

Community Newsletter

Longwood Berrys Lane Bushfire 12 March 2026

Recovery Hub marks first month supporting the community

The Strathbogie Recovery Hub in Euroa has now been open for one month and continues to play an important role in supporting residents impacted by the January fires.

Since opening its doors, the Hub has welcomed more than 460 community visitors and hosted over 24 different support services, delivering 126 contact hours of support to local residents.

Located at 34 Railway Street, Euroa, the Hub provides a welcoming space where people can access recovery information, practical assistance and one-on-one support in a calm environment. Recovery can often involve navigating multiple agencies, completing paperwork and making important decisions, and the Hub is designed to make that process easier by bringing help together in one place.

Community members can drop in to ask questions, seek guidance or simply have a conversation with someone who understands the challenges of recovery. Private rooms are available for confidential discussions, and practical services such as printing and scanning are also available to assist with forms and documentation that often come with recovery processes.



The space is also becoming a reflection of community strength and hope. Students from Euroa Primary School recently donated the Hub's first piece of artwork, helping to create a warm and welcoming environment for visitors. Council is now working with other schools

across the Shire to continue adding artwork that celebrates the resilience of the community.

The Recovery Hub remains open weekdays from 9am to 3pm, with appointments available outside these hours if needed.

Community members are encouraged to drop in if they need support, information, or simply a place to start their recovery journey. The Hub team is there to listen and help connect people with the assistance they need.

In coming weeks, the Hub will also host a series of workshops designed to support community recovery. Community members are encouraged to keep an eye out for upcoming workshop announcements and join in where they can.

More time for community input to 2026 Summer Fires Parliamentary Inquiry

Strathbogie Shire Council has welcomed the decision by the Victorian Parliament's Environment and Planning Committee to extend the submission deadline for the Inquiry into the 2026 Summer Fires.

The deadline for community submissions has now been extended to Sunday 19 April 2026, giving residents, businesses and community organisations more time to share their experiences and insights.

The inquiry will examine a range of issues related to the fires, including preparedness and planning, the emergency response, the resilience of critical infrastructure, support for volunteers, environmental impacts and recovery efforts in affected communities.

Strathbogie Shire Mayor Cr Scott Jeffery said the extension was an important step in ensuring communities impacted by the January fires have a genuine opportunity to contribute to the inquiry.

"Our community is still very much in the recovery phase. Many people are focused on clean-up, navigating insurance, and beginning the long process of rebuilding," Mayor Jeffery said.

“Extending the submission deadline gives residents the time and space to share their experiences and help inform recommendations that can strengthen how Victoria prepares for, and responds to, bushfires in the future.”

Cr Jeffery encouraged anyone who had been impacted by the fires, or involved in response and recovery efforts, to consider making a submission.

“Local voices and lived experience are incredibly important in shaping better systems and stronger support for rural communities,” he said.

The inquiry is expected to hold public hearings after submissions close and will provide its report and recommendations to the Victorian Parliament later in 2026.

Community members can find more information about the inquiry and how to make a submission via the Victorian Parliament website at <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/2026firesinquiry>

Hazardous trees remain a risk after the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire

Thousands of trees across Strathbogie Shire were damaged during the Longwood Berrys Lane Fire, and many remain standing but unstable. These trees can pose a serious risk of injury or death, particularly when branches loosen or trunks weaken after fire damage.

As part of post-fire recovery efforts, Strathbogie Shire Council’s secondary impact assessment teams have assessed trees across the Shire. You may notice white markings on trees near your driveway, property entrance, or close to buildings. These markings indicate that the tree has been assessed and may pose a potential risk to structures or safe access to your property.



The markings provide safety information and recommendations for property owners, helping you understand which trees may require further assessment or management.

Examples of what the markings may indicate include:

- X – whole tree removal recommended
- X̄ (single stem) – removal of one trunk from a multi-stem tree
- H – hanger (a loose or broken branch caught in the canopy)
- P – pruning recommended
- D – debris

While there is no requirement for property owners to act on these markings, Council strongly recommends seeking advice from a qualified arborist if a tree could impact:

- the safety or condition of your home
- sheds or other structures
- access to your property.

Property owners are responsible for managing trees on private land. Fire-affected trees can become unstable over time, so it’s important to assess their condition before undertaking work or allowing others to operate nearby.

For properties included in the State-led Clean-Up Program, contractors may assess and remove hazardous trees where necessary to safely carry out building clean-up works.

Council is also addressing hazardous trees on Council-managed roads, where more than 2000 trees have been identified as posing a risk to road users. Crews are prioritising works in the highest-risk locations.

If you have concerns about hazardous trees on public land or roadside access near your property, you can contact Council for inspection and advice.

For a full explanation of tree markings, permits, and when to engage an arborist, read the Hazardous Trees FAQ here:

www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/services/emergency-preparedness/2026-bushfires/bushfires-recovery/2026-bushfires-hazardous-trees/

Stack sites

As post-fire clean-up continues, Council is working to identify suitable timber to establish community firewood stack sites across the Shire.

Where appropriate, usable timber from roadside tree removal will be retained for community use or habitat, with remaining material mulched or removed.

More information about locations and access arrangements will be shared with the community once sites are confirmed.

Planning fact sheets released to support rebuilding after the January 2026 fires

Strathbogie Shire Council has developed a suite of practical fact sheets to help residents and businesses understand planning pathways available when rebuilding after the January 2026 bushfires.

Recovery can involve navigating planning permits, temporary accommodation and rebuilding processes. These fact sheets aim to explain the key planning provisions available in plain language and help people understand what options may apply to their situation.

The information covers three key areas of rebuilding and recovery:

1. Planning exemptions for reconstruction

after an emergency – Clause 52.10

This fact sheet explains the planning provisions that may help streamline the process for rebuilding homes, businesses and other structures damaged or destroyed in an emergency such as a bushfire. In some circumstances, certain planning requirements may be simplified to help affected property owners rebuild more quickly.

Read the full fact sheet: http://tiny.cc/bushfires_building

2. Temporary accommodation for

home owners – Clause 52.07

This fact sheet outlines how residents who have lost their principal place of residence may be able to establish temporary accommodation on their property while rebuilding. It explains the conditions, timeframes and requirements that apply.

Read the full fact sheet: http://tiny.cc/bushfires_building

3. Temporary buildings to help businesses

re-establish – Clause 52.07

Local businesses affected by the fires may be able to install temporary buildings while permanent premises are rebuilt. This fact sheet explains eligibility requirements and key considerations for temporary business operations.

Read the full fact sheet: http://tiny.cc/bushfires_building

Council encourages residents and business owners who are planning to rebuild to speak with a Council Planning Officer early in the process to understand what permits, approvals or exemptions may apply to their property.

These fact sheets are designed to support the community through the rebuilding process and provide clear guidance during recovery

Women Leading Through Recovery – International Women’s Day Event

As our community continues to recover from the recent bushfires, Strathbogie Shire Council marked International Women’s Day with a special gathering that recognised the strength and leadership of women in times of challenge.

Held on 6 March at Fowles Wine, the event brought women from across the Shire together to connect, reflect and share experiences following the fires.

Guest speakers Michelle Roberts and Fyowna Norton spoke about leadership, resilience and the important role women play in supporting families, neighbours and entire communities through disaster and recovery.

With live music from local performer Gayle Mawson and time for conversation over afternoon tea, the event provided a moment for people to reconnect and acknowledge the quiet leadership and care that so many women have shown during the recovery period.

The gathering served as a reminder that community recovery is built not only through rebuilding, but through connection, compassion and the strength of people supporting one another.



Help if your property has been damaged

Help to clean-up your property is available if you are uninsured or underinsured. Emergency Recovery Victoria will remove eligible damaged homes, businesses and community assets at no cost. Community assets are social and cultural spaces. They include things like town halls and sports facilities. Supporting structures, like sheds, may also be eligible. Visit vic.gov.au/register-for-clean-up or call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760

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 853

Subscribe to this newsletter

If you'd like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox, please follow the link provided and enter your email details.

<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.

Upcoming Community events

Looking after yourself after the fires

- a community recovery event

Join us at Creighton's Creek Hall on Saturday 21 March for a community gathering focused on connection, support and recovery.

Although the fires are behind us, many people still feel the ongoing tiredness and stress that can follow. Coming together - sharing a meal, catching up, and checking in on neighbours - can make a real difference.

The Creighton's Creek Hall/CFA, with support from Council, is hosting this event featuring two highly respected disaster recovery specialists:

- Dr Rob Gordon
- Anne Leadbeater

After the speakers, stay for dinner and acoustic music - a chance to relax, reconnect, and enjoy time with your community. This evening is all about slowing down, sharing food and supporting one another. Everyone is welcome.

When: Saturday 21 March 2026

Time: Guest speakers at 5pm, followed by dinner

Where: Creighton's Creek Recreation Reserve

Community Meeting Invitation

Planning for Recovery in Ruffy

Community members are invited to attend an upcoming meeting at the Ruffy Community Hub to discuss how the community will be represented and how it can advocate for local needs as recovery continues.

A small "thinking group" has helped get things done - now we need everyone involved to shape the future, including advocacy, grants and facilities.

Representatives from Strathbogie Shire Council will attend, along with disaster recovery and community resilience consultant Anne Leadbeater.

When: Friday 13 March, 6pm arrival for a 6.30pm start

Where: Ruffy Community Hub, Nolan's Road

Dinner is provided as usual on a Friday but tickets must be booked for catering purposes.

Bookings via <https://www.trybooking.com/DKFGV>

Community members are encouraged to bring along ideas about the support the community needs as it transitions from emergency response into recovery. Everyone is welcome, including local groups, businesses, families and individuals.



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

COMMUNITY EVENT

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AFTER THE FIRES

*A community
connection dinner*



When - Saturday 21 March 2026 at 5pm

Where - Creighton's Creek Hall

This night is all about slowing down, sharing a meal, and spending time with others in the community.

The fires may be behind us, but there is a long road ahead. Sometimes the best thing we can do is come together — share a meal, catch up, and check in on our neighbours. Council is supporting the Creightons Creek Hall and CFA to host this Recovery Event, everyone across the community is invited to join us and to hear from two leading disaster-recovery experts.

Featuring:

Dr Rob Gordon - Clinical psychologist and trauma recovery expert with nearly 40 years' experience supporting individuals and communities after disasters. Dr Gordon will discuss common emotional responses following traumatic events and share practical strategies for supporting your wellbeing.

Anne Leadbeater - Anne Leadbeater is a community-resilience and disaster-recovery specialist with 30 years' experience helping communities rebuild after major emergencies across Australia and New Zealand. She develops national policy, trains recovery practitioners, and most recently co-authored the Australian Disaster Recovery Framework. Anne lives in Kinglake, Victoria, and received the Medal of the Order of Australia for her work after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL



Community MEETING

Step 1 to Community - Enabled Recovery

Friday 13th March at 6.00pm
at Ruffy Community Hub
and dinner provided

Your Voice Matters!

*Learn about the options available
for your community to be
represented and heard.*