

March 2023 Edition

► MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Hello and welcome to the March 2023 newsletter. This will be the last Storm Recovery newsletter as we wind back our messaging around the June 2021 storm. While recovery projects will continue to run, the information now will be available on Council's Facebook page and the website under the Emergency tab.

The June 2021 storm that hit the Trentham and surrounding districts is regarded as the worst in living memory, with drenching rains and cyclonic strength winds.

In the first three months, July to September 2021, Council spent \$2.8 million on recovery works, which was an unbudgeted cash cost, placing great financial strain and workload pressure on the organisation. The financial cost continued to run at almost \$1 million per month — half of Council's monthly income. At the time, Council couldn't be confident about what percentage of these costs would be recouped through relief funding, but that uncertainty didn't impede the commitment to undertake clean-up works.

The State Government quickly tasked Bushfire Recovery Victoria (now called Emergency Recovery Victoria) to work with affected councils to manage the cleanup. As the intensity of the Storm Recovery Team's work now recedes, I think it is pertinent to reflect on some of the positives from this event that impacted such a large proportion of our community. We are extremely grateful for the funding we have received from ERV and the Australian and State Governments, particularly DFFH under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, which has enabled us to deliver on so many projects, both at a practical and an emotional level, for community members of Trentham and surrounds.

Thank you again to everyone in our community who helped neighbours, friends and strangers during the event and in the months since. We are a close-knit and caring community and I know this will continue

Cr Brian Hood



► THE BIG STORM BOOK

The Big Storm book was produced by the Storm Recovery Team as a way of sharing community experiences and recording the event in the words of the people who were there. Two hundred books were printed and feedback has been strong. Due to public enquiry, we are doing another print run.

The book covers the weather event, an overview by Cr Hood, the cleanup, wood processing, stories from Emergency Services, community members, community groups including artists. There is also a feature story on Dr Rob Gordon, a clinical psychologist who specialises in trauma recovery. It is a rounded profile that also discusses trigger signs and recovery tips.

While the storm is now 22 months behind us, there are some people who may take years to reflect on the event. Therefore, we encourage you to acquire a copy of this book, leave it on your coffee table, bookshelf or bedside table, and pick it up when you are ready.

For those that missed out, some books will be available at the Trentham Library.



► FIREWOOD, FENCEPOSTS + CHAINSAW TRAINING

Around 5000 logs were cleaned up from roadsides and public areas and delivered to the stack site at Little Hampton.

Over the period June to December 2021 the logs were processed into firewood, mulch, millable timber and fenceposts.

Free firewood was distributed to the community via the Shire's transfer stations.

Other timber was milled at the Creswick Timber Training facility. Fenceposts were milled at the Romsey facility, returned to the Hepburn Shire and distributed to residents who expressed an interest.

Chainsaw training courses were taken up by more than 70 participants, which puts skills back into the community.

We thank Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) for the funding to enable these programs to run.

The Central Highlands Rural Health team had funding to provide a woodcutter trailer, which contains chainsaws and wood splitters. It is available for use by community groups in order to help clean up private property. It will be managed by the Daylesford Foundation.

<https://thedaylesfordfoundation.org.au>



► ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Storm Recovery ran habitat workshops that empowered residents to help re-introduce fauna and wildlife to the environment.

Habitat workshops helped to focus on rebuilding the forest canopy to provide flora and fauna for wildlife. Nesting boxes were made by the Trentham Men's Shed and distributed to the 50 storm-affected residents who completed an Expression of Interest. These were accompanied by a selection of native plants for repopulating shelter belts and larger trees in paddocks.

Jeremy Neal of Wombat Native Plants at Bullarto South was kind enough to offer free planting advice. Funding for this project was through DELWP (now DEECA).

True to form, at our Preparedness for Wild Weather workshops, the weather turned on us and our main guest speaker, Damon Gameau, as he presented on Habitat your Environment. We had to move indoors with the 85 people who had come to hear the talk moved into the Uniting Church, who housed us for that event. The day was a great success.

Another workshop, funded by DELWP, focussed on making canopy rope for habitat. Canopy ropes are used to replace foliage that was lost so arboreal marsupials can move through the treetops. The canopy rope will be sliced into custom lengths for forest installation. There will be one installed on the Domino Trail for display and for residents to be able to view the rope through the use of monitors. We thank community groups who helped with the making of these ropes and hosting the workshops.

The inaugural Sustainable Hepburn Expo day was held mid-spring at the Trentham Railway Station. Working together with the sustainability, biodiversity and the waste teams at Hepburn Shire, the Storm Recovery Team was pleased with the great response to local Landcare group and other specialist speakers.

The day was opened by Uncle Rick Nelson of Dja Dja Wurrung and accompanied by Alvin Briggs (Yorta Yorta and Taungurung) on didgeridoo.



► MENTAL HEALTH

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, staff and trained volunteers checked on storm-affected residents and properties for follow-up assistance. Kate Riddell, a Mental Health First Aid Instructor and Trainer with experience in disaster recovery and community development, provided workshops to community groups.

Dr Rob Gordon, Clinical Psychologist and trauma recovery specialist, conducted workshops twice, to discuss the effects of trauma and steps to recovery and resilience.

At the end of 2022 we ran a photography competition and encouraged residents to share their stories and photos reminiscent of the storm or its aftermath. The competition was well-supported and some of the winners and their stories are in The Big Storm book. A presentation evening was held at the Trentham Neighbourhood House.

The Business Recovery program included a business mentoring session with Small Business Victoria, where business owners could access government assistance to help with upskilling in business management and a matchmaking service that brought potential staff and employers together. The highlight of the program was the re-establishment of the Trentham Twilight Festival, which was held on a perfect early summer evening in the town square.

► WORKSHOPS

We have run a series of workshops at Trentham as part of the Sustainability and Resilience workshops that are being held up until the end of March at the Trentham Neighbourhood House.

The **Wicking Beds** workshop was run at Trentham and the beds have been put in place and planted with edible plants. You can see them outside the Neighbourhood House.

There was a good turnout for the **Seedsavers** workshop, which demonstrated how to harvest seeds and encouraged participants to join the Seedsavers community group, which meets on the third Sunday of the month at the Glenlyon Community Hall. Participants got good hands-on experience of separating seeds for next year's harvest.

Another successful workshop has been **low-tox laundry products**. This workshop taught participants how to make their own environmentally friendly laundry products and it was very well received. Despite not having any power for the first hour, the **beekeeping** workshop was also well attended.

In conjunction with the Trentham Youth Group, we will be running a workshop on recycling bottle tops and developing a mosaic mural for the wall of the Trentham Neighbourhood House. It will depict the growth from the storm until now.

Upcoming Workshops

Sat 15 April	Edible Gardens
Sat 22 April	Beeswax Wraps
Sat 29 April	Keeping Backyard Chickens
Wed 10 May	Working with Clay (art as therapy)
Sat 3 June	Working with Clay (art as therapy)
Sat 10 June	Eat well, feel well, look well
Sat 24 June	Bringing Solar into your Home

We'd love to see you there so please register via Trentham Neighbourhood Centre
<https://www.trenthamnc.org.au/classes>
and click on the workshop link. (\$10 booking fee applies).

Or scan QR code.



EMERGENCIES PAGE

Council has an Emergencies page on their website.

Future news and information relating to current emergencies will be posted here and we recommend you familiarise yourself with it beforehand.

www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/storm-recovery

