



Storms & Floods

Recovery Update – July 2021

On the ground – What’s happened so far

Since the June storm and flood event, there have been continuous assessment, recovery and support activities taking place in and around Walhalla.

Baw Baw Shire Council, Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV), Regional Roads Victoria (RRV), DELWP, Parks Victoria (PV), and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) have maintained regular on-the-ground contact with residents and business owners in the weeks since.

The summary below provides a snapshot of the various activities to date as well as clarifying the relevant agencies responsibility.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

BRV is the lead authority coordinating and supporting the clean-up and recovery work for all communities impacted by the Victorian June 9-10 storm and floods.

Storm and Flood Clean-up Program

BRV has established the Storm and Flood Clean-Up program, which is fully funded by the Commonwealth and State Government and is free to eligible property owners, whether they were insured or not.

Registrations for BRV’s Storm and Flood Clean-Up Program for structures on private property are now open. The program is fully funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government and is free to eligible property owners, whether they were insured or not.

BRV is also accepting registrations of trees on private property that were made hazardous because of the June 2021 storms and are within falling distance of a structure. Eligible trees can be professionally assessed and recommendations made for their treatment.

Affected residents are urged to visit brv.vic.gov.au/cleanup or to call 1800 560 760 to check their eligibility and register for support.

Every property is different and will be managed on a case-by-case basis. BRV is contacting registered property owners and working with them to explain the process, and see that works are done as safely and efficiently as possible.

Storm and Flood Recovery Hotline

The Storm and Flood Recovery Hotline is a single state-wide number that Victorians impacted by the June 2021 storms and floods can call for help or assistance.

Operators can assist you with registering for Clean-Up of structures on private property or accessing your own Recovery Support Worker, mental health and wellbeing support, financial counselling and information on available payments.

The Recovery Hotline is open from 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) and 9am to 1pm on weekends.

On the ground activities in Walhalla

BRV CEO Carmel Flynn visited Walhalla with Baw Baw Shire Council CEO Mark Dupe and Municipal Recovery Manager Christian Thomas on June 29 to look at the situation on the ground, hear resident concerns and discuss the community’s recovery priorities.

Regional coordination of collaborative efforts

BRV has appointed a Regional Recovery Director to coordinate the efforts of all the various authorities and agencies involved in the recovery efforts.

Multiple in-person and online meetings have taken place each week since the storm event, involving representatives from Council, RRV, DELWP, Parks Victoria, the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and other impacted and associated agencies.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

WGCMA staff have visited Walhalla on site several times over the past weeks, and have met with Baw Baw Shire Council and DELWP to collaborate on recovery efforts.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Personal wellbeing

Wellbeing and welfare phone checks began immediately after the storm and were coordinated by BBSC.

Council has maintained a regular presence with a Recovery Officer to understand what the community needs in terms of recovery.

Council has and continues to support affected residents with referrals for payments from the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund.

Council has also organised Red Cross to door knock and engage directly with residents to provide psychological first aid where required.

Infrastructure Maintenance

The Council Infrastructure Maintenance team inspected the township the day after the event to assess damage to Council assets

Council teams arranged and erected bollards along Stringers Creek where the road had been washed away. This was done as a temporary safety measure until Regional Roads Victoria could place more substantial water bollards.

Council teams ensured the closure of the North Gardens Camp Ground.

Council continues to conduct twice weekly inspections of all 'make safe' infrastructure, and continues to conduct fortnightly maintenance activities.

Impact Assessments

Council engaged Fire Rescue Victoria to conduct drone inspections of the township.

Council's Municipal Building Surveyor and an Environment Health Officer have been on the

Staff have assessed damage to existing works in Stringers Creek and bank stabilisation works at the Railway Yards.

Subject to funding support via Treasury Advance, WGCMA will undertake works to repair existing WGCMA assets/works in Stringers Creek and Railway Yards.

WGCMA have also undertaken minor removal works in Stringers Creek, including debris and logs.

ground conducting Secondary Impact Assessments of structures.

Council arranged for SES to sandbag a dwelling at risk due to erosion.

Council met with Bushfire Recovery Victoria on site in town to inspect damage and advocate for State and Federal funding support.

Road Network Team

Council's Road Maintenance Team has and continues to carry out inspections of Council owned road infrastructure in and around Walhalla. Council has undertaken Secondary Impact Assessment of the roads north of Walhalla.

Council has also inspected and assessed all Council and privately owned bridges. Copies of reports for private bridges will be provided to property owners.

Executive outreach and advocacy

Baw Baw Shire Council CEO Mark Dupe was onsite in Walhalla on Thursday 17 June and Tuesday 29 June to meet with residents.

On 21 June Mayor of Baw Baw Shire Cr Danny Goss met with Minister for Roads and Road Safety the Hon. Ben Carroll MP onsite at Mt Baw Baw Tourist Road to advocate for needed State funding support.

Mark Dupe met with Victorian Emergency Commissioner Andrew Crisp on Wednesday 30 June to advocate on behalf of impacted community members.

Director of Community Infrastructure Cohen Van der Velde and Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance visited Walhalla on 11 July.

What happens next? Community meetings and recovery pop-ups

With efforts now moving into recovery, clean-up and repair, an in-person community meeting had been planned to engage the local community and seek their input into next steps for Monday 19 July.

With the snap COVID-19 lockdown taking effect at 11.59 on Thursday 15 July, however, **this meeting has now been postponed.**

In person recovery pop-ups are also planned fortnightly for the next three months (if and as needed) to make it easy for residents to speak directly with Council about their pressing concerns.

Alternative dates for a local community meeting are currently being discussed, as are the commencement dates for the recovery pop-ups on site in Walhalla.