

# Community Newsletter

## Longwood Berrys Lane Bushfire 26 March 2026

### Community Recovery Hub – here to support you on the road to recovery

The recent fires have touched every part of our community, and we know that recovery isn't a straight line. It looks different for each person, each family, and each property. What matters is that no one has to work through it alone.

The Community Recovery Hub in Euroa is here to help. It's a welcoming space where you can ask questions, access support, and connect with services that can help you rebuild and regain stability at your own pace.

#### How the Hub can help

Many residents are now turning their attention to rebuilding, and the Hub is ready to assist. Every Wednesday from 12 noon to 3pm, a planner, municipal building surveyor and environmental health officer will be available to answer questions about planning permits, rebuilding requirements, and the steps involved in getting your property back on track.

Beyond rebuilding advice, the Hub offers a wide range of support, including:

- one on one recovery assistance
- health and wellbeing services
- guidance on clean up and reconstruction
- information about financial support and grants
- business recovery advice
- referrals to government and specialist services.

#### More than rebuilding – reconnecting

Recovery isn't just about structures; it's about people. The Hub will also host community meetings, information sessions, and wellbeing activities designed to help neighbours reconnect, share experiences, and support one another.

Whether you need practical guidance or simply a friendly place to talk things through, the Recovery Hub is here for you.



#### Visit the Recovery Hub

34 Railway Street, Euroa

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm

Or by appointment 1800 065 993

If you're unsure how the Hub can support you, take a look at our upcoming Hub event in the "Upcoming community events" section later in the newsletter.

### Poly Tank recycling program – supporting our fire-affected communities

There's some positive progress for communities impacted by the fires, with a new recycling initiative nearly ready to launch.

Strathbogie Shire Council has been working closely with the Longwood Plains Conservation Management Network and Polymer Processors to create a free recycling pathway for fire-damaged poly materials, including water tanks, pipes and IBCs.

Rather than sending these materials to landfill, they'll soon be able to be recycled into new tanks and pipes—reducing environmental impact and helping ease the financial burden on residents. It's estimated that more than 200 damaged poly tanks could be diverted from landfill through this program.

This initiative is a great example of what can be achieved when local community groups, businesses and Council come together. It's also been designed with accessibility in mind, recognising that transport and disposal can be challenging following a disaster.

We're almost ready to get started, with most approvals now in place:

- Council EPA approval - received
- processor EPA approval - received
- transport approval - currently in progress.

We thank the community for your patience as we work through these final steps.

### What can be recycled?

Residents affected by the fires will be able to recycle:

- poly tanks
- poly pipe
- fire-damaged IBCs (Intermediate Bulk Container).

Materials will need to be cut into pieces no larger than 1m x 1m, with all metal fittings removed.

Once the program opens, items can be dropped off at:

Euroa Transfer Station, 46 Tip Road, Euroa

There's no strict limit on quantities, but if you have more than two large tanks, please contact Council ahead of time so we can plan accordingly.



### Need a hand?

We know this isn't an easy job. Council is currently exploring options with the Department of Justice and Community Safety to help with cutting and transporting materials. If this goes ahead, it will support residents who may need help on their properties.

If you need help completing the form our Community Recovery Officers at the Recovery Hub, 34 Railway Street will be able to assist you.

### Register your interest

An updated Expression of Interest form will be available next week, both online and in hard copy. This will help us understand who needs support and keep you updated as the program launches.

In the meantime, thank you to everyone who has contributed ideas, time and energy to get us to this point. It's another strong example of our community working together in recovery.

### Sharing our story: your photos from the January fires

In the weeks and months since the January 2026 fires, our community has shown incredible strength, care and resilience.

Many people have captured moments along the way, images of the landscape, the response, quiet acts of kindness, and the gradual steps toward recovery. These photos form an important part of our shared story.

Strathbogie Shire Council is inviting community members to share photographs taken before, during or after the fires. These images may help document what our community has experienced and support future storytelling, reflection and recovery.

We understand that for some, revisiting this time may be difficult. There is absolutely no expectation to participate, please only share if you feel comfortable.

If you would like to contribute, you can send your photos to: [communications@strathbogie.vic.gov.au](mailto:communications@strathbogie.vic.gov.au)

Please include your name, where the photo was taken, and (if you're comfortable) a short description or story behind the image.

Shared photos may be used in future Council communications, publications or local archives, with appropriate acknowledgement.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support one another as recovery continues.



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## A night of connection at Euroa BlazeAid Camp

There was a real sense of community at the recent Farmers Night held at the BlazeAid camp at the Euroa Showgrounds, where around 150 people came together for a well-earned break.

Farmers and fire-affected residents were joined by BlazeAid volunteers, community members, Lions Club representatives and supporters including David from Nutrien. The Euroa Tennis Club fired up the BBQ, with a generous spread of homemade desserts rounding out the evening.

More than anything, the night offered a chance to pause, connect and enjoy each other's company in a relaxed setting. Laughter carried across the grounds, and for those who took part in the impromptu paper plane competition, there was a welcome moment of lightness after a challenging few months.

With the success of the evening, more gatherings are planned for smaller, local fire-impacted communities in the months ahead—creating further opportunities for people to come together and support one another.

### Supporting recovery, day by day

Behind the scenes, the BlazeAid camp continues to play a vital role in recovery, with operations running smoothly and expected to continue for at least another six months.

Volunteer numbers naturally fluctuate, and efforts are ongoing to keep that support strong. BlazeAid is working closely with regional community groups, schools and organisations to encourage involvement. Recent support has included groups such as Scouts Victoria (Rovers), FCJ College Benalla, Kerang High School and Geelong Grammar's Timbertop campus, with 120 Timbertop students set to lend a hand over two days in late April.

### The numbers

The impact of the Longwood camp to date (as of 10 March 2026) highlights the scale of the recovery effort:

- 488 volunteers registered
- Average stay: 10.3 days
- 1,818 volunteer workdays on properties
- 638 volunteer workdays in camp
- 2,153 meals provided

Support for local farmers continues to grow:

- 226 farmers / 232 properties registered
- 83 properties started
- 2 properties completed.

Progress on the ground includes:

- 265.2 km of fencing cleared
- 107.91 km of fencing completed.

### How to get help



BlazeAid is here to support landholders needing fencing assistance as part of recovery.

If you need help, the best first step is to contact the Camp Coordinator directly via the BlazeAid website by visiting the Current Camps page.

If there isn't a camp near you:

- call council on 1800 065 993 to contact BlazeAid
- register your details online so you can be notified when support becomes available in your area.

#### More information and registration:

<https://blazeaid.com.au/registering-for-help>

#### For further support:

BlazeAid Hotline: 1300 333 546

Receive or Donate Hay Hotline: 0418 530 471

## Council advocates for community in bushfire inquiry

Strathbogie Shire Council has endorsed its submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2026 Victorian bushfires, ensuring the experiences of the local community are represented at a state level.

Adopted at the 17 March Council meeting, the submission draws on feedback from fire-affected residents, emergency services and recovery partners following the Longwood Berrys Lane fire.

Deputy Mayor Cr Claire Ewart-Kennedy said the submission reflects what Council has heard directly from the community in the weeks after the fires.

"Our community has been through an incredibly challenging time, and it's critical that their experiences are heard," Cr Ewart-Kennedy said.

"We've spent time listening to residents, farmers, businesses and community groups to understand what worked, what didn't, and where improvements are needed."

The submission highlights key priorities including stronger emergency preparedness and response, more resilient infrastructure, and ongoing support for community recovery.

Cr Ewart-Kennedy said the inquiry is an important opportunity to help shape better outcomes for the future.

"This is about making sure our community is better supported—from preparedness through to recovery - as we face more frequent and intense bushfires," she said.

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## Fire recovery update: tree works progress and what happens next

Our community has made remarkable progress in the ongoing recovery efforts following the recent fire event. The tree management program, one of the most significant components of the recovery, has reached several major milestones thanks to the dedication of our inspecting arborists, operations teams, and field crews.

### Where things stand

The scale of the work completed so far is substantial:

- 3,937 tree related jobs have been logged by our inspecting arborists
- 250 works packages have been created by Operations Administration
- 2,494 jobs have already been completed (For comparison, we completed 1,963 jobs in all of 2025 - highlighting just how large this year's effort has been)
- 113 high risk tree jobs remain, all located on Gap Rd.

All roads, except Gap Road, are now cleared of high risk trees.

This is a significant achievement and a testament to the hard work of everyone involved.



### Next steps

Crews will complete the remaining high-risk tree works shortly before taking a break.

Following this, attention will shift to finalising the stack sites and constructing hardstands in preparation for the next major phase: debris clearing.

There are 1,365 debris clearing jobs scheduled to begin after Easter. The process will follow these guidelines:

- material smaller than 300 mm will be chipped on site
- material larger than 300 mm will be left on site where space allows.

As a guide, this equates to roughly one tree trunk every 10 metres, though this will vary depending on road reserve width, terrain, and other local factors.

Where there is insufficient space, larger material will be transported to designated stack sites.

We'll continue to share updates as the recovery progresses. If you have questions or notice something we may have missed, please reach out—community feedback helps ensure the work remains safe, efficient, and transparent.

## Rates update for bushfire affected properties

Strathbogie Shire Council is continuing to support residents impacted by the January 2026 bushfires, including adjustments to rate notices where needed.

Third instalment rate notices have not been issued for properties within the bushfire impact zone. Council is currently working closely with valuers to reassess these properties to ensure rates fairly reflect the impact of the fires.

Once revaluations are complete:

- any necessary adjustments will be applied
- remaining balances for the 2025/26 financial year will be included in the fourth instalment notice.

Fourth instalment notices for all ratepayers are expected to be distributed in late May 2026, with payments due by Monday 22 June 2026.

If you have already paid your 2025/26 rates in full, you will not receive a third or fourth instalment notice. However, any adjustments will still be processed, and you will be contacted with details of any changes.

Council understands this is a challenging time for many in our community and appreciates your patience as we work through the revaluation and rating process.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Council's Customer Service team for assistance 1800 065 993.

## Reminder: VERRF payments now reopened

### Bushfire affected? Did you miss out on this support?

The Victorian Emergency Relief and Recovery Foundation (VERRF) payments have reopened and are available until 1 May 2026.

The Victorian Emergency Relief and Recovery Foundation (VERRF) is a charitable trust, supported by the State Government of Victoria.

Did you know? You can apply if:

- your home was significantly damaged or destroyed and deemed uninhabitable
  - the damage was caused by a Victorian bushfire during the 2025–26 summer
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- the property was your main place of residence at the time
- renters can apply (one application per household)
- business owners, sole traders and primary producers can apply if the place they trade from is also their main place of residence.

Find out more or apply online at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/apply-victorian-emergency-relief-and-recovery-foundation-payment>

## 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



## 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](http://vic.gov.au/register-for-clean-up) or call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760

## Upcoming Community events

### Recovery Hub Community Day

#### - you're invited

Join us at **34 Railway Street, Euroa on Saturday 28 March 2026, from 9am to 11am, for a relaxed and friendly community catch-up with the Council Recovery Hub team.**

Enjoy a bacon and egg roll from Euroa Rotary and grab a coffee while you chat with the team, ask questions and connect with neighbours.

#### What's on

- Euroa Gym – kids' activities and coffee van
- BlazeAid – meet the volunteers or register to get involved
- Biodiversity Recovery Alliance – paint a nesting box, try nature craft or create your own bee hotel

Come along, say hello and be part of this welcoming community morning.

### Recovery on the Hill

Longwood East, Longwood, Locksley, Upton Hill and Avenel communities will gather on 29 March at the Upton Hill Fire station to start the recovery conversation for that community.

**When: Sunday 29 March 2026**

**Time: 9am till 11am**

**Where: Upton Hill Fire Station 1475 Upton Rd, Upton Hill**

Join us for breakfast and a coffee RSVP by 25 March 2026 [recoveryonthehill2026@gmail.com](mailto:recoveryonthehill2026@gmail.com)

## Community Conversation Ruffy

**Sunday 29 April at 2pm.**

Facilitated by Council Recovery Team.

Light afternoon tea provided.

The conversation will explore different recovery models used by other communities and consider what might work best for Ruffy.

It's also a chance for people who have skills, experience, or a strong passion for seeing recovery done well to think about how they might contribute.

The aim is not to finalise everything at this session, but to begin a thoughtful discussion about how the community can work together to guide recovery in the months and years ahead.

### The questions we will work through on the day are:

What type of community recovery structure would best support the Ruffy community moving forward?

How should members of a community recovery structure be identified or selected to ensure fair and balanced representation of the community?

In your experience what size committee works well in your community?

## Art of renewal:

### RAGE Recycled Art Exhibition in Euroa

This Easter, Euroa will host the inaugural RAGE Recycled Art Exhibition from 2-8 April, bringing together more than 30 artists from across Victoria.

The exhibition will feature around 60 artworks created almost entirely from recycled and reclaimed materials – from salvaged metal and textiles to everyday objects given a new life through art.

Several of the participating artists were impacted by the January fires, making the exhibition a powerful reflection of renewal and resilience. At a time when many people in our community are focused on recovery, RAGE offers a reminder that creativity, connection and new beginnings can grow from difficult moments.

The event is also expected to attract visitors from across the state over the Easter period, bringing welcome activity to Euroa and supporting local cafés, shops and accommodation providers as the region continues its recovery.

The Exhibition was an initiative of the Rotary Club of Euroa and supported by Victorian Government Tiny Towns Fund in conjunction with Strathbogie Shire Council.

Residents and visitors are warmly invited to explore the exhibition across several locations in Euroa during Easter week.

[RAGE Recycled Art Exhibition](#)

**When: 2-8 April 2026**

**Where: Euroa, North East Victoria**

### Venues

1. St Paul's Hall – 1A Clifton Street
2. Vacant Block – Cnr Binney Street and Alex McMasters Lane
3. Sheilas Art Gallery – 52 Binney Street
4. Old Klofts Garage Site – Top of Binney Street on Railway Street
5. Euroa Arboretum – 76 Main Road

**Venues open from 10am – 4pm daily**

**Entry is free**

## Community Information Sessions

Residents are also invited to join our Community Information Sessions to meet directly with planners, building surveyors and emergency services representatives:

- **Wednesday 22 April, 5-6pm – Ruffy Hall**  
Duty planner, building surveyor, CFA liaison
- **Wednesday 29 April, 5-6pm – Creightons Creek Hall**  
Duty planner, building surveyor, CFA liaison

These sessions are a great opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and learn about support available for fire-affected properties.

## 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](mailto:info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au).**



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



# Recovery on the Hill

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Longwood East - Longwood - Locksley - Upton Hill - Avenel

## *Community connection morning*

**Let's talk about how to progress our communities recovery.  
Where to from here?**

*Sometimes the best thing we can do is come together-share a meal, catch up and check in on our neighbours*



When: Sunday 29 March 2026

Where: Upton Hill Fire Station

1475 Upton Rd, Upton Hill

Time: 9am till 11am

Join us for breakfast and a coffee

RSVP by 25 March 2026

[recoveryonthehill2026@gmail.com](mailto:recoveryonthehill2026@gmail.com)

or just drop in for a coffee

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Everyone in the community is invited

# RAGE

Regional  
Art  
Group  
Euroa

## Recycled Art Exhibition

Euroa, Victoria

2–8 April 2026

REINVIGORATE. RECYCLE. REIMAGINE.

A celebration of the war on waste tapping into the creativity, innovation, and talent thriving in our local communities.

**\$3000 Prize Award**

[www.rageeuroa.com.au](http://www.rageeuroa.com.au)



Rotary Club of Euroa

*Strathbogie*  
SHIRE COUNCIL