

Newsletter 3 - 16th March 2016

The City of Ballarat is committed to working with its community to respond and recover from the Mount Bolton fire.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Currently the Arboriculture Section have the following happening in the Mt. Bolton area

- *Contractors are continuing to remove dangerous & damaged trees along Eastern Peake & Sand Pit roads, this may take 3-4 more weeks.
- *Trees that are interfering with the re-instatement of farm fences are being removed to allow Blaze-aid to carry out this work.
- *All trees for removal are required to fit within the exemption categories under the removal of native vegetation panning scheme 52.17 and are being inspected by the Councils Arboriculture team.
- *The arboriculture team will continue to monitor roadside trees for the next few months to re-assess any trees that may not recover from the fire
- *Contractors are removing a number of fire affected Pine trees on top of Mt. Bolton itself to help reduce any future fire danger.



RELIEF CENTRE

The Relief Centre is now closed.

If you require further assistance please contact the Recovery Manager on 0447 109 877

PERMITS TO BURN

Burning of stubble/grass for farming practices has commenced within the surrounding.

Controlled burning is conducted by permits and have strict conditions set by the CFA and Council. Permits must be complied with and are monitored by Council, Police and CFA.

Some of these burn offs are very close to the area of the fire. Burning off will produce significant smoke in the area but there should be no cause for concern

PLANNING PERMITS

The City of Ballarat has nominated one point of contact for all planning related matters.

Leah Clark from Statutory Planning Department can be contacted on 5320 5149 or

leahclark@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Leah can assist you with where to go from here and can meet you at The Phoenix Building in Ballarat by prior appointment.

RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING

Rural Financial Counselling provides free, confidential support to those affected by the Mt Bolton fire. Contact Brian Gardiner on 0427 094 675 for your free financial advice.

Removal of Native Vegetation

Public land

As part of the recovery operation, the City of Ballarat have engaged qualified arborists to inspect vegetation on public land that poses an immediate risk to humans and property.

Any vegetation (native or exotic), which is assessed as posing an immediate risk is being removed. However, due to the scale of the fires this will take some time.

Consideration is being given to retain standing and fallen trees where they do not pose a current or future risk to people and infrastructure (e.g. roads and fences) in accordance with the Ballarat Planning Schemes.

Private Land

In Victoria, under clause 52.17 of the Ballarat Planning Schemes a planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop standing native vegetation (dead or alive), unless:

*The native vegetation is dead and has a diameter less than 40cm at a height 1.3m above the ground

*The native vegetation presents an immediate risk of personal injury or damage to property and only that part of vegetation which presents the immediate risk is removed, destroyed or lopped

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* To enable the construction of a fence on a boundary between properties in different ownership consultation that was constructed before 10 September 2009

*In the case of a road this will either be the local council or Vicroads (Please note: The combined maximum width of clearing permitted either side of the fence is 4 metres)

* Operation or maintenance of an existing fence on your land (Please note: The combined maximum width of clearing permitted either side of the fence is 4 metres)

* Pruning or lopping for maintenance only and no more than 1/3 of the foliage is removed from any individual plant. This exemption does not apply to the pruning or lopping of the trunk of a tree or shrub.

Below are some useful links that outline further information relating to native vegetation:

Clause 52.17: <http://goo.gl/Sp500r>

Native vegetation exemptions fact sheet: <http://goo.gl/EgEs1z>

To assist in the retention of soils, to minimise erosion and to the return of native animals it is advisable that standing and fallen trees are retained where ever possible.

If residents are seeking further information regarding the removal of native or exotic vegetation on private property please contact:

City of Ballarat Planning Department on 5320 5500

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on 136 186



SCRAP METAL BINS

There are still large skip bins located in the area, these are for scrap metal only. Feel free to use these to dispose of old fencing wire, steel framing or roofing iron etc. . We are currently investigating the possibility of obtaining larger bins.

- ◆ Eastern Peake Road, 1.4km from Addington Road
- ◆ Next to the Glendaruel Fire Station on Kinnersley Road Glendaruel.
- ◆ Mt Bolton Road, 2.5 km from Waubra-Talbot Road just as you enter the bush area.

BLAZE AID

Blaze Aid is still working in the area. If you are needing their assistance could you please contact Jainee on 0429 117 701 by Friday the 18th of March.

STOCK FEED

Stock feed is available from Kate Serrurier at 173 Addington Road. A machine will be on site to load from 5 pm. Any queries regarding the pick up of feed please contact Noel on 5343 2227.



REJUVENATING PASTURES AND PADDOCKS

In response to questions about rejuvenating paddocks and pastures for crops or the return of animals, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources has provided the following links to information.

Growers focus on protecting cropping soils after fire - <http://www.grdc.com.au/Media-Centre/Media-News/South/2015/12/Growers-focus-on-protecting-cropping-soils-after-fire>

Paddock Practice: Managing base soils following a fire <http://grdc.com.au/Media-Centre/Media-News/South/2015/12/Managing-bare-soils-following-a-fire>

Case Study with Steve Whillas <http://grdc.com.au/Media-Centre/Media-News/South/2015/12/Outside-advice-helped-following-devastating-blaze>

City of Ballarat

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TRAUMA & SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN—GENERAL INFO

Summary

For children, a distressing or frightening experience can challenge their sense of security and the predictability of their world. Children's responses to these experiences depend on a wide range of factors.

Children will 'fill in the blanks'

It's a natural reaction to want to shield children from harsh realities. However, keeping a child 'in the dark' doesn't protect them from the emotional impact of a distressing or frightening event. It may even make it worse for them as children are keen observers and will realise that something is wrong, even if no one in the family talks to them about it.

Children's reactions change with age

Every child reacts differently and typical reactions change with age. Your child may not react the way you expect. Depending on their age and stage, they may not have acquired the skills to articulate their thoughts and feelings to those around them. Sometimes, distress reactions surface weeks or even months after the event.

Some common reactions include:

- * Sleep problems such as not wanting to go to bed at night or nightmares
- * Changes in eating habits

- * Going back to behaviours from earlier developmental stages
- * Fear at being separated from their parents or carers
- * Changes in their relationships with siblings
- * Needing to 'relive' the trauma
- * Mysterious physical ailments, such as headaches and stomach aches

When to seek professional help

It may help to seek professional advice if:

- * The family as a unit is finding it difficult to cope with the impacts and demands of the events and the follow-on
- * The child's reactions and behaviours are intense, do not settle in a week or two or become worse, or if new ones develop
- * The child talks about harming themselves .

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

