

Flood Recovery in Murrindindi Shire

Edition #4

In this edition

The wet weather has hit again, with some flooding reported along the Goulburn River and increased releases from Lake Eildon.

This is proving to be very hard for those who personally experienced the floods last year and those who saw family and friends go through it.

With many people still doing it tough, we want to remind the community that there are still a variety of information and support available. We encourage everyone to access whatever help they need now and in the future.

To improve access to some services, Council is hosting a series of pop-up flood recovery hubs in communities around the Shire, including monthly pop-ups at the Yea Cattle Sales.

Murrindindi Shire residents are also welcome to attend Mitchell Shire Council's Flood Recovery Hub in Seymour for support.

Throughout the Shire, flood recovery efforts continue. For many it will be a long and difficult process. This newsletter will continue to provide you with the latest information on flood recovery from Council and our partner agencies.

If you know anyone who would benefit from the information in this newsletter, please share it with them and encourage them to sign up at the link below:

murrindindi.vic.gov.au/recoverynewsletter

Topics

- Upcoming events
- Council's advocacy
- Flood Recovery Hotline - updated hours
- Mitchell Shire Flood Recovery Hub
- Water levels - stay informed
- Available support
 - Personal support
 - Practical and financial support
 - Agriculture support
 - Business support
- Local updates
 - Acheron
 - Thornton



FLOOD RECOVERY HOTLINE
1800 560 760

Press 9 for an interpreter

8 am – 6 pm
Monday to Friday

Closed weekends and public holidays

A stylized illustration of a person with purple hair wearing a headset, sitting at a laptop. The person is wearing a green shirt. The laptop screen shows a blue circle and a white arrow pointing to the right.

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Online Flood Hub

Council has a dedicated Flood Hub on our website, where we share updates about the Victorian Floods along with links to important information and resources to help you and your loved ones.

Visit the Flood Hub at:

murrindindi.vic.gov.au/floods2022

Events

Murrindindi Shire Council is running a series of pop-up hubs for you to meet the flood recovery team. This is an opportunity to share your story and to find out what support is available to you. Come and meet the flood recovery team at one of the scheduled pop-up hubs below:

- Molesworth Hall, Wednesday 19 July, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm
- Alexandra Library, Thursday 27 July, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm
- Yea Library, Tuesday 1 August, 5.00 – 6.30 pm
- Yea Library, Wednesday 2 August, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Dates are currently being planned for the Flowerdale, Kinglake, Glenburn and Buxton communities.

The flood recovery team will also be attending the Yea Cattle Sales each month to offer information and support to farmers:

- Friday 4 August, 10.30 am – 3.00 pm
- Friday 1 September, 10.30 am – 3.00 pm

For more information about resources available for your ongoing recovery, visit the Flood Hub on Council's website. This hub has information on available grants, infrastructure updates, and support services available. Find out more at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/floods2022

Advocacy

Lake Eildon storage and water releases

Murrindindi Shire Council has joined other community members in advocating to the Victorian State Government urgently requesting an interim cap of 90-95% for Lake Eildon, to allow headroom for potential flooding events.

We have asked the State Government to review Goulburn Murray Water's (GMW) operating rules for Lake Eildon, and review the current policy that allows the Dam to be at 100% full by 1 November 2023.

To date the State Government has neglected to address the storage management concerns and to the request to include flood mitigation at the Lake Eildon Dam. Council will continue to put pressure on the State Government on behalf of our community, to protect the municipality from further inundation.



Flood Recovery Hotline - New hours

As you navigate your way through recovering from the floods, it is important to remember that you aren't alone, and there is support available for you.

You can call the Flood Recovery Hotline on **1800 560 760**. Operators can help you with clean-up services, finding a place to stay, financial support and mental health and wellbeing support.

The hotline is open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and closed on weekends and public holidays. Press 9 for an interpreter.

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Mitchell Shire Flood Recovery Hub - Murrindindi Shire residents welcome

Mitchell Shire Council now has a new Recovery Hub located in Seymour, open on weekdays from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm. A rotating roster of service organisations is available for individuals and businesses impacted by the floods. The Goulburn Flood Recovery Service (GFRS) is available onsite every day to everyone impacted by the floods.

Residents from across Murrindindi Shire are welcome to attend to find out what supports are available to them and to talk with services that operate in the Shire.

Appointments are not necessary, drop-ins welcome.

Please drop in if you need some information or support including:

- register for structural assessments and Make Safe program
- apply for relief payments
- links to local support and services including housing, food relief and mental health
- access to a range of other information and resources including Disaster Legal Help and information for tenants and landlords
- tips to clean up safely including what to do about mould
- free wi-fi and some public computers are available



Water levels - Stay informed

Throughout the end of June, water releases from Lake Eildon were up to 12,000 ML. With saturated soil and rain coming through, we have seen localised flooding across parts of Murrindindi Shire, again impacting landholders and businesses, many of whom are still recovering from last year's flood event. Areas downstream such as Euroa have also been impacted by localised flooding.

On 28 June, Goulburn-Murray Water announced it will be aiming to reduce water levels in Eildon to 94% by 1 August 2023. Releases of 12,000ML per day are expected throughout July in order to meet this goal. They also announced they have pushed back the target date of full capacity from 1 October to 1 November.

It is important to stay aware of conditions through the wet season. You can monitor Lake Eildon storage levels and releases on the Goulburn-Murray Water website: g-mwater.com.au

Read the recent media release from Goulburn-Murray Water published on Tuesday 4 July 2023.

g-mwater.com.au/news-updates/media-releases

You can follow emergency warnings on the VicEmergency App or on the website at emergency.vic.gov.au

Stay up to date

If you know of anyone else who may benefit from this information, please share this with them and encourage them to subscribe to receive our Flood Recovery News direct to your inbox. Printed copies will be made available at Council's Libraries and Customer Service Centres. Subscribe online at: murrindindi.vic.gov.au/recoverynewsletter

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Roadside debris removal in Acheron

Six-hundred cubic metres of timber debris were removed from the river at the Breakaway Bridge in Acheron after the October 2022 floods. Council, in collaboration with Emergency Recovery Victoria contractors, coordinated the removal of remaining debris from the roadside on Breakaway Road, opposite the Twin Rivers Caravan Park.

The debris has been transported to the Romsey Green Waste Facility. The river debris from Acheron is salvageable and will be recycled into valuable products.

Once river flows decrease, and GMW reduces the releases from Lake Eildon to a manageable level, Council contractors will begin work around the bridge to remove the recent build-up of debris and begin bank stabilisation works.



Available Support

Health and wellbeing support

Goulburn Flood Recovery Service

If you have been affected by the October 2022 Floods, you are eligible to receive support from a Flood Recovery Support Worker, through the Goulburn Flood Recovery Service.

Find out more at our Flood Hub, or contact the Flood Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760.

Mental health and wellbeing support

Disasters can have a devastating impact on people. You don't have to go through it alone.

If you or a loved one needs extra support, speak with your local doctor, a mental health professional, counsellor or psychologist. It can also be helpful to start a conversation with someone who is independent but still understanding.

Visit the Flood Hub for a list of services to support you and your family.

Flood Response Support for Victorian primary producers

The National Centre for Farmer Health offers initiatives for primary producers impacted by the floods. This organisation delivers initiatives to support farmer mental health and wellbeing:

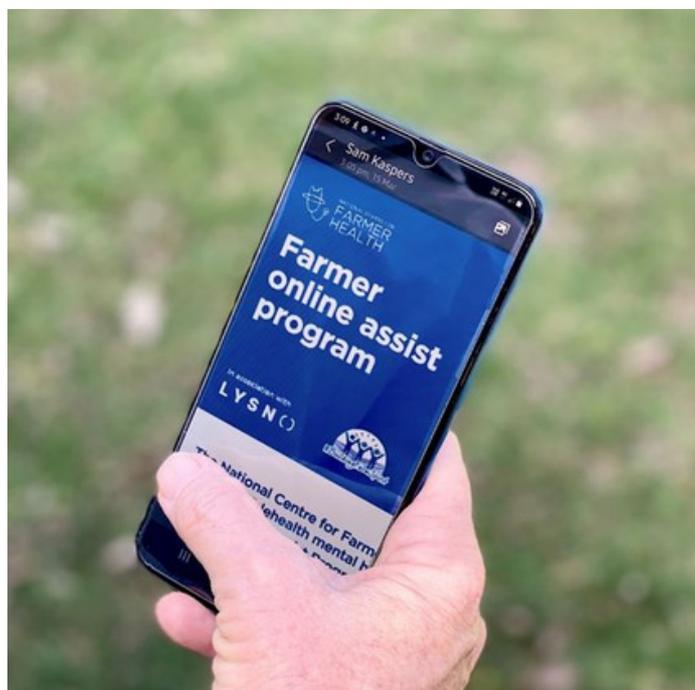
- Farmer Online Assist Program: Provides Victoria's flood-affected farmers with up to three free sessions with a farmer health trained and registered psychologist.
- #BuildingFarmSpirit social media campaign: Provides a welcoming space for farmers to share stories of how they navigate challenging times and is open to all forms of creativity.

Find out more on their website:

farmerhealth.org.au/buildingfarmspirit

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Family violence support

Cases of family violence may increase after an emergency. Several organisations are working within Murrindindi Shire to provide information and support for family violence and child protection issues.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 000. For anyone requiring non-emergency support for family violence or child protection issues, The Orange Door is a first point of contact on 1800 560 760. For information on other services please visit our Flood Hub.



Agriculture support

Digital newsletter for farmers

Farmers and service providers are encouraged to subscribe to Agriculture Victoria's Flood Recovery digital newsletter to access the latest events and information via the Agriculture Victoria website: agriculture.vic.gov.au

Financial and practical support

Financial support

Whether you're a resident, business owner, or farmer, financial support is available to you. See our Flood Hub for more information.

Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) is available to assist primary producers to understand and apply for flood and storm support. Primary Producers can contact their local RFCS on 1300 771 741.

More information is available at Rural Finance by calling 1800 260 425 or visiting the website at ruralfinance.com.au

Flood waste disposal

Council is assisting impacted residents and businesses with disposal of flood-damaged waste, including damaged farm fencing.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/floods2022 for information on available support.

Emergency Recovery Victoria's structural assessments

Homeowners, small business owners and not-for-profit property owners can register for an all-hazard structural assessment if eligible properties with structures have been damaged or destroyed by floods.

Register at: vic.gov.au/register-structural-assessment-october-2022-floods

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Business support

Murrindindi Business e-Newsletter

If you operate a business in Murrindindi Shire and have not done so yet, you can register for the Murrindindi Business e-Newsletter on our website: murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Your-Business

Partners in Wellbeing Helpline

Sole traders, business owners and their employees can continue to call the Partners in Wellbeing Helpline on **1300 375 330** for free and confidential advice, available seven days a week. Trained financial counsellors, business advisers and wellbeing coaches are available to provide confidential one-on-one support. The Partners in Wellbeing program will also include embedded community mental health and wellbeing services.

Business Relief Service

The Business Relief Service offers free, confidential, one-on-one support to flood-affected business owners from a local business relief advisor via telephone and face-to-face. Visit the Business Victoria website for details: business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs

During July this service will be transitioning to the Business Recovery Advisory Service, providing an extended case management service to assist small businesses in their longer-term recovery.



Business Relief Services

Speak with a Business
Relief Adviser call Business
Victoria Hotline 13 22 15

Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants

Grants of \$20,000 and \$50,000 are available for eligible businesses groups. Funds can be used by chambers of commerce, trader groups, industry associations and more to deliver locally led projects to support flood-affected small businesses recover and thrive. Find out more on the Business Victoria website:

business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs



Local updates

Breakaway Bridge, Acheron

Council hosted a community meeting for the Acheron community in Alexandra on 30 May 2023. At this meeting Council provided updates on Breakaway Bridge – what we know, what we didn't know, and what needs to be done. Approximately 40 residents attended this meeting, sharing concerns and feedback on the recovery.

We have put together some FAQs following that meeting which you can find on the Breakaway Bridge, Acheron page of our [Flood Hub](#).

The next step is completing the bank stabilisation works on the northern side of the river to protect further erosion of the road reserve. Planning is being finalised with timelines subject to river heights and volumes.

We are continuing to engage with impacted residents and businesses in Acheron and will keep the community up to date with details and timelines for any planned works.

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Thornton

The installation of the two stormwater backflow prevention devices in Thornton has been completed.

Following the October 2022 floods, and in consultation with the local community, Council installed two custom backflow prevention devices on the two stormwater outflow pipes that empty into the waterway on Taggerty-Thornton Road.

During periods of low water levels, these devices, also known as reflux valves or flap gates, allow the drains to function normally.

Once water levels in the creek rise above the level of the drains, the devices prevent the back flow of water into the stormwater system.

Once the water levels recede in the creek, we will place more rock beaching around the valves to prevent erosion.

Thank you to the Thornton community for your patience while these devices were designed and installed.



What do you want to see in future editions?

We would love to hear from you. If you have any suggestions about what you'd like to see in future editions of the newsletter, please let us know by emailing communications@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

We also encourage you to share your story with us. We'd like to know how you are coping in recovering from the floods and if you have any ideas that might be helpful for other people in our communities.