

Bushfire recovery

Community bulletin

Wednesday 1 September 2010



Nillumbik welcomes State's response

Nillumbik Shire Council has welcomed the final response by the Victorian Government to the Bushfires Royal Commission report in particular the \$38 million partnership support package for all Councils announced by the Premier.

Nillumbik Shire Mayor, Councillor Ken King said that local government had overwhelmingly agreed it has a key role to play in local emergency management planning, but needed adequate funding support to fulfil its responsibilities.

"The involvement of Council in putting the recommendations from the Royal Commission into action cannot be under estimated. There is still a lot of detail that needs to be sorted out and the funding will be shared across all Councils in Victoria. These changes will have an impact on many different areas but particularly on planning, fire prevention works and the management of bushfires in general.

"There will be an increased workload for Council and the funding announced will assist by boosting our capacity to continue to work closely with the CFA and other agencies to improve local emergency planning and safety options for our community.

"The funding for Neighbourhood Safer Places and other last resort options was a concern to Council and it is pleasing to see some allowance has been made for that in the announcements made last week. We continue to work with CFA in relation to Township Protection Plans.

"Council will now start working on the details such as any expanded council responsibilities for community sheltering options, planning for evacuation and vulnerable people, and a range of land use planning roles.

"\$19 million has been allocated for an integrated building and planning hazard mapping and risk response framework which will have a major impact on planning matters for our Shire. Following any changes that will take place Councils will need new or additional expertise and so welcomes the \$2.7 million for extra training.

"With Parliament next week expected to pass amendments to the Electricity Safety Act requiring councils to identify hazard trees near electrical lines, we will be taking guidance from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to clarify details such as definitions, liability, transition processes, resourcing, and the development of plans and procedures.

"We will continue to work with the MAV about the delivery of this work and will assist with joint working groups to ensure effective delivery."

For full details of the State Government's response to the Royal Commission visit www.premier.vic.gov.au.

Community Meeting about St Andrews Men's Shed

Thursday 16 September, 7pm-8.30pm
St Andrews Community Centre

Nillumbik's Bushfire Recovery Community Projects Officer Colin James will lead a discussion about the Men's Shed program in general and discuss ideas and opportunities for The Men's Shed at St Andrews.

For more information please contact Colin on 9433 3720 or email colin.james@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.



Free green waste drop-off for the 2010-2011 bushfire season

Recycling and Recovery Centre, Plenty

Friday 5 November to Monday 8 November 2010
Friday 12 November to Monday 15 November 2010
Friday 19 November to Monday 22 November 2010
Friday 26 November to Monday 29 November 2010
Saturday 11 December and Sunday 12 December 2010
Saturday 15 January 2011 and Sunday 16 January 2011

Municipal Site, Kangaroo Ground

Saturday 11 December and Sunday 12 December 2010
Saturday 15 January 2011 and Sunday 16 January 2011



Who's who at the Hub

There are a number of new Council and agency staff based at the Hurstbridge Hub working on bushfire recovery. Here's a brief outline of who they are and what they can offer.

Administrative and individual assistance

Suzanne Rouvray and Heather Stewart
Suzanne and Heather provide administrative support to the staff at the Hub and to the Community Recovery Committees and Steering Groups. Get in touch with Suzanne if you need any help or referral to other bushfire support services. Heather works primarily to support the Strathewen CRC.

Volunteer Coordination

Emma Short and Miriam Kruh
Emma works collaboratively with Nillumbik's Fencing Co-ordinators Julie and Alex Sutherland to ensure enough volunteers are available for fencing and new offers of help are matched to the needs of fire-impacted residents.

Over the past year much of the on-the-ground support for volunteer work has been done by Sue Aldred and Miriam Kruh, which has resulted in some great practical assistance for residents throughout the Shire.

Bushfire Recovery Community Projects Officer, Colin James

Colin has come to the team to facilitate a range of support activities for men in fire-affected communities.

Community Recovery Officer

Gail Cumming
Gail works with the community development team at the Hub and supports the Strathewen and St Andrews CRCs as executive officer. Gail is also involved in implementing the community projects funded by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund. Please contact the Hurstbridge Hub on 9433 3270 or email hurstbridgehub@nillumbik.vic.gov.au if you would like further information about bushfire recovery.

Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, Maria Romanin
Maria is Nillumbik's VBRRA Community Engagement Officer and has been central to assisting our communities to secure funding from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund for a range of community projects. Maria is also helping our communities to implement projects as they are funded.

The Salvation Army Crossroads Network

Susan Connors
Susan is a family and community worker and is based at the Hub on Wednesday mornings from 9am to 1pm. She can be contacted directly on 0458 761 600 or by email at susan.connors@aus.salvationarmy.org. Susan can provide access to a range of support services for individuals and families.

Bushfire Recovery Arts Officer

Cath Rutten
Cath is your contact for advice and support with regards to any artistic activities. She can support you in the pursuit of funding, provide advice on the logistics and promotion of an event or help you to take that brilliant idea from concept to reality.

Community Development Officer

Holly Teagle
Holly works in St Andrews, Strathewen and Christmas Hills supporting and implementing community-led recovery projects. If you have ideas about what is needed for your community please contact Holly.

Youth Development Officer (Bushfire)

Ele Jenkins
Ele is working with bushfire-affected youth across Nillumbik, setting up programs and sourcing funding for new ideas and events. Ele is very keen to hear from you if you have any ideas about what can be done to support Nillumbik youth.

Please contact the Hurstbridge Hub on 9433 3270 or email hurstbridgehub@nillumbik.vic.gov.au if you would like further information about bushfire recovery.



Nillumbik Recovery Volunteers Project

The Nillumbik Recovery Volunteer (NRV) project is gaining momentum. A number of groups who want to offer their time have registered to be volunteers. All volunteers will be supervised by Council staff to assist people who have fire-affected properties and are struggling to get on top of the many jobs that need doing.

Groups from Montmorency Secondary College, Melbourne High, Eltham Rotary, ANZ bank, CA (pacific), Ford and Mount Lilydale Mercy College are all booked in to come out to the

area to volunteer over the coming few weeks. More groups or individuals are welcome.

Please contact the Hurstbridge Hub on 9433 3270 or email hurstbridgehub@nillumbik.vic.gov.au if you would like to register for volunteer assistance.

Please contact Emma Short, Bushfire Recovery Volunteer Coordinator, at the Hurstbridge Hub on 9433 3270 or email emma.short@nillumbik.vic.gov.au if you know of any groups that may be interested in becoming volunteers.



Have you registered for the Boundary Fencing Program?

If so, you are one of 52 properties waiting for assistance to replace boundary fencing. Work is progressing well with more than 45 properties now finished so by its conclusion, the program will have helped almost 100 properties.

Volunteer work crews have been very busy over the past few months helping to remove old fencing, putting in posts and rewiring. Despite the wet and challenging conditions, volunteers continue to come along each week to help with this important program.

Progress was initially slow while extra funding was sought to support the program. Seeking volunteers is an ongoing challenge especially over winter but a small core group with assistance from Conservation Volunteer Australia crews have kept the program going.

Property owners on the register can help move things along by talking to neighbours and gaining their agreement on the type of fencing to be constructed and purchasing materials in readiness for crews to arrive. Council is planning to have the program completed by the end of November.

If you haven't registered but would like to – it's not too late. Registrations are being taken until 30 September 2010 – please contact Marianne Sparks, Environmental Planner, on 9433 3195 or Marianne.Sparks@nillumbik.vic.gov.au for details.

About the program

The Boundary Fencing Program supports landowners by providing volunteer labour to assist in stringing up fencing wire, installing boundary markers and end assemblies where MegaAnchor products are used. Landowners are responsible for providing all required fencing materials and for installing their own timber assemblies or posts if that is preferred over MegaAnchor.

Three types of fencing are available through this program:

- 3-6 strand plain wire for control of stock
- 2-3 strand plain wire for control of human movement and/or vehicle access on the edge of bushland
- wood or steel boundary marker posts where the fence is located within bushland and marking the boundary is the primary purpose.

The program does not include the installation of electric fencing, barbed wire, hingejoint, ringlock or the equivalent.

Teenagers – have you got your Nillumbik discount card?

Nillumbik Young Person's Discount Cards (NYPD Cards) are free for young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years, who live, work, study or participate in a youth program in Nillumbik.

NYPD cardholders receive Youth News (a newsletter with upcoming events, latest news and information), half price entry into Rock the Hill events, contacts for youth information plus heap of great discounts at local business including:

Diamond Creek

Diamond Creek YMCA – 20% off a family membership
Diamond Creek Pool – 20% discount
Jonar Hair and Beauty – 10% discount
Penguin Dry Cleaners – 10% discount
Curnow Tennis – 10% discount
Platters Café and Bar – 10% off main meals
Diamond Creek Bike Shop- 10% discount
Subway Diamond Creek – 15% off any sub, salad, or wrap
McDonald's Diamond Creek – free meal upgrade
Diamond Creek Newsagent – 10% off stationary

Eltham

Tiger Mist – monthly in-store discount
Eltham YMCA – concession swim for \$2.20
The Lane – \$2 coffee with any food purchase from menu
Sugar Kube – 50 cents off all hot drinks
Party's Ago – 10% discount

Hurstbridge

Wattle Café – 10% discount
Essential Beauty Therapy – 20% discount
Post Office Café – 10% discount
Snip 'n Tal Hairdressing – 15% off any colour/chemical treatment and formal hair

To sign up for your card visit www.nyp.com.au .



Community news



Stringybark Community Nursery taking shape

The Stringybark Community Nursery project continues to go from strength to strength and has now locked in its permanent location at the St Andrews Primary School. Thanks go to Principal David Dodd and the School Council for making this possible. The area at the school is flat, has shelter and separate vehicle access from School Road. In the next month the Nursery will focus on getting the area at the school fenced and level.

The Nursery now has many plants going into properties in the fire-affected area. Some are 'pretties', such as daisies, while others like sedges and grasses are invaluable for stabilising wet areas that have suffered erosion. All these plants are free to fire-affected residents.

Stringybark has held seed cleaning and pricking out workshops and are planning more for the future. If you would like more information or would like to get involved in the Nursery please contact Sue Aldred on 9005 8048/0409 409 288 or Kylee Woods on 9714 8292.

Background

The idea of the community nursery came out of the Natural Environment Recovery Working Group (NEWRG), which has been meeting since May 2009. The aim of NEWRG (which includes St Andrews, Arthurs Creek, Strathewen and Christmas Hills Landcare, as well as agencies such as Parks Vic, Nillumbik Shire Council and Melbourne Water) is to work towards the recovery of our local environment post fires. It was felt that a community nursery would contribute to maintaining the biodiversity of our area, protect a range of local species and help social recovery through joint activities.

The Stringybark Community Nursery set up a Steering Committee comprised of members of Landcare groups and the St Andrews North gardening group. The Committee has received a \$30,000 grant from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) to establish the nursery. Work to date has included seed collection and cleaning, seed sowing and pricking out. Thanks to the other community nurseries – Osborne Road, Friends of Warrandyte State Park and Merriang – that have helped with the development of Stringybark.

Free plants

Stringybark Nursery is pleased to offer free plants to all Nillumbik's fire-affected residents. These plants are all grown from seed that was collected locally in 2009. The seed was cleaned and sown and pricked out by volunteers at community workshops as part of the Stringybark Community Nursery project.

All plants will attract local birds and insects to your garden/property and some will also provide habitat for frogs and small mammals. They would normally retail at around \$2 per tube.

If you would like plants or more information on what species of plants are available, please call Sue from St Andrews Landcare on 9005 8048 or 0409 409 288 or Kylee Woods on 9714 8292. There will be a limit of 20 plants per property. Please note there are fewer of some species than others.

Community Environment Recovery Action Plans (CERAP's) Update

The Natural Environment & Recovery Working Group is coordinating the development of the Community Environment Recovery Action Plans (CERAP's). The purpose of this project is to develop individual strategic community environmental recovery plans for St Andrews, Strathewen and Christmas Hills.

The primary objectives of this project are:

- to involve the three communities in making informed decisions about the protection and recovery of their local environmental assets
- to enable them to articulate and document their local short and long term recovery priorities, and
- to enable them to determine their involvement in terms of individual and collective voluntary effort and seeking investment and support.

CERAP's will provide cohesive and coordinated direction to land management and recovery programs over a 10-year timeframe. These documents will improve the community's ability to respond to current and future challenges and manage their impact on local environmental assets. The development of the CERAP's will involve extensive community consultation and the consideration of existing work undertaken by local community and Landcare groups.

The CERAP's Working Group is currently in the process of appointing consultants to prepare the plans. We will continue to follow the development of the CERAP's in this bulletin. If you would like more information please contact your local Landcare group or Donna Stoddart on 9433 3111 or email donna.stoddart@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

Community news

Skilling up locals

A group of volunteers and community members from Strathewen and St Andrews recently became certified in chainsaw operation and maintenance.

Many people have a lot of work around their properties that requires the use of a chainsaw.

The training was offered locally so people in fire-affected communities could undertake some of the work themselves in a safe manner.



Twelve people attended the training and are now certified to operate and maintain chainsaws.

Thanks go to those who assisted with the funding and well done to all who have completed the training.

Funding assistance

Sue Aldred from St Andrew's Landcare and Miriam Kruh from Council Bushfire Recovery Team coordinated the course with 4 Wheel Drive Victoria (4WDV) as the training provider.

St Andrews and Strathewen Landcare partly subsidised the cost of the course; 4WDV gave a 10% discount and St Andrews Community Bushfire Recovery Association donated \$1000 towards the initiative. The combination of this support meant that people were able to complete the \$300 training for \$150.

Green thumbs in St Andrews

The St Andrews North Gardening Club enjoyed a change of scene for their recent meeting on 27 August when Denise in Rangeview Road hosted the group. Elaine Shallue from Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA) came to the meeting to talk about the opportunities that are available as a result of a substantial grant they have received from the *Helen MacPherson Smith Trust*.

SGA are in the process of meeting with all Victorian fire-affected communities to discuss opportunities for establishing community gardens and Productive, Organic, Diverse local community gardening groups (PODs). If you'd like to find out more about SGA and what they have to offer your community in relation to gardens, please visit www.sgaonline.org.au or email Elaine@sgaonline.org.au.



Volunteers tasty treats

Volunteers from St John's Parish, Mitcham came out to Strathewen on a grey, blustery day for the fourth time on Saturday 14 August. The group of 60 volunteers had jobs on five different properties for the day, working tirelessly weeding, digging, mulching, tidying, splitting and delivering wood.

One of the volunteers, Theresa Mills also wanted to do something a little bit extra on this, her third visit to the area. Theresa had heard that local children loved the homemade cup cakes that volunteers brought out on working days. She was a little concerned though that some of the children may miss out and decided to make enough to be delivered to Strathewen Primary School for all to enjoy. Theresa made 74 cup cakes! By now, these will be a mere delicious memory for all those lucky enough to sample one.

Parish volunteers will return to Strathewen on 19 September.





Controlling rabbits

Nillumbik Council has just completed a Rabbit Action Plan for the Shire. The vision for the plan is to achieve effective rabbit control in Nillumbik to protect areas of high biodiversity, productive agricultural land and community facilities under threat of damage by rabbits.

The plan can be downloaded from Council's website www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

Council's Community Rabbit Control Program plays an important role in the delivery of the Rabbit Action Plan. The Community Control Program provides funding to support groups of residents who plan and execute coordinated attacks on rabbits.

The success of any rabbit control program is dependent on the number of neighbours who work together consistently and cooperatively choosing the right approach for the right time of year. Now is a great time of year to meet with your neighbours to discuss this and Council can support this discussion by providing advice on appropriate control techniques. For example; ferreting, dogging and grid netting, installing a rabbit proof fence, fumigating and removing rabbit harbour can all be effectively employed in spring as part of a long-term three-year plan.

For more information or to register your neighbourhood for the Community Rabbit Control Program please contact Council on 9433 3316.

Council works on drains

Council is about to commence work on eroded table drains along the edge of road formations within the fire-affected areas. Priority, at this time, will be given to the badly eroded drains along Rankines Road, Strathewen.



Works will involve removal of loose material from the drain and reinstatement with clay. Drains will then be sealed at the surface level with crushed rock. Works are programmed to commence within the next few weeks. Signage and traffic management will advise motorists of the works, but please take every care when travelling through the construction zones.

Once complete, these works will significantly improve safety and driving conditions. After priority works are complete other roads within the fire-affected areas will follow.

Roadside weed control in fire-affected areas

Council's weed control contractors have now mapped visible weeds throughout all Nillumbik's fire-affected 'high-significance' road reserves.

Priority weeds have been treated in these areas with the exception of *Blackberry* and bulbous weeds such as *Oxalis* and *Wild Watsonia*, which will be treated later in the year when they are most susceptible to herbicide. Contractors are now moving onto mapping and treating road reserves that have vegetation of 'low significance'.

Further funding from the Department of Primary Industries has extended the weed control program to reduce the spread of weeds into fire-affected areas. Regionally controlled noxious weeds will be targeted on roadsides adjoining the fire-affected area. Generally the target area will be within about 5km of the burnt area on the roadsides leading into it however it may be up to 20km away to target weeds whose seeds are spread by birds.

A mapping phase of this project has begun and a strategy to tackle priority weeds will then be developed in conjunction with the Landcare groups in the area.

Community Weed Control Program

Registrations are currently being invited for participation in Nillumbik Shire Council's Community Weed Control Program for the control of:

- Cape Broom
- Flax Leaf Broom
- Gorse.
- English Broom
- St Johns Wort

Council's Community Weed Control program can help to provide a cost-effective means for landowners to use a professional contractor to undertake weed control work.

Under the program, Council subsidises the cost of using an approved licensed contractor to control these noxious weeds.

The Program also assists with the control of other noxious weeds not listed above which are best controlled at different times of the year. To obtain a registration form please contact Council on 9433 3316.



10/30 exemptions extended

Please be aware that the 10/30 exemption has now been extended to 1 March 2012. The exemption enables:

- removal of trees around a building used for accommodation within 10 metres for fire prevention purposes without a permit and
- vegetation clearing (except trees) for up to 30 metres around a building used for accommodation for fire prevention purposes without a permit.

If you would like to discuss vegetation or tree removal in preparation for the 2010/11 fire season please contact Council's planning department on 9433 3111.



Fire Services Commissioner

Craig Lapsley, former Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and current Director of Emergency Management at the Department of Health and Human Services, has been appointed as Victoria's new Fire Services Commissioner.

In line with the Royal Commission's recommendation, the new Fire Services Commissioner will be an independent statutory officer responsible to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The Commissioner will be the most senior operational fire fighter in Victoria.

VBRR Chair

Prominent Victorian businessman Ian Dicker has been appointed as the new chair of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRR). Mr Dicker said he was looking forward to working closely with the people and communities affected by the 2009 bushfires.



Closing date for entries in the *Symbols of Loss and Recovery* art exhibition extended

Council has extended the opportunity for artists to enter their work for inclusion in the *Symbols of Loss and Recovery* art exhibition to commemorate the second anniversary of the Black Saturday bushfires until Friday 29 October 2010.

Nillumbik Shire Council has invited artists who are able to demonstrate a connection with Nillumbik and currently or previously worked or lived in the Shire, to submit work for selection in the exhibition which chronicles the affect 7 February 2009 has had on people, townships and landscapes of the Shire.

For more information, or to obtain an application form, contact Arts and Culture via artsinfo@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or phone 9433 3359. Application forms are also available electronically from Council's website.



In brief

Fence Aid on Facebook

If you would like to see some of the great volunteer fencing work on properties in Strathewen, St Andrews and Christmas Hills befriend the Fence Aid group. There are some good stories and photographs – look for Fence Aid on Facebook.

Affordable demonstration homes

Two winning teams of registered Victorian builders and architects have developed home designs for bushfire-affected people at a set price of \$150,000. The three-bedroom homes are six-star energy rated and BAL 40 bushfire compliant. Until May 2011, people from bushfire-affected communities who are considering rebuilding can access the three-bedroom designs at the set price. The cost excludes consultancy fees and external works. The winning designs and more details are available at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au.

Skilling up teenagers

Nillumbik teenagers who are interested in updating or obtaining new skills to help with current or future employment such as food handling skills or a certificate in retail can contact Ele Jenkins, Youth Participation and Development Officer (Bushfire Recovery) on 9433 3728 or 0438 009 185 or email eleanor.jenkins@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

Hub new email

The Hurstbridge Hub has a new email address. You can contact them via hurstbridgehub@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

VBRR 18 month report

VBRR's 18 month report showing reconstruction and recovery progress is now available to download at www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au.

Bushfire Recovery Feature

The winter issue of the *Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine* looks at how Landcare groups have contributed to the recovery of bushfire-affected communities and landscapes in changing times. Some stories tell of the vital role Landcare plays in supporting community resilience and connections, others take a practical look at what groups are doing to protect their land from erosion and invasive species in the wake of fires. View the latest issue – or any of the back issues – of the magazine at www.dse.vic.gov.au/victorianlandcaremagazine.



SP Ausnet moves to control regrowth

Vegetation regeneration is well underway in the areas impacted by the 2009 bushfires. The natural regeneration of taller growing native and some exotic tree species if left unchecked will quickly form a dense forest surrounding SP AusNet's electrical transmission and distribution infrastructure.

If no action is taken statutory vegetation clearances and access to line easements could compromise SP AusNet's obligations under the *Electricity Safety Act*, resulting in interruptions to electricity supply to surrounding communities and other parts of Victoria.

SP AusNet has initiated a program of regrowth control which commenced in April/May 2010 predominantly utilising the application of herbicides. Where appropriate, slashing of vegetation will also be completed as part of this control program.

This treatment will be focussed on vegetation regrowth in the vicinity of power lines and associated infrastructure located on roadsides, private property and electricity line easements. Property owners and land managers will be consulted prior to these works proceeding.

Nillumbik Council is currently negotiating with SP AusNet to develop site-specific work specifications for the treatment of high vegetation significance road reserves.

Grief and bereavement support

EACH, in partnership with the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement, run a group once a month for people who have been affected by bereavement as a result of the bushfires. This group has been running for several months and there is ample room for more to attend.

The groups are held at EACH in Ringwood once a month on a Thursday evening. If you are already seeing a counsellor, psychologist or other support person you may be interested in attending this group as well and it may complement your one-on-one sessions. Similar groups are also run for children who have experienced bereavement through the bushfires.

For more information on these groups please contact Rosie Petschack on 9871 1800 or email rpetschack@each.com.au.

Counselling and support

- Difficulty sleeping?
- Recurring traumatic or disturbing dreams?
- Mood swings?
- Depressed thoughts?
- Or just need someone to talk to?

EACH has a committed team of counsellors trained to respond to the needs of those affected and impacted by the bushfires. EACH's Bushfire Response and Recovery Counselling services are: confidential, free of charge and can be provided at a location convenient to you.

Please call EACH on 9871 1890 to discuss how we can help you.

Financial counselling

EACH offer qualified financial counsellors that can assist with:

- a free and confidential service
- assessment of your financial situation
- advice if you can't pay bills, fines or debts
- assistance to work out payments with creditors
- help with budgeting
- assistance with Centrelink issues
- information about possible government assistance
- consumer information
- information about your legal rights.

For more information or to make an appointment to speak with a qualified financial counsellor please call EACH on 9871 1800.



Bushfire Recovery Arts Grants available

Bushfire Recovery Arts Grants are currently available to support local artists work within their communities on arts projects that will assist in the recovery process and/or contribute to community healing and revitalisation.

Grants will be awarded to the value of \$500 – \$5000, until all monies are expended. Council requires funding to be expended during the 2010-2011 financial year.

If you need assistance completing the application form, finding project partners, understanding the guidelines or refining your project plan, or to discuss how your project fits within the guidelines, please contact Council's Bushfire Recovery Arts Officer Cath Rutten on 9433 3720 or email Cath.Rutten@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

Strathewen letterboxes launched in style!

On Saturday 14 August 2010, over 300 people gathered at Bridges in Hurstbridge to celebrate the resilience, creativity and collaboration of the Strathewen community at the launch of the Letterbox Project.

Marion Oakley, who has hosted the Letterbox project at her house for the past fifteen months wanted to "fill the room with love" and indeed that is exactly what the Strathewen community did.

The sixty Letterboxes, when gathered in the one space, looked absolutely incredible. Each of them was made for a member of the Strathewen community, by a member of the Strathewen community and the entire project and event was a tribute to the resilience and spirit of this community.

Member for Yan Yean Danielle Green MP (representing Minister for the Arts Peter Batchelor MP), Christine Nixon, Nillumbik Shire Councillor Mayor Ken King, Nillumbik Shire Councillor Lewis Brock and Marylin Gourley from Regional Arts Victoria attended the launch.

Diana Roberston from Strathewen spoke movingly about the project and what it has meant for the people involved.

Begs to Differ and the *Chocolate Lilies* provided fantastic music. Bridges provided the beautiful room and food, which combined to create a great festive atmosphere. This was a truly great celebration of what people can do for each other under traumatic and distressing circumstances.

The Strathewen Letterbox Project was made possible by the support of Regional Arts Victoria through their Regional Arts Grants, Nillumbik Shire Council and Bunnings.



Events

Upcoming festivals

11 September 2010, beginning at 10am
Diamond Creek Rotary Town Fair
Marngrook Oval, Main Hurstbridge Road, Diamond Creek
www.diamondcreektownfair.org.au

10 October 2010, 11am-7.30pm
'On the Hill' Festival, Panton Hill
www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au > Events calendar

24 October 2010, 10am-4pm
Practically Green Festival
Edendale Farm, Gastons Road, Eltham
www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au > Environment

31 October 2010, 10am-4pm
15th Annual Nillumbik Pet Expo
Marngrook Oval,
Main Hurstbridge Road,
Diamond Creek
www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au > Community Services

13-14 November 2010
The Rotary Eltham Town Festival
Eltham
www.elthamtown.com.au.



Wildhaven

A special moment for our little ones. With all the information from the Royal Commission, no one could have stopped Black Saturday's fires.

In a blink of the eye everything was gone, how can we fight a fire we can not catch. Each one of us needs to take responsibility for what we have chosen to do in life.

Putting the blame on 3 people is not the way to learn by our mistakes, if we do not learn, it will happen again. As a fire fighter I thought our home was totally safe. That was the first mistake.

We are planting native trees and grasses, the first aid room is finished, the 7 rescue rooms are now completed.

In the next 5 months the house where we will live with our little friends will be started.

We have a bunker to take the little ones to, when the next fire comes. We will stay and fight the next fire, it will be our choice, putting a fire plan in place now for the future, the rest will be in God's hands.

The little ones were taken from us, each day we remember them, they are in God's hands now.

Above in the glow of light is the new generation, it is this beautiful country and the creatures that live here that give us a reason to live to get up each day. The sorrow and pain will be forever with us, the glow and light of the future is with us also.

This is a moment in time at Wildhaven.

Love Stella





Community Dinners celebrates first anniversary

Diamond Valley Baptist Church celebrated its first anniversary of serving Community Dinners on Monday 16 August 2010. Over the past year the team of volunteers and caterers have served over 2,000 meals. About 80 people attended the anniversary celebration with entertainment provided by singers Liz and Simon Nygaard, Michael the Magician, Greg Champion and the *Chocolate Lilies*.

Thank you to all the catering, cleaning and serving volunteers who faithfully continue to serve the needs of the wider community. Come and join us each Monday night at 6pm for a \$5 meal.

2 September – 21 October, Thursdays 10am-12noon

From the Ground Up – introductory gardening course

Diamond Valley Baptist Church, 309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty

Cost: \$10 per week includes morning tea at Valley Café.

Bookings are essential, please phone 9435 9377 or email jgraham@dvbc.net.

Tuesday 7 September, 6pm-7.30pm iNSIGHT photography exhibition and booklet launch

Diamond Valley Library

iNSight is a collaborative photographic project by Nillumbik's young people. For more information please contact Council on 9433 3159 or email sophie.grange@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Sunday 12 September, 2pm-4.45pm

Springtime 'Songs of Praise'

Diamond Valley Baptist Mud-brick Complex, 309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty

Sing your favourite hymns and choruses plus enjoy performances by special guests. This is a free event and includes complimentary afternoon tea. Enquiries to the organiser Ron Ellis on 9459 5698.

Thursday 16 September 2010, 10am

St Andrews Morning Tea

St Andrews General Store
10 Caledonia Street, St Andrews

Everyone is welcome! For more information please call Holly on 0438 062 236.

Thursday 16 September, 7pm-8.30pm

St Andrews Men's Shed –

Community Meeting

St Andrews Community Centre

Nillumbik's Bushfire Recovery Community Projects Officer Colin James will lead a discussion about the Men's Shed program in general and discuss ideas and opportunities for The Men's Shed at St Andrews. For more information please contact Colin on 9433 3720 or email colin.james@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

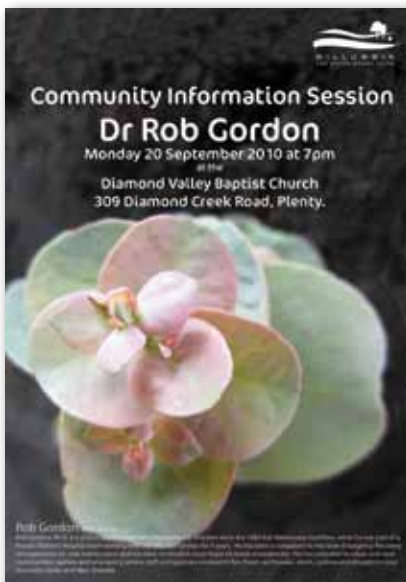
Friday 17 September, 7.30am-9am

Men's Breakfast with guest speaker

Terry Warburton

Diamond Valley Baptist Church,
309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty

Cost \$10. For more information please contact 9435 9377.



Monday 20 September, 7pm

Dr Rob Gordon information session

Diamond Valley Baptist Church,
309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty

10 October – Sunday 17 October

Victoria Fire Action Week – more details in our October bulletin

Regular events

Every Monday evening from 6pm

Community dinner

Diamond Valley Baptist Church,
309 Diamond Creek Road, Plenty

A weekly community dinner for \$5pp encouraging all bushfire-affected families and friends to join for a meal. Bookings 9435 9377.

Tuesday 7pm-9pm

Lasting Memories Mosaics

St Andrews Community Centre

Come along and create beautiful mosaics using broken crockery and findings left behind after the fires. For more information please contact Chris Reade on either 9844 4849 or 0425 778 223.

Every Thursday afternoon from 3.45pm-5.30pm

SAY (St Andrews Youth)

St Andrews Community Centre
All welcome!

Thursdays 10am-1pm, commencing Thursday 15 July 2010

Drop IN

Salvation Army Bushfire Recovery Outreach Centre, Level 1, 254 Maroondah Highway, Healesville

Thursday evenings, 7.30pm-8.30pm

Meditation and relaxation – no charge

St Andrews Community Centre
Bookings essential. Living & Learning Nillumbik Pantom Hill 9433 3799.

5 October to 12 November on Tuesdays and Fridays, 10.30am- 11.30am

Strong People Stay Young strength training program, run by Nillumbik Community Health Service.

Hurstbridge Community Centre,
50 Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge

The six-week course focuses on helping you learn and build upper and lower body strength under the supervision of a physiotherapist. For more details please contact 9430 9100.

Bushfire recovery contacts



Hurstbridge Community Services Hub

36 Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge.
Opening hours Mon to Fri 9am-5pm
Phone 9433 3720, email rcc@nillumbik.vic.gov.au .

The Nillumbik Shire Council Recovery Coordination Centre (RCC) coordinates Council's bushfire recovery effort and is based at the Hub.

Community Recovery Committees

Strathewen Community Renewal Association

<http://strathewen.vic.au>
Email: scra@tpg.com.au
Phone: Malcolm Hackett (Chairperson) 0427 356 803
Denis Spooner (Secretary) 0419 311 603

St Andrews Bushfire Recovery Association

<http://standrewsrecovery.wordpress.com>
Phone: Ian Flack (Chairperson) 0406 991 376

Important contacts	Telephone	Web/email
Nillumbik Shire Council, Civic Drive, Greensborough	9433 3111	www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Bushfire Building Advice Line	1300 360 320	www.buildingcommission.com.au
Bushfire Legal Help	1800 113 432	www.bushfirelegalthelp.org.au
Bushfire Support Centre Hurstbridge Inc	9718 2759	hurstbridgereliefcentre@netspace.net.au
Business Victoria	13 22 15	www.business.vic.gov.au
Department Primary Industries	13 61 86	www.dpi.vic.gov.au
Diamond Valley Baptist Church	9435 9377	www.dvbc.net
Department of Human Services	1300 650 172	www.dhs.vic.gov.au
Insurance Council of Australia	1300 728 228	www.insurancecouncil.com.au
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800	www.kidshelp.com.au
Lifeline	13 11 14	www.lifeline.org.au
Nillumbik Community Health Service	9430 9100	www.nchs.org.au/ or info@nchs.org.au
Parentline	13 22 89	www.parentline.vic.gov.au
Red Cross	1800 811 700	www.redcross.org.au
SP AusNet	13 17 99	www.sp-ausnet.com.au
State Revenue Office	13 21 61	www.sro.vic.gov.au
St Johns Anglican Church	9438 1264	www.stjohnsdiamondcreek.org.au
St Vincent de Paul	1300 305 330	www.vinnies.org.au
The Salvation Army	13 72 58	www.salvos.org.au
Telstra	1800 110 503	natural.disasters@team.telstra.com
Transport Accident Commission	1800 332 556	www.tac.vic.gov.au
Valley Cafe	9435 9377	jgraham@dvbc.net
Victorian Bushfire Accommodation Inquiry Line	1800 006 468	www.dhs.vic.gov.au
Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund	1800 180 213	www.redcross.org.au
Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service	1800 050 400	www.dhs.vic.gov.au
Victorian Bushfire Information Line	1800 240 667	www.dse.vic.gov.au
Victorian Bushfire Public Accommodation Donation Line	1800 006 468	www.redcross.org.au
Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority	1800 240 667	www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au
Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission	1800 243 650	www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au
Victorian Farmers Federation	1300 882 833	www.vff.org.au
Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service	1800 011 046	www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs