

Community Newsletter

Longwood Berrys Lane Bushfire 6 March 2026

Strathbogrie Community Recovery Hub – here to support you

The Strathbogrie Community Recovery Hub continues to provide practical, face-to-face support for community members impacted by the recent fires.

Recovery can feel overwhelming. There are often multiple agencies to contact, forms to complete and decisions to make. The Hub is a central place where you can access information, ask questions and receive one-on-one support in a calm and welcoming environment.

A range of services are available, including:

- access to recovery support workers
- information about available grants and assistance programs
- referrals to financial, wellbeing and insurance support services
- help navigating government processes.



If you need to have a private or sensitive conversation, confidential rooms are available. You can speak with support workers or service providers in a quiet space where you feel comfortable.

We know that recovery often comes with a lot of paperwork - from grant applications and insurance documents to identification forms and other important records. The Hub provides free printing and scanning services, and our staff can help you prepare, copy or submit documents if you need a hand. There's even a shower available for community use.

You do not have to navigate recovery alone. The Hub is here to provide practical assistance and connect you with the right support at the right time.

If you're unsure where to start, simply drop in or contact the team for guidance.

Strong turnout at Ruffy Recovery Event shows community spirit



Strathbogrie Shire was proud to support the recent Farmers Community Connect event held at Ruffy on Thursday 26 February, with more than 300 people attending across the day (and close to 500 visiting throughout the morning). The strong turnout exceeded expectations.

The event was delivered by the Rapid Relief Team (RRT), and the Ruffy Community. The event provided practical support to farmers and families impacted by the Longwood bushfire. Alongside the generous donation of fencing wire to assist rebuilding, residents were able to connect directly with services and seek advice tailored to their individual circumstances.

Council staff responded to a high number of enquiries relating to waste clean-up that fell outside the State Government clean-up program. Residents sought clarification on eligible materials, transfer station and landfill processes, and safe management of remaining debris.

There was also significant interest in Landmate clean-up assistance, with several households supported to better understand available recovery pathways. Outreach and education services from the Recovery Hub were well received, linking families experiencing ongoing hardship with additional support.

The proposed poly tank recycling program also attracted strong interest, reflecting the community's focus on rebuilding responsibly.

Strathbogie Shire remains committed to working alongside residents as recovery continues — providing clear information, practical assistance and connection to the right services when they are needed most.

A huge shout out and acknowledgement to the Ruffy Community that made this event possible.

Ruffy Donations Update

As the Fire Recovery Hay Depot winds down, the remaining donated items have now been moved to the Euroa Transfer Station.

These items will soon be passed on to local clothing charities so they can be rehomed within our community.

We're also continuing to sort through additional items, which will be shared with other approved clothing charities.

Thank you to everyone who has donated — your generosity continues to make a real difference.



Business Impact Survey – We need your voice

Strathbogie Shire Council is working to understand how the recent bushfires have affected our community and, importantly, our local businesses.

To secure the right recovery support and funding, we need a clear picture of what businesses across the Shire are experiencing. This information is essential — without it, our ability to advocate strongly to State and Federal Governments is limited.

If your business has felt the impact of the fires in any way — big or small, direct or indirect — we're asking you to take a few minutes to complete the Business Impact Survey.

Your input will play a crucial role in helping Council push for the financial assistance, recovery programs and long-term support our business community needs.

Have your say here: <http://tiny.cc/businessimpact>

Your contribution genuinely matters — and it will help shape our community's recovery

Small Business Financial Counselling

The Small Business Financial Counselling service can help small businesses impacted by the bushfires who are in, or at risk of, financial hardship.

All businesses impacted or located within one of the local government areas (LGAs) affected by the summer 2026 Victorian bushfires are eligible for these services.

Information on how to access the Small Business Financial Counselling service is on the Business Victoria website: <https://business.vic.gov.au/small-business-financial-counselling-2026>

Business Victoria's Business Recovery Advisory Service

Business Victoria's Business Recovery Advisory Service can help businesses impacted by the bushfires to navigate and access the available supports and

All businesses impacted or located within one of the local government areas affected by the summer 2026 Victorian bushfires are eligible for these services.

Business owners are encouraged to visit the Business Victoria website to check their eligibility and to register: <https://business.vic.gov.au/business-recovery-advisory-service-2026>

Help with registration is available by calling the Business Victoria Hotline on 13 22 15 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Bushfire clean up support available for affected properties in Strathbogie

If your property was impacted by the January 2026 bushfires, support is available through the Bushfire Clean-up Program.

The program is jointly funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments and is being delivered by the State, with Forge Solutions appointed as the primary contractor.

If you are unsure about your eligibility, confused about next steps, or uncertain how the program interacts with your insurance claim, please contact the Concierge team via the Emergency Recovery Hotline:

1800 560 760 (press 3 for Clean-up)

Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm

Free clean-up support for property owners

If you've been affected by the January 2026 bushfires and are uninsured or underinsured, you can register for free clean-up support.

We will remove eligible damaged homes, businesses, and community assets at no cost. Supporting structures, like sheds, may also be eligible.

- 1 Registration and eligibility check**
 - When you register, the team will ask you some questions to see if you're eligible.
 - As part of this, you might need to send us some documents, like a copy of your insurance policy.
- 2 Site inspection and planning**
 - If you're eligible, the contractor will meet you on-site.
 - They will have an engineer.
 - We will send you this plan in a Works Pack.
- 3 Program set-in and works booking**
 - Once you've read the Works Pack, you can decide to go ahead or not. It's up to you.
 - If you say yes, we'll book a time for the work to be done.
- 4 Before work starts**
 - Give the contractor access to your property.
 - Disconnect services like electricity, water and gas.
 - The contractor might need to get permits.
- 5 Works underway**
 - You'll need to leave while the work is being done.
 - Your site supervisor will tell you about what is happening and any changes.
 - If new work is needed that wasn't in the original scope of works, the contractor will talk to you about it.
- 6 Works completion and follow up**
 - After it's done, the contractor will meet you on site to talk through what they did.
 - We'll then send you a record of this work in a Completion pack.
 - Then, you can focus on your next steps, whatever is right for you.

Emergency Recovery Victoria has appointed Forge Solutions as the lead contractor to support the Clean-up Program. They are experienced in construction and disaster clean-up.

Register online at www.vic.gov.au/register-for-clean-up or via the Emergency Recovery Hotline on **1800 560 760**

When you call, the team will work with you one-on-one to:

- understand your individual circumstances
- confirm whether you're eligible
- explain the clean-up process
- connect you with other available supports
- clarify how it works alongside your insurance requirements.

If you are waiting on insurance assessments, you may be hesitant to move forward without clear guidance. The Hotline is the most effective way to step through your specific situation and reduce uncertainty, helping you avoid unnecessary delays.

What's happening locally?

In the Strathbogie region:

- 13 Asbestos Hazard Assessments (AHAs) have been completed
- 12 AHAs are currently booked
- the first clean-up works are scheduled to begin in the week starting 9 March.

The Clean-up team continues to update Council's Recovery team, and regional recovery partners are sharing information through local outreach.

You can also find up-to-date information online at:

- register for clean-up support after the January 2026 bushfires | <https://www.vic.gov.au/clean-support-january-2026-bushfires>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/clean-and-waste>

If you have any doubt or confusion, please don't wait — make the call and speak directly with the team. They are there to support you through every step of the process

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.

To register your interest contact Council for assistance with the referral process.

Getting your power reconnected after the fires

If your property has been impacted by the recent fires, AusNet has helpful guidance on safely restoring electricity supply. Visit AusNet's "Getting Your Power Back On After a Bushfire" page for clear information on inspections, reconnections, and what to expect throughout the process.

You can find it here: <https://www.ausnetservices.com.au/outages/getting-your-power-back-on-after-a-bushfire>

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.

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/>

Upcoming Community events

Longwood Bushfire Relief Concert

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586556341334>

Saturday 7 March at Longwood Rec Reserve

6pm – Kaitlin Keegan

6.45pm – Swim State

8pm – Tones and I

Tickets only online

<https://tickets.oztix.com.au/outlet/event/726fe2bc-f83c-4af4-a4f7-6dbd85abb72e>

Parking and bus must be prebooked too.

<https://www.123tix.com.au/events/52000/event-parking-and-buses-longwood-bushfire-relief-concert>

Mental health support

Your emotional wellbeing is as important as your physical health and financial circumstances. 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:

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



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<https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/services/emergency-preparedness/2026-bushfires/2026-bushfires-stay-informed/>

Your information will only be used for this purpose.

If you have suggestions for future editions, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au.



Contact the Customer Service team on 1800 065 993

Email info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au

Website: www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au

Emergency Recovery Hotline: 1800 560 750