



Storm Recovery Newsletter, July 2021

Contacts for residents/businesses

The Macedon Ranges **Recovery Operations Centre (ROC)** can be contacted Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm, by calling 5422 0237 or emailing recovery@mrsc.vic.gov.au

Hardship assistance and financial support

Contact the **Department Families, Fairness and Housing** on 1300 475 170 or via email EmergencyHardshipPayments@dffh.vic.gov.au

Council trees, blocked drains, safety concerns or access issues

Council can assist in clearing trees and debris where it is causing access issues to and from your property. Please call 5422 0237

NBN and internet connections

If people have had their power restored and their nbn service has not come back online, they should speak with their phone and internet provider. nbnLocal based in Bendigo is currently working with local organisations and phone and internet provider to access and restore the parts of the nbn network that have been affected.

If your service over the nbn network isn't working:

- If you're experiencing a power outage visit nbn.com.au/powerblackouts
- If you have power, but are experiencing issues with your service over the nbn network, contact your phone and

internet provider as a field technician may be required to visit your premises

- Have more questions?
Email vicstorms@nbnco.com.au

Road closures

The storm has caused dangerous road conditions and a number of local roads are closed, however they might not be sign posted. If you need to travel, be aware there may still be trees and debris over roads. Visit **VicTraffic** at traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au for main road closures. For urgent road hazards call 13 11 70.

Transfer Stations and Waste Collection

All transfer stations have reopened. Check our website for opening times or ring our customer service desk. Normal bin services to resume with additional service to affected areas being planned with more information to come.

FOGO Bins

Put food waste in your FOGO bin first and then top up with green waste.

Roadside wood collection

An increase in roadside collection of timber is causing traffic hazards in storm-affected areas. **Council** and **Regional Roads Victoria** do not give permission for the removal of mulch, timber or other materials from roadsides.

Council crews are conducting a large-scale storm response and recovery operation across the shire, continuing to focus on those requests to clear that are posing a threat to lives or property. Trees and branches/limbs that have fallen in the storm or are a risk to our community will be cleared from nature strips and road reserves as quickly as possible, but this could take weeks into months in some areas. Officers are identifying sensitive conservation areas whilst gradually reducing the fire hazard.

Residents are urged to drive safely and to current conditions on local roads. Please slow down in the vicinity of roadside tree clearing works and take care when near heavy vehicles and crews.

Insurance

If you have property or contents insurance, you should contact your insurance company as soon as possible after the event. Ask your insurer for advice on actions you should take. Do not discard or throw away damaged items without first consulting your insurance company. Make a list of items that have been damaged and take photographs if possible. Keep receipts for any emergency repair work.

For assistance with insurance contact the **Insurance Council of Australia** on 1800 734 621 (24 hour hotline). You can find information on lodging a claim following a disaster here: www.disasters.org.au

Access to clean-up funding

Residents whose homes, businesses and sheds were destroyed in the June floods and storms can have their properties cleaned up at no cost, to help local communities to recover as soon as possible. Assistance is being provided through the jointly funded

Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) announced on 4 July 2021.

Initial statewide funding of \$55.5 million has been provided for the first phase of the program which will be delivered by **Bushfire**

Recovery Victoria (BRV) in partnership with Johns Lyng Group, Australia's largest disaster recovery specialist. This voluntary program is open to eligible property owners impacted by recent storms, regardless of whether or not they were insured. Eligible properties owners in Macedon Ranges Shire are encouraged to check their eligibility and register for the clean-up program at www.br.vic.gov.au/cleanup or by phoning 1800 560 760. Please carefully read BRV's webpage for detailed information.

Should you still need assistance to register online or simply require help to navigate this process, you are welcome to call Council's Recovery Operations Centre on (03) 5422 0237.

Planning permit advice

Many local properties have been impacted by falling trees and/or falling branches. An existing exemption from the need for a planning permit is in place for repairs to existing buildings, including the replacement of walls and roofs for sheds and houses that may have been impacted by the storm.

The repairs of your house and/or shed must be "like for like" to receive an exemption from the need of a planning permit. Unfortunately, if your building structure needs to be completely rebuilt you may require a planning permit, however, the Council team will work with you to ensure a decision can be made quickly for you. In all instances, either structural repairs or replacement building you will need a Building Permit from a private building surveyor.

For more information about whether you need a planning permit please contact Council's planning team on (03) 5422 0333 or email planning@mrsc.vic.gov.au

Protect your health

Nurse-on-Call on 1300 60 60 24 - this is a phone service that allows you to discuss any health related issue with a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria.

Do not use appliances designed for outdoor use inside a home, basement, garage, caravan or tent. Appliances such as BBQs, grills, camp stoves, or other devices that burn petrol, liquid petroleum gas, natural gas or charcoal should only be operated in a well-ventilated outdoor area away from open windows and vents.

Mental health

It is normal to have strong reactions following an emergency or distressing event. People can experience a range of physical, mental, emotional, and behavioural reactions. There are a number support services available to assist you and your family recover. If at any time you are worried about your mental health or the mental health of a loved one, call **Lifeline** 13 11 14.

Other contacts:

- Your doctor or local community health centre
- A counsellor or psychologist
- **Parentline** 13 22 89 or the **Kids Helpline** 1800 55 1800
- **NURSE-ON-CALL** 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- **Australian Psychological Society Referral Service** 1800 333 497
- Counselling support service is available through the **Victorian Council of Churches**. For further information please visit www.vccem.org.au/floods

Family violence

Emergencies can put additional stress on close relationships and families. Abuse in a relationship is never acceptable, regardless of the circumstances, and is never the fault of the victim.

The Orange Door is the access point to services for adults, children and young people who are experiencing family violence. Visit www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre provides confidential support for women and children living with family violence. Call 1800 015 188 or visit www.safesteps.org.au

The Men's Referral Service is a confidential telephone service for men who have been victimised by a partner or family member or might be using violence towards a family member. Call 1300 766 491 or visit <https://ntv.org.au/>

Call 000 if you, or someone you know, is in immediate danger.



Frequently asked questions

Who can help me clear trees on my private property?

- Insurance
- Private contractors
- Council is advocating to the State Government to provide assistance to residents with this clean up.

If you do not have access to insurance or financial means to engage a private contractor and think there is a dangerous tree on your property that needs someone to look at, please call our Recovery Operations Centre on **5422 0237** and staff can assist with the options available to you.

Can you give me any contractor recommendations?

Council cannot advise on which contractors people should engage on their private land. To find a local contractor, you can search for terms such as 'Arborist' or 'Tree removal' in the Yellow Pages or White Pages phone directories.

Asking for recommendations from neighbours, local friends and family, or online community groups can also be a way to find contractors. When engaging anyone to work on your land, residents are encouraged to conduct due diligence by checking they are insured and follow safety standards, such as the use of appropriate protection equipment.

My fences have been damaged by trees falling down. Will Council pay for their repair?

Claims for damages against Council will be forwarded to the Risk Unit for investigation. If you have photos of any damage, please send them and a brief description of what happened to the email address - risk@mrsc.vic.gov.au. In your description, please include any relevant information such as the approximate time that

the damage happened (if you know) and what were the weather conditions (storm, windy etc.). If you have quotes for repairs, please include those.

It is a good practice to call your own insurer (house/car/property) as this may be quickest path to get the costs of repairs paid. If Council is liable for the damage, your insurer will recover from Council's insurance.

My Fences have been damaged by a contractor cleaning up trees. Will Council pay for their repair?

Any damage caused by a contractor is the responsibility of that contractor. We recommend you contact them directly. Not all contractors involved in clean-up work are necessarily appointed by Council. It is suggested you take photos of any damage and of any identifying numbers or names on vehicles/equipment being used by the contractor.

If you cannot identify the contractor, our Operations team can make enquiries to see if the contractor involved was a Council-appointed one and provide you with contact details.

Trees have fallen down on my nature strip, who will clean these up and when?

Council is conducting a large-scale response and recovery operation at this point in time, and are continuing to focus on those requests that are posing a threat to lives or property. Trees and branches/limbs that have fallen in the storm will be cleared from nature strips and road reserves as quickly as possible, but this could take weeks into months in some areas.

If you identify a tree, branches or limbs that are posing a risk to our community – please call **5422 0333** ASAP to report this hazard.

Who is conducting the emergency response/recovery tree clean up within the shire?

Council have numerous Tree Service engaged through an already established contractor engagement process. These contractors have been working with council prior to this storm event. We have internal crews also responding to this event.

Can we collect firewood from roadsides?

No, this is potentially dangerous and can have increased negative impacts to the natural flora and fauna on road reserves, as well as impacts to drainage systems.

Council is working on a solution to make wood available to residents for firewood. We will keep the community updated as we know more.

How long will the clean-up of trees impacted by the storm take?

Council is conducting a large-scale response and recovery operation at this point in time, and are continuing to focus on those requests that are posing a threat to lives or property.

Trees and branches/limbs that have fallen in the storm will be cleared from nature strips and road reserves as quickly as possible, but this could take weeks into months in some areas. If you identify a tree, branches or limbs that are posing a risk to our community – please call **5422 0333** ASAP to report this hazard.

I have no access to insurance/ am vulnerable and I think there is a dangerous tree within my property that needs someone to look at. Can you help?

In some circumstances, Council may be able to help in these situations. Please contact councils Recovery Operations Centre on **5422 0237** and staff can assist with the options available to you.

Where can I go to find the most up to date information about Council's storm recovery response?

You can view council's website, and a page titled Storm Recovery has been set up to keep residents informed of Council's response.

mrsc.vic.gov.au/storm-recovery