or harm to others.
 - are not currently using a community mental health psychosocial support service.

Carers may experience these challenges in their own right in addition to providing care to a loved one.

Get started or refer someone

Call **1300 375 330** to contact the service in your area.

If you would like to refer someone you know, you must first discuss this with them and have their consent to make the referral on their behalf.

We encourage referrals from people who identify as LGBTIQ, culturally diverse, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, veterans and people experiencing homelessness.



Contact Partners in Wellbeing



Phone **1300 375 330**

Live chat **available online**

Monday to Friday 9am-10pm
Weekends 9am-5pm

Free wellbeing support

We provide phone support to any Victorian aged 16 and up, including people who identify as LGBTIQ+, multicultural, Veterans, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people and international students. There are no Medicare or visa requirements to receive support.

For more information visit www.partnersinwellbeing.org.au

@PartnersInWellbeingFB
 @partners_in_wellbeing

About Partners in Wellbeing

Partners in Wellbeing is funded by the Victorian Government and is being delivered by EACH, Neami National and the Australian Community Services Organisation (ACSO) across Victoria.



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we work on and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION: VISIT ararat.vic.gov.au/pomonal-fire-recovery

SOCIALS

