



June 2022



# Storm Recovery Special Edition

## MOVING FORWARD

RESILIENT YARRA RANGES

'Resilient Yarra Ranges' is a project delivered by Yarra Ranges Council to increase disaster preparedness, risk management, recovery and future resilience.

Through seven key programs, we aim to increase the community's ability to mitigate, avoid, withstand and recover from the effects of bushfires, floods or storm, which are increasing in frequency as a result of climate change.

### Place based resilience planning

Will bring communities, local businesses, support organisations and agencies together from Monbulk, Healesville, Yarra Junction and their surrounds to benchmark and strengthen resilience.

### Tree management and clean-up

Funding requested to complete clean-up in Council open spaces and bushlands from the 2021 storm, as well as delivering a proactive tree management program in high-risk areas.

### Resilient energy precinct

A joint venture from Monash University and Council to assess the feasibility for a resilient microgrid across essential buildings in Monbulk.

### Resilient buildings

Multiple Council community buildings that serve as emergency relief centres will be upgraded with a generator plug-in point and/or solar power capabilities.

### Changing places facility

Provides suitable facilities for people who are unable to use standard accessible toilets at Kilsyth Sports Centre, which is also a designated emergency relief centre. This fills a need in the provision of emergency amenities for people who are unable to use standard accessible amenities.

### Bushfire risk assessment

A bushfire risk assessment will be commissioned for the areas of the Dandenong Ranges impacted by the 2021 storm which will assist in the rebuilding process.

### Emergency relief network

Will strengthen the role and involvement of the Yarra Ranges Emergency Relief Network to provide better coordinated support and material aid resources across Yarra Ranges.

Council is looking forward to delivering these priorities which will support community preparedness for future weather events across Yarra Ranges.

The June 2021 storm was like nothing we have experienced before.

For those who live in the Yarra Ranges, what happened during last year's violent storm is still raw, and many are still on their recovery journey.

For some, that recovery journey is just starting while others may have made some progress over several months. For some the fallen trees are a reminder of the storm and for others something they want to be able to treasure into the future.

Whatever the case, Yarra Ranges Council has been and is continuing to work to help and support those impacted by the storm.

This special edition of the Storm Recovery Newsletter highlights the progress and work that has been undertaken over the last 12 months. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding support from the community, during and after the storm.

Our heartfelt thanks to each and every community group and member for the assistance they provided, the shoulder they lent, the support they gave and the resilience they developed for their neighbourhood.

### Further information

To receive dedicated Storm Recovery news, register for the Storm Recovery E-Newsletter at: [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/newsletter](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/newsletter).

For Planning information and assistance call 9294 6594 or visit [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/rebuild](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/rebuild)

Residents who have experienced trauma, damage or loss as a result of the June storm are also able to discuss their circumstances with the Victorian Storm Recovery Support Program that is coordinated by Windermere by contacting 0408 521 320.







On 9 June, 2021, we experienced the most significant storm event in Victoria's history. The year since then has held incredible challenges for impacted communities, but what has been true from the start, and what will always be true, is that we're here to help.

Since June 2021, Council's Recovery Planning and Rebuilding Team has been on-hand to offer advice and assistance for those going through their recovery journey.

Council held specific planning and rebuilding events in April for residents who lost their homes which included presentations from planning consultants, landslip experts, architects and Dr Rob Gordon. In addition to these events, planning permit fees for properties damaged or destroyed by the storm are waived.

To date, 173 properties have been reported by the storm and 76 are considered uninhabitable. Contact 9294 6594 to book an appointment or ask about any planning matters related to the June 2021 storm.

Insurance issues have been and continue to be at the top of the agenda for many residents.

Council teamed up with the Insurance Council of Australia to host virtual one-on-one consultations where Insurance company representatives offered free advice for storm-related issues.

Questions and answers from this event can be found on Council's Recovery website: [www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/insurance](http://www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/insurance).

Residents impacted by the June 2021 storm who are continuing to negotiate with their insurers can contact Eastern Community Legal Centre on 1300 325 200.

During the storm, power and internet was lost to over 50,000 residents for anything between three days to three months.

Ten Council facilities now have internet satellites for community use during emergencies and eight have generator hook-ups:

- Karwarra Gardens
- Olinda Recreation Reserve
- Monbulk Community Sports Pavilion\*
- Monbulk Living and Learning Centre
- Powelltown Sporting Clubrooms
- The Patch Public Hall
- Kilsyth Sports Stadium\*
- Mooroolbark Community Centre\*
- Warburton Millgrove Sporting Complex\*

## Support is here for you

The State Government funded Victorian Storm Recovery Support Program will continue to be available to residents during 2022, which will enable Windermere, Anglicare and Oonah to continue with their important support services for a few more months.

Residents who have experienced trauma, damage or loss as a result of the June storm are able to discuss their circumstances with Windermere on 0408 521 320.

There is also a wealth of information on Council's Recovery website at [www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/home](http://www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/home).

## Storm anniversary events

While some people do not want to dwell on the date of the first anniversary of the storm event, others expressed the need to gather, reflect on shared experiences, and/or thank people who helped.

After consultation with community groups, Yarra Ranges Council offered small grants to enable community-led gatherings to be held between Friday 27 May and Friday 24 June.

A total of \$5,430 was allocated for children's activities to community tree plantings. Events have focused on the importance of reconnecting with neighbours, and the opportunity to gather, talk, connect and share stories.

A full list of all the available events can be found here: [www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/anniversary-events](http://www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/recovery/anniversary-events).

# Community Feedback shapes Council Response

## Community suggested...

- 1 Establishing Community Recovery Committees
- 2 Creating a community feature built from fallen tree wood.
- 3 Provide free firewood and mulch for storm affected communities
- 4 Monthly dinners hosted by the Council
- 5 Plan and act regarding dangerous trees
- 6 An improvement to initial response times
- 7 Better power and NBN solutions \underground power
- 8 Information and guidance about insurance provided to the community
- 9 A relief centre set up in the Hills region
- 10 Identification labels for residents' cars to pass through roadblocks seamlessly
- 11 Change-over switches on private property for generators
- 12 Compile a book of community stories
- 13 Unregistered tractors be used to help with clean-up
- 14 A review of emergency plans

## What has progressed

Four Regional Community Recovery Committees have been established with a focus on supporting community-led recovery initiatives.

Trees that can be reused for community purposes have been provided to a variety of artists and community groups.

Two free firewood sessions have been provided to the community and 17,000m<sup>3</sup> of mulch was made available.

Some community groups are undertaking this.

BRV/Council coordinated a program to remove dangerous trees. BRV's program is now completed.

Emergency Management Victoria are undertaking a review of all agencies.

Satellites at 10 emergency relief centres have been installed and generator hook-ups at 8 Council facilities.

Council hosted two information sessions with the Australian Insurance Council

Over the next 12 months Council is reviewing Community Relief Facilities

We are working with Victoria Police on this.

This needs to be undertaken by a private and qualified electrician. Details available on Council's website in relation to generators.

Currently being considered.

We are working with VicRoads and the Dept of Transport on this.

As part of our standard practice, Council has undertaken an internal review and Emergency Management Victoria has also conducted two reviews.