

# Community Newsletter

Longwood Berrys Lane Bushfire  
25 February 2026

## Transitioning from response to recovery

Strathbogie Shire Council has formally transitioned from the state-led emergency response to recovery following the Longwood Berrys Lane fire.

Chief Executive Officer Rachelle Quattrocchi said that while response activities continue, Council is now focused on supporting long-term recovery.

“Our communities have been through an incredibly challenging time. The road to recovery starts now, and it’s about more than rebuilding, it’s about strengthening resilience for the future,” Ms Quattrocchi said.

The Victorian Government has announced recovery funding for impacted councils and grants for community-led initiatives. While Council waits for confirmation of its allocation, it has already taken action, advertising for Community Recovery Officers and established the Recovery Hub in Euroa to ensure support is available now.

A key next step will be establishing Community Recovery Committees (CRCs), giving impacted residents a structured way to identify priorities and guide local recovery efforts. Council will also form a Municipal Recovery Committee to strengthen coordination between community, agencies and government.

“It’s not Council’s role to replace community leadership we are here to enable it,” Ms Quattrocchi said. “Local knowledge and local voices must guide recovery.”

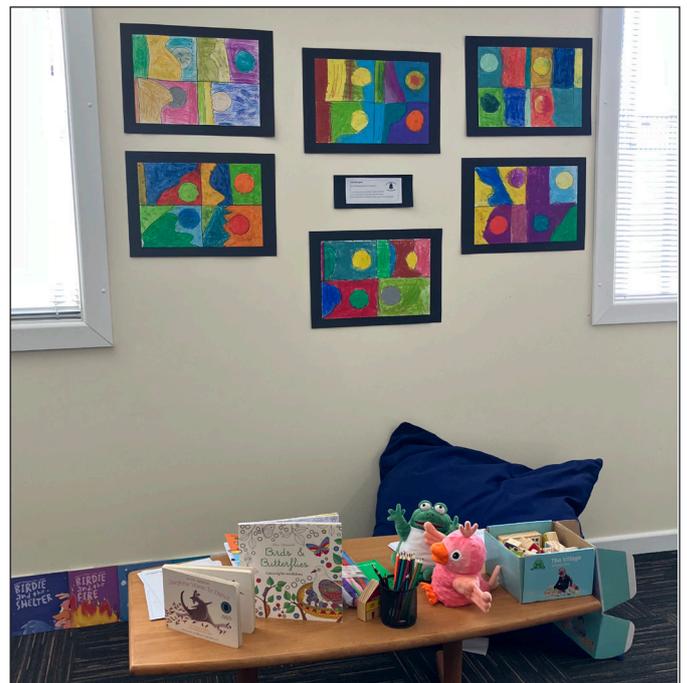
Council recognises that townships including Ruffy, Longwood East, Upton, Avenel, Gooram and Creighton’s Creek are at different stages of recovery and will work with each community at its own pace.

## Recovery Hub update – community, support and connection

The Recovery Hub in Euroa is continuing to grow with over 150 people accessing services so far. We’re thrilled to share that the Recovery Hub has received its very first piece of artwork, created by students from Euroa Primary School, helping to make the space even more welcoming.

We’re now working with schools across the Shire to help create a vibrant community space that reflects local strength, hope and recovery. Thank you to our young artists for helping bring warmth and colour to the Hub.

This week, we’re also highlighting the support available through Arc Justice, who are onsite to provide free legal assistance and guidance for community members navigating insurance, tenancy, financial hardship and other recovery-related matters. Their team offers practical, confidential support during what can be a very stressful time.



Children’s corner at the Euroa Recovery Hub, featuring artwork by students from Euroa Primary School.

This Thursday from 11am to 3pm, a Peer Worker from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local will be available at the Recovery Hub. No appointments are required. This is a safe, inclusive and welcoming service for people aged 26 and over who may be experiencing psychological distress, mental health challenges, or alcohol and other drug concerns, and who need more support than their usual GP can provide (but do not require hospital care).

You'll be met with a simple question: "How can we help?" The team is there to listen. Support is guided by you, with care plans developed together and connections made to the services that best meet your needs. Family members, carers and friends are also welcome to be part of the journey if that feels right for you.

Private spaces are available at the Hub to ensure conversations can take place comfortably and confidentially.

Emergency Recovery Victoria's Clean-Up Concierge Service will be in attendance this Friday 27 February to help eligible residents register for free clean-up support. This includes the removal of damaged structures from homes, businesses and community assets impacted by the January 2026 bushfires. You may be eligible if your property is in an affected council area, has damaged structures, and is uninsured or underinsured.



## The Recovery Hub

**Where: 34 Railway Street, Euroa**

**When: Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm**

**Or by appointment: 1800 065 993**

For daily updates on services attending the Hub, please visit Council's website or follow our social media channels.

## Steel and metal disposal – help protect our community spaces

Strathbogie Shire Council is asking residents, contractors and businesses to dispose of steel and metal waste correctly to help keep our community areas clean and safe.

Council has recently seen an increase in metal items being dumped at recreation reserves, sports grounds, cemeteries and Council works sites. This is considered unlawful dumping and may lead to EPA penalties for those responsible, as well as property owners.

If you're unsure how to dispose of large or bulky metal items, Council's Waste Team can provide advice on safe and legal disposal and recycling options.

Please contact Council before disposing of any steel or metal materials.

Contact Strathbogie Shire Council – Waste Team  
Ph. (03) 5795 0000 | [info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au)

## Support for landowners clearing fire-affected trees

Many landowners across the Shire are continuing the important work of clearing fallen trees and debris following the January bushfires.

If you require assistance, support may be available through the Victorian Government's Landmate program.



By registering your interest through Council, eligible landholders can be connected with help to manage fire-affected trees and related recovery works.

Landmate provides practical, on-ground support to help landowners recover safely and effectively.

**Contact Council on Ph. 1800 065 993** for assistance with the referral process.

## Strathbogie Disaster Relief Fund

Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the community spirit behind the Strathbogie Disaster Relief Fund and the intention to support those impacted by the January 2026 bushfires.

The Fund is an independently established and operated charitable initiative. It is not administered, funded or governed by Council, and Council does not have oversight of its operations, donation management, eligibility assessment or distribution of funds.

Enquiries regarding the Fund should be directed to its organisers at <https://strathbogiedisasterrelief.com/>

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## Bushfire Stabilisation Assistance Longwood Berrys Lane Fire (February 2026)

Private landholders impacted by the Longwood-Berry's Lane Fire may be eligible for support through the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic).

CFA, as the Fire Control Agency for this event, is coordinating stabilisation works with FFMVic to help properties recover from impacts caused by fire response operations.

Support may include:

- stabilising control lines (dozer and grader lines) on private property to reduce erosion and protect land and water quality. (Note: reseeding and crop replacement are not included.)
- replacement of essential water taken from domestic tanks, stock or irrigation dams for firefighting
- repairs to fences cut or damaged during fire response (including fallen trees) where the damage was not caused by fire
- boundary fence repairs where fences between private and public land were damaged by bushfire and are not covered by insurance.

Landholders who believe they may be eligible are encouraged to complete the relevant form by 30 March 2026 and email it to: [emergency.recovery@deeca.vic.gov.au](mailto:emergency.recovery@deeca.vic.gov.au).

An assessor will then make contact to discuss eligibility and arrange an on-site inspection

## Temporary accommodation

Individuals and families who have no insurance or are underinsured may be able to get temporary accommodation.

Support may include financial assistance towards rental payments or a caravan on site at your property for up to 12 months.

Call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on **1800 560 760** to speak to a recovery support officer about your needs and eligibility.

## Prepare fire-affected properties ahead of storms

Fire-affected landholders — especially in hilly areas — are urged to prepare for possible flash flooding, erosion and debris movement if thunderstorms occur.

After bushfire, bare ground and water-repellent soils can cause ash, sediment and woody debris to move quickly during heavy rain, damaging fences, tracks, dams, crossings, water supplies and impacting livestock.

Landholders should consider installing sediment traps, protecting culverts and stream crossings, relocating livestock from low-lying areas, and safeguarding drinking water supplies.

For practical advice and step-by-step guidance, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au) or call 136 186

### Practical steps to protect your property

Agriculture Victoria recommends:

- sediment traps: Use straw bales, fabric, or mesh fencing to slow runoff and trap debris before it enters dams or waterways
- vegetated filter strips: Maintain thick vegetation above dams to naturally intercept sediment
- protect culverts and stream crossings: Ensure debris doesn't block critical flow paths
- diversion banks: Small levee banks or drains can redirect contaminated runoff away from key areas
- post-storm checks: Remove floating debris from dams, inspect sediment controls, and move livestock from low-lying or flood-prone areas.

For detailed guidance and step-by-step instructions, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au) or call 136 186.



## Register for clean up

You may be eligible for free bushfire cleanups through Emergency Management Victoria (ERV).

This support is available for primary residences that are uninsured or underinsured.

Register your property - even if you're insured - to find out if you qualify.

Forge Solutions will visit your property to carry out the assessment and will never attend without notifying you first. Anyone representing ERV or Forge Solutions will:

- wear Victorian Government, ERV, or Forge Solutions branding
- carry photo ID.

**If you're unsure about someone attending your property, call the Emergency Recovery Hotline: Ph. 1800 560 760.**

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## Funding available for communities to connect during tough times

With bushfires and ongoing drought continuing to challenge many Victorian communities, **a new round of Look Over the Farm Gate grants is now open.**

These grants — up to \$5000 — support local events and activities that boost the mental health and wellbeing of farmers and farming communities. Since June 2025, more than 160 events have received funding, helping communities come together, take a break and check in on each other.

Administered by the National Centre for Farmer Health on behalf of the Victorian Government, the program forms part of the state's \$146.5 million drought support package.

It could be a BBQ, film night, sporting event or any event that contributes to a lasting impact.

Applications for the latest funding round are open until 20 May 2026 (or until funds are fully allocated). All funded activities must be completed by 30 June 2026.

Apply via the **National Centre for Farmer Health website at <https://farmerhealth.org.au/>**

## Relief drinking water

Emergency relief drinking water is available to help households affected by the January 2026 Victorian bushfires.

Relief drinking water is a one-off delivery of clean domestic water, up to 20,000 litres.

It's available if:

- your household relies on tank water
- your tank has been contaminated by fire, ash, debris or fire-fighting activities, and
- your property is within an impacted area.

Households must complete and submit the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) form to access this support.

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/about-us/news/news-stories/emergency-relief-drinking-water-2026>



## Recovery water tank cleaning rebates

Rebates to households that are not connected to mains water supply to help ensure access to safe drinking water.

Eligible households will receive a rebate for cleaning and filling water tanks that are impacted by the bushfires.

More information is available on DEECA's website at <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/grants/recovery-water-tank-rebates>

## Mental health support

Your emotional wellbeing is as important as your physical health and financial circumstances. Find services, websites and guides to help you recover from an emergency or disaster.

Major emergencies can have a significant impact on your life and the lives of those around you.

You might feel overwhelmed, exhausted or unsure where to start. These are all normal responses.

If you find yourself experiencing strong emotions, talking about your worries and feelings as well as remaining connected to others can make them more manageable. It is important to identify what actions can be taken to address the source of your concerns.

Seeking help is a sign of strength and often the first step in recovery.

If you or someone close to you is feeling overwhelmed please reach out for support.

### For immediate support, contact:

- **Lifeline** 131 114
- **Beyond Blue** 1300 224 636
- **Mens Line** 1300 789 978
- **Kids Help Line** 1800 55 1800
- **National Centre Farmers Health** 03 5551 8533



*If you have suggestions on what you'd like to see included in these Newsletters please email us at: [info@strathbogje.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@strathbogje.vic.gov.au)*

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## Upcoming community events

### Ruffy - Farmers Community Connect



The Rapid Relief Team (RRT) is hosting a Farmers Community Connect event to support fire-affected landholders across the Strathbogie Ranges. Registered farmers can collect 1km of donated galvanised fencing wire and access rural support services, with a free BBQ and refreshments for families.

**Date:** Thursday 26 February 2026

**Time:** 7am-12pm

**Location:** Ruffy Hall, 3 Nolans Road, Ruffy

### Nagambie - 28 February outdoor cinema

**Location:** Buckley Park (enter via Blayney Lane)

**Film:** Blueback (PG)

**Time:** Movie begins at sunset (8.15pm).

Please note that outdoor events may be affected by weather and could be changed or rescheduled. For the latest updates, follow Strathbogie Shire Council on social media or visit the website.

For full event details, visit [www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au](http://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au).

**FREE COMMUNITY OUTDOOR CINEMA**  
*Summer* NAGAMBIE

**Saturday 28 February**

**Buckley Park**  
(enter via Blayney Lane)

**From 7.30pm**  
Movie starts at sunset  
(approx. 8:15pm)

**FREE ENTRY**

**BYO chairs, rugs and blankets**

**BLUEBACK**

### Community information session - 27 Feb

#### Longwood

The **Longwood Community Centre** will host a local Information Session focusing on community updates and support resources relevant to residents and landcare groups.

**Date:** Friday 27 February 2026

**Time:** 1pm-4pm

**Location:** Longwood Community Centre, 2A Down St, Longwood

### International Women's Day - 6 March

**Date:** Friday 6 March 2026

**Time:** 1:30pm - 4pm

**Location:** Fowles Wine, Avenel

Tickets are free but booking is essential.

Free bus transport available from Ruffy, Violet Town, Euroa and Nagambie.

Enjoy a delicious afternoon tea, live music by Gayle Mawson, and hear from two exceptional speakers: Michelle Roberts - National leader in child disaster mental health and Fyowna Norton - Victorian State Manager, Australian Red Cross.

Secure your spot: <http://tiny.cc/strathbogieiwd> or call 1800 065 993.

**Join us to celebrate International Women's Day**

**Friday 6 March 2026**  
1.30pm - 4pm

**Bookings essential:** <http://tiny.cc/strathbogieiwd>

Australian Government | Strathbogie SHIRE COUNCIL | International Women's Day | VICTORIA State Government



Contact the Customer Service team on 1800 065 993

Email [info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au](http://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au)

Emergency Recovery Hotline: 1800 560 750