

Community Recovery News for the Redesdale Area Fires

Number 33 — Thursday 10th December 2009

Christmas gifts for local children: CentaCare and the Community Wellbeing Working Group, with support from Curves and Toyworld are distributing donated Christmas gifts to local children at the Barfold Hall on Thursday 17th December between 2.30pm and 6pm. The gifts will be delivered to the Barfold Hall unwrapped to make it easier to select gifts that best match children's age / gender / interests. Wrapping paper, tape, scissors and gift tags will be available at the Barfold Hall for parents / caregivers to use.

Any parent / caregiver in the local community who is finding it hard to 'make ends meet' is welcome to access the donated gifts - this service is not restricted to people who have a 'blue card'. This service will operate on an honesty system ... **parents and caregivers are requested to self-assess their needs, and to select only one gift per child in their immediate care.** There will be no records kept as to who accesses this service. For more information, please contact Deb Simpson at Centacare on 5438 1300.

School Holiday Program: Redesdale Hall, Monday 21st December to Friday 29th January 2010 for Prep to Year 8. Bookings for the Summer School Holiday Program will be taken by YMCA Victoria until **Friday 11th December**. If you wish to book or make changes to your booking after the 11th of December you can do this via the Program Coordinator at Redesdale from 8.00am Monday 21st December. Bookings through **YMCA Victoria**, 9403 5090 or Facsimile: 9403 5100, or bushfire.programs@ymca.org.au and www.victoria.ymca.org.au/holidayprograms

Fire Ready Rural Women: one impact of drought and climate change is increased fire risk. Are you prepared? The CFA and the Rural Women Leading Change Program invite rural women to a focus group meeting at Barfold Hall, Wednesday 16th December, 11am to 2pm. We want to know what issues rural women face regarding increased fire risk. We also want you to tell us how you can be better informed and supported to manage fire risks. And it is a great opportunity to learn what other women are planning to do. A light lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Ellen White on 0448 533 032 or Maxine Sleep on 0400 381 276 for catering numbers. If you cannot make it but would like to contribute, please call.



Fencing Program extended: Karl Metcalf will be continuing as Fencing Co-ordinator for six weeks from 18th January to late February 2010. This will allow work to continue on repair and replacement of boundary fences. Requests or enquiries can go to Karl on 0437 27 40 50. Please leave a message if Karl is out of range.

Farewell Trevor Pollard and thanks to Brian Anderson: a big thankyou to Trevor who is leaving for a well-earned 'retirement' at Christmas. [He'll be working on his farm!]. Trevor has been working on recovery in the Redesdale area since 8th February and his skills, support and cheerful manner will be missed. There is a farewell for Trevor on Tuesday 22nd December at 4pm at Barfold Hall and we will also be thanking Brian Anderson (CVA team leader) that day. Brian's volunteer teams have done great work in the area over the last 6 months, and are now moving to other districts. Please come along on the 22nd if you have been involved in the fencing recovery work in any way.

Barfold Hall Drop-in: Thursday drop-in at Barfold Hall will resume in early 2010. Notice of drop-in dates for the new year will be given in a future edition of this newsletter.

Women Gathering After The Fires: women in the community affected by the fires are invited to attend a 1-2 day workshop in Bendigo in March 2010. They then may be eligible for funding to run a Women Gathering {WG} group in their own community. For more information, contact Kirra [details at end of newsletter], or Elaine Atkinson, one of the Case Management Team on 5479 1000.

Looking After Ourselves: On Saturday 28th November a workshop and lunch took place at Redesdale Hall. Christine Nixon [chair of the Bushfire Recovery Authority] was in attendance and answered questions from participants. The Workshop was led by local psychologist and facilitator, Dr Susie Burke, who is part of the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) Panel on Bushfire Recovery. If you would like to take part in a similar event, please contact Ian – details at end of newsletter.

Deadlines for Grant Applications: the Bushfire Supplementary Grant for Primary Producers and Small Businesses closes 31st Dec 2009. Applications must include either receipts or quotes for clean-up works and/or restoration needed to restore the business. AND Primary Producers Repair and Restoration Payment (recently announced by the Government through the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund) also closes 31st Dec 2009. Late applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, primary producers are urged to get their applications in by the set date. Once again, receipts and/or quotes are needed to be included with the application. For more information about these grants, contact the Rural Finance Corporation in Bendigo on 54482600.

The Department of Human Services is reminding all bushfire affected people that applications for the temporary living expenses grant and the re-establishment grant are due to close on 31 December, 2009. For information talk with your case manager or visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency/current-events/bushfire/financial-assistance/major-grant

Rice straw for erosion control and cover for still-bare soils is available to any fire-affected property courtesy of the Sunday Creek-Dry Creek Landcare Group near Seymour. Rice straw does not harbour pasture weeds and it holds together as a mat. It will decompose within a year. The straw is at Clare and Win's place in Glenhope. The bales are 8' x 4' x 4' so if you want a whole bale, you will need to bring a large tractor with forks. If you want part of a bale it can be hand loaded onto your trailer. Please phone Clare beforehand on 54 234 152.



Free Counselling Services available:

- Nerida Melsmith, is a Grief and Loss specialist and can talk with anyone in relation to their fire experiences. Nerida is available on Wednesday and Thursday each week – including at Barfold Hall on Thursdays from 10am – 12. Or call Nerida on 0415 060 565.
- Bushfire EAR - immediate counselling, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1300 78 99 78. The Bushfire Psychological Counselling Voucher Program gives residents six free counselling sessions if you have received grants paid by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund. For more information, see the DHS website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal
- Castlemaine District Community Health Service (5470 1000) and Cobaw Community Health Service in Kyneton (54 211 666). Unlimited sessions.

Pet Emergency Evacuation Kit: the RSPCA and some vets are now providing a recommended list such as - food for each pet, small water bowl, etc. Please contact the RSPCA www.rspca.com.au or your vet.

Redesdale Farmers Regenerate and Improve Fire-Affected Pastures: Local farmers gathered at Ray Shea's property on Watchbox Road to learn about pasture management and regeneration after fire. Ray said one of the main issues was the introduction of several weed species that he had not seen before, and the lower productivity of his phalaris-based pastures. DPI agronomist Kate Sargeant answered many questions about the control of different weeds, and provided a step-by-step process for re-establishing pastures, as outlined in the DPI fact sheet "A simple guide to perennial pasture establishment". This fact sheet is available in the fire recovery section on the DPI website. Ray took the group to see a demonstration of phalaris establishment on a very rocky hill, which he had sown using his Rock-hopper seeder. The rock-hopper showed great promise in its ability to sow in previously non-arable, rocky and hilly areas of land. For further information on pasture establishment and recovery after fire, contact Kate Sargeant at DPI 5735 4352.

Australia's Open Garden Scheme is inviting communities in bushfire-affected areas of Victoria to submit their ideas, plans and dreams for community-based garden projects. The Victorian Bushfire Grants Fund has been established by the Open Garden Scheme to support Victorian communities affected by the bushfires of summer 2009. \$80,000 is available for the re-establishment or refurbishment of community gardens, parks and other public places in these communities. Grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 are available. Applications are invited from community groups and not-for-profit organisations. Schools and educational institutions are eligible to apply. Visit: <http://www.opengarden.org.au/grants.html>

Recovery Staff Contact Details:

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Newsletters are also available at:

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





THE MOBILE LIBRARY'S BIG THREE DAYS OUT

The Goldfields Library Corporation's mobile library is visiting the space next to the Redesdale hall from Tuesday 12th January – Thursday 14th January for 'The Mobile Library's Big Three Days Out'.

There'll be a marquee with espresso coffee plus cold drinks and icy-poles. Explore the book mobile and be amazed at the range of library resources now available. Or come and enjoy the fabulous (and free!) programmed events.

Tuesday 12th January:

11.00 am: Pete the Plumber Rides the Water Cycle

Listen to Pete's wondrous watery tales and help him make music with his water-pipe inspired instruments. Suitable for all ages.

Midday: Juggling workshop with Pete the Plumber

All equipment supplied. Suitable for all ages.

Wednesday 13th January:

10.30 am: Zine making workshop with Simone Howell.

What's a zine anyway? Come and find out. It's easy, creative and fun. Simone is an award-winning young adult fiction author and her film scripts have been made into award-winning films. Suitable for secondary students.

1.30 pm: High Literary Tea with Carmel Bird: Writing Your Life

Carmel is a renowned author and will be reading from her inspirational book: *Writing The Story of Your Life*, followed by an informal discussion about memoir writing. Fresh scones and cups of tea will be provided.

Thursday 14th January:

11.00 am: Giving Voice to the Landscape by Annie Stewart

Be enchanted by Annie's stories as she gives voice to the landscape through her interactive stories that range from Goriolla the Rainbow Snake to tales from the Goldfields and more. Suitable for all ages.

This Mobile Library's Big Three Days Out is a collaborative project between the Goldfield's Library Corporation and the Bushfire Recovery Health & Well Being Committee.

For enquiries, phone Julie Gittus, Outreach Officer at the Bendigo Library on 5449 2786. See you there!

