

Friday 15th May 2009

Information for communities affected by the Redesdale Fire:

Barfold / Baynton / Glenhope / Redesdale / Sidonia

Thankyous: there have been many generous donations since the fires. As well as support from Regional Lions for fencing [mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter] these funds have been received by Mount Alexander Shire on behalf of the Community:

\$672	Cup Cake Sale by Sacred Heart College, Kyneton
\$500	Lions Club of Kyneton
\$500	Lions Club of New Zealand
\$8,200	Bowling Club, Kyneton

Bushfire Appeal Funds – increased eligibility: you are encouraged to look closely at page 2 as there are some changes to eligibility for grants.

Community Recovery Committee (CRC) – the next meeting will be Wednesday 27th May 2009, at 5pm at **Baynton** Hall. Refreshments are available from 4.45. *[not 6pm as stated in last newsletter]*. CRC Meetings happen about every three weeks. Would you like a different time or venue for meetings? For example, would you attend a meeting at a weekend, or on a different evening? Please let Ian know your preference: 5422 0337.

The Community Recovery Working Groups are meeting regularly – details below.

- **Community Wellbeing:** The group is continuing to send out the Redesdale Fundraiser funds – and cheques for \$300 are been sent. If you are a fire-affected resident and haven't applied for your \$300, you need to complete and return an application form that went out with newsletter #9, or contact Simone - 0421 458 891. For details of next meeting, and for information, call Susan on 0400 054 971
- **Fencing:** Vouchers from the Regional Lions Clubs are now being distributed. Thankyou to Alan and marg Crilly who visited the group last Tuesday. Alan is Regional Governor and his work was acknowledged at the meeting.

If you have materials but need help to put up fences, please contact Lyal Metcalf (volunteer co-ordinator) on 54 234 135. If you are an experienced fencer and you can offer a day or two to supervise a team of volunteers, please also contact Lyal. The Fencing Working Group meets again on **Tuesday 19th May**, 12.30pm, Barfold Hall.

More information and minutes of the CRC meetings, and its Working Groups, are available by calling Ian on 5422 0337 or 0417 147 058, or via email i.lillington@macedon-ranges.vic.gov.au

Do you need a someone to sign **Statutory Declarations**? One for the Case Managers, Wendy Droney is a JP and can sign Statutory Declarations for you at Barfold Hall on Thursday mornings, 10am-12noon.

Bushfire Appeal Funds – increased eligibility: you are encouraged to look closely at the following as it may be possible to get a grant that you were not eligible for before. *If you are unsure about applying, ask your Case Manager for help. Case Managers based at the Community Health Services in Castlemaine [5479 1000] and Kyneton [5421 1666] have information about all of the grants available via the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund.*

- **Rural Properties Recovery Assistance grant** (\$5,000) *includes fencing*, available for properties of 5 hectares or more in the bushfire affected areas. The amount and sources of your income are not relevant. This grant is to assist individual rural landowners in bushfire affected areas who have suffered hardship and who have an increased need due to the damage or destruction of rural and farming property infrastructure.
- **Primary Producers Grants** (\$5,000 up to \$20,000). Over 50% of the income has to come from the farm (in a normal year) and the applicant has to spend the majority of his/her time working on the farm. If you can show that because of the drought, the farmer had to take an off-farm job to survive, then RFC may allow you this grant, but the farm has had to show it has been a commercial operation in its own right. You can apply for the Rural Property Grant if you were knocked back for the PP Grant. However, you cannot get both grants for the \$5K.

Other grants:

- A \$50,000 grant is available to homeowners whose principal place of residence was destroyed. A grant of up to \$15,000 (with a possible further needs-based payment of up to \$16,000) is also available for repairs to damaged primary residences. Tenants are eligible to receive grants of up to \$15,000 for home contents if their rental property was destroyed in the fires.
- Initial Home Dislocation Payment: families who lost their principal place of residence or were unable to return home for more than a week are eligible to receive a grant of up to \$10,000.
- Tools of Trade Payment: a \$5,000 grant to assist people who have lost equipment vital to their trade and employment and are employees working for a registered business.

You can find also out more about these grants at

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal/home> or call 1800 255 925.

Stephen Ryan, Rural Services Officer from Centrelink, will be at Barfold Hall on Thursday mornings 10am – 12, throughout May. Stephen can provide information about financial assistance that is available, answer questions and assist in making applications. It is not necessary to make an appointment. Stephen is also available for home visits and can be contacted on 5430 5941 or 0414 947 602. And Centrelink's "**Drought Bus**" is in Heathcote on 1st June, 10 to 4.30, at the RSL Hall, 127 High St. The main focus is around Drought Assistance for Farmers and Small Businesses, and they are able to deal with any Centrelink or Medicare enquiry. For more info - Andrew Gregory, Co-ordinator, 0438 27 99 69.

Waterways fencing grants: a new program has been announced to assist landholders with the recovery, protection and maintenance of waterways affected by bushfires from the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA). Priorities include:

- areas on waterways where there has been previous CMA investment;
- areas on waterways contributing to river health where there has not been previous CMA investment;
- New works to establish assets or activities contributing to river health.

Other areas where there is a threat to the health and/or management of waterways will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To obtain an Expression Of Interest form and copy of the guidelines please contact the North Central CMA on 5448 7124. For more information, please contact: Adrian Martins on 5440 1851.

These newsletters are now on available on the following webpages:

http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=754&h=0 and

http://www.macedon-ranges.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=1961&h=0

