

# Pinery fire recovery newsletter – Issue 3

18 December 2015

*Image courtesy of DEWNR*



Welcome to the third edition of the Pinery fire recovery newsletter. Three weeks into the recovery program we are seeing signs of progress.

Nobody knows better than you that there remains much to be done before family and community life regains any semblance of normality. It really is heartening to see how sections of the community have come together to quickly and effectively respond to those in need. Various local community groups, and the four councils serving the fire zone, have been superb. Leadership and input of locals has been boosted by volunteers and NGOs providing a wide range of practical and supporting services. Finally, working with all other service providers, we have seen incredible action from an impressive cast of government agencies; some of it 'up-front', much of it behind the

scenes, but no less vital to the success of a long term recovery effort.

It is a humbling and challenging task to which I have been assigned. I am confident that, by working with each group, organisation, agency and individual making a contribution, we will achieve our goal to facilitate a smooth transition from community disaster to community recovery.

Christmas will be a difficult period for many of us, both families affected by the fire and those working towards recovery. As you spend time at Christmas with family and friends, I trust that you can know some peace, perhaps some joy, and that you sustain a hope for a better future. I know that the entire recovery team joins me in wishing you this.

***Vince Monterola***  
*Local Recovery Coordinator*

## Stay connected

The Recovery Hotline (**1800 302 787**) provides recovery information for people affected by the fire. The latest fire recovery information is also available online at [www.sa.gov.au/recovery](http://www.sa.gov.au/recovery) or the SA Bushfire Recovery Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SABushfireRecovery](http://www.facebook.com/SABushfireRecovery).

## Pinery Fire Recovery Centre

The Pinery Fire Recovery Centre is located at the TAFE Gawler Campus, 43 High Street, Gawler. The Recovery Centre is open from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 12pm Saturdays (closed on Sundays) until further notice. The Recovery Centre provides long-term support to fire-affected community members who have registered at the

emergency relief centre or through the Recovery Hotline.

Mobile recovery centres have been established at Kapunda and Hamley Bridge for those who are unable to access the Recovery Centre.

- **Hamley Bridge:** a mobile recovery service is available each Monday from 1pm-5pm at the Hamley Bridge Institute, Gilbert Street, Hamley Bridge.
- **Kapunda:** another centre is available at the Light Regional Council, 93 Main Street, Kapunda, from 1pm-5pm each Thursday. (*Note on 24 and 31 December, the mobile recovery service will be at Kapunda Football Club - Baker Street, Kapunda, instead of the Council office.*)
- **Wasleys:** a mobile recovery centre will be held at Wasleys Institute, Annie Terrace, Wasleys on Monday 21 December from 4pm to 6.30pm.

## Pink dots

A number of property owners have been reporting the mysterious appearance of pink dots on their roadside house number. These are being applied by Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams as they assess hazards at properties. If you see the dot please leave it so that other USAR teams passing your property will know an assessment has been carried out.

## CFS fire debrief meetings

CFS has arranged a series of public debriefings to gain feedback from community members. Meetings in Hamley Bridge and Wasleys provided valuable feedback to CFS and answered questions about a range of issues relating to the fire. Details of further meetings will be publicised in each community, on the CFS and [sa.gov.au/recovery](http://sa.gov.au/recovery) websites, the SA Bushfire Recovery Facebook page and via email.

## Carcass disposal pits

Mis-information abounds regarding EPA's involvement in disposal pits for animal carcasses. EPA provides guidelines for the correct location and properties of these pits, but they do not need to approve each pit. Refer to the advice provided on the EPA website at [www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au) or contact the recovery hotline on **1800 302 787**.

## Domestic violence and disasters

Disasters such as bushfires can have a profound effect on families and communities. Physical and emotional landscapes can go through significant changes during these times, as men, women and children experience a shake-up of every aspect of life. Once the immediate danger has passed, a general feeling of unease and powerlessness can persist.

Women's Health Goulburn North East write that "increased violence against women is characteristic of a post-disaster recovery." This is supported by the World Health Organisation who identify intimate partner and sexual violence as forms of violence that may increase following a disaster. Following the earthquake in New Zealand in 2010, there were reports of an up to 50% increase in reporting of domestic violence incidents.

Following a disaster, domestic violence is not inevitable. Many families and relationships survive these tumultuous events. However, it is important to acknowledge that domestic and family violence is a serious issue and that disasters increase the risk of it occurring. This can be a continuation of, or increase in, previously occurring violence, or it can happen for the first time.

The disruption to everyday life that a disaster presents can mean that support networks, programs and services are less available or unavailable; that victims become more reliant on perpetrators; and that domestic and family violence can be seen as less important than other issues that may be seen as more pressing.

In times of disaster, victims may be more reluctant than usual to report instances of domestic and family violence, and this can be for a variety of reasons. Examples include a belief that the violence was 'out of character' and temporary; feelings of a lack of capacity to deal with further stress and trauma; community acceptance and justification of violence and abuse as a legitimate response

to trauma; or a wish not to appear disloyal to their partner.

There is no justification for domestic and family violence, regardless of the circumstances. If you or someone you know has experienced domestic or family violence, please call the national 24/7 counselling phone line **1800RESPECT** or visit [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au). The Domestic and Family Violence Gateway in South Australia can be contacted on **1800 800 098**.

## Chemical disposal deadline extended

The deadline for people to register their needs for disposal of chemicals that are either in damaged containers or unsafe to transport has been extended. Local residents can now register with their council until 29 January 2016.

## Injured livestock

Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) would like to remind affected primary producers that PIRSA officers are still available to assist with the assessment, treatment and, if necessary, destruction of injured livestock from the fire. For further information contact PIRSA on **(08) 8207 7847**.

If you have any doubt about the authenticity of people visiting your property, PIRSA staff carry identification on them at all times and you can request to see it. PIRSA officers can also assist with verification of a livestock owner's Property Identification Code (PIC) number if required.

## Soil erosion

Wind erosion of soil from paddocks is proving an additional challenge for farmers and the community.

Over the years, farmers have invested considerable effort in protecting soils and have significantly reduced the risk of erosion by keeping the soil surface covered with stubble and pasture, and working the soil as

little as possible. It is ironic that now the stubble cover has gone, producers are having to cultivate the soil to bring up clods that act as mini wind breaks and break up wind sweep over the soil. As Corbin Schuster from Freeling says "cultivating to control drift is like back-burning to control fire", it's an emergency measure. On deep, sandy soils, where clods of soil can't be brought to the surface, it is very difficult to roughen the soil surface and these areas start drifting very easily. Applying a mulch is tricky, as this too can be easily blown away.

Farmers in the area have been very proactive and have borrowed and hired equipment that they haven't used for years to try and control wind erosion. Younger farmers are working at slow speeds they would never have used before! They are working together, observing results and comparing notes to see what method works best on different soil types and coordinating the movement of machinery from property to property. They are also keen to share their knowledge and experiences with other farmers across Australia who might face similar situations in the future.

While it can be disconcerting to see the plumes of dust behind the tractors, the amount of raised dust is very little compared to the erosion that would occur if they did nothing. The soil will stabilise as soon as there is enough rain to get plants growing again. These will anchor the soils with their roots and provide a wind barrier but unfortunately this could take quite a while. In the meantime, we have to remember that farmers hate seeing valuable topsoil disappearing from their paddocks and are doing the best they can, given there is no easy solution.

Farmers wanting advice or assistance on management of different soil types can contact PIRSA soils and land management officers David Woodard on **(08) 8568 6412** or **0417 803 525** or Brian Hughes on **(08) 8568 6411** or **0429 691 468**.

## Native vegetation recovery

The Pinery fire has had a big impact on the native vegetation in the burnt area. At this point in time, apart from clearing fallen trees around houses, fence lines and tracks, most native vegetation should be left to recover. Many trees will resprout from the base and fallen timber is best left on site as it still provides habitat for native birds and animals and affords some protection to the soil and any seedlings that germinate. DEWNR staff



recently visited some areas of native vegetation and took this wonderful photo of an Owlet nightjar that has managed to survive the fires. There are many other birds, lizards and animals that will rely on the few remaining resources. It

will be important to control rabbits, stock and other grazing animals to maximise plant regeneration.

Many native plants are adapted to fires and if allowed the opportunity may reshoot and grow, while others such as native pines, sheoaks and wattles may not recover well but will regenerate as seedlings. The best advice is to leave these native plants undisturbed where possible, allow them time to recover and if necessary consider re-planting in future years. Seek advice from DEWNR staff.

There will be time between now and winter to plan for replanting windbreaks and gardens. DEWNR staff are available at the Recovery Centre in Gawler each day between 11am and 2pm to help to connect you with the right advice and assist with decisions on existing plantings and future planting designs.

Many organisations such as Trees For Life, Barossa Bushgardens, State Flora and others are working together to make sure that the community has access to a good selection of appropriate plants at the right time. We will promote how you can access plants over the coming months.

Any replanting is best left to the cooler months, so there is no hurry to do this. For further information on native vegetation management, planning shelterbelts or other revegetation, please contact the Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Office in Gawler on **(08) 8523 7700**, Natural Resources Northern & Yorke Office in Clare on **(08) 8841 3400** or visit us at the Pinery Fire Recovery Centre at the Gawler TAFE, 43 High Street, Gawler.

You can also find lots of useful information on managing your property after fires at [www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaide/mtloftyranges/land/fire-management/pinery-fire-recovery](http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaide/mtloftyranges/land/fire-management/pinery-fire-recovery).

## Reaching out to the community

Teams from the Australian Red Cross and Disaster and Recovery Ministries have been paying home visits to residents to provide a listening ear, assess needs and offer care and comfort. The Australian Red Cross is also reaching out to the community via phone calls. These activities will continue until 22 December 2015 and then begin again early in 2016.

Staff from the Recovery Centre are also out in the community providing mobile recovery support and case management services to those affected by the fire. If you would like a home visit or a phone call, please call the recovery hotline **1800 302 787**.

## Counselling support

In a coordinated approach with SA Health Emergency Management Unit, Country SA Primary Health Network has coordinated service providers, Country and Outback Health and Northern Health Network, to provide immediate assistance with counselling and linkage to other community organisations by expert mental health clinicians.

Through these providers, a free service is available for anyone directly affected, as well as friends and family who may need support

but do not necessarily reside in the affected areas. Those providing assistance to the affected communities are also encouraged to seek support where necessary.

To access counselling services phone **(08) 8209 0700** or contact your local GP.

Further information about coping after a disaster or emergency can be found on the SA Health bushfires website at [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+topics+a++z/bushfire](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+topics+a++z/bushfire)

## Respiratory health

Information about your health and smoke and dust inhalation can also be found on the SA Health bushfires website above and also Asthma Australia at [www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/Bushfires.aspx](http://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/Bushfires.aspx). Please see your local GP if throat and lung irritation persists.

## Natural Resources

For advice on soil protection, weeds, foxes and rabbits, farm planning, pasture recovery, river and creeks, and bush vegetation, please contact the Natural Resources AMLR office at Gawler or Clare or visit their website at [www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au](http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au).

- **Gawler - (08) 8523 7700**, or visit 8 Adelaide Road, Gawler.
- **Clare - (08) 8841 3400**, or visit Unit 2/17 Lennon Street, Clare.

## Roads and essential services

DPTI and councils are reinstating road signs this week and will continue to remove cut vegetation and sand drift from roadsides over the next few weeks.

## A Christmas Thought.

The fire across our district has been devastating. We have heard of the tragedy of

lost lives, the loss is immense and the pain is overwhelming. We have heard of miraculous escapes, courage in the face of danger, heroic efforts of volunteers, and the generosity of people. We feel compassion towards the needs of others and try to muster some courage in the midst of our own troubles.

Then there is Christmas. Lots of good things are planned. End of year celebrations, community groups with special functions, family functions being planned and Christmas presents to buy. These normal Christmas things seem to fade into the background in the aftermath of the fire ravaged plains.

The local churches across the fire affected region will be celebrating the birth of Christ, the Nativity scene will be displayed, candles lit and Christmas carols sung. At each gathering people will find comfort and care. It can be a still moment during a busy Christmas season and a place to draw strength to take the next step in the long recovery process.



This Christmas will be a time to “Weep with those who are weeping and give thanks with those who are thankful.”

This Christmas will be different.

**Rev. Dr. Phil Marshall**  
*Hamley Bridge Uniting Church*

## Events

### Horse owners and supporters get together

Monday 21 December, 7.15pm

University of Adelaide, Roseworthy Campus

Call **0402 488 306** for more information.

## Contact information

**Recovery Hotline – 1800 302 787**

**Pinery Fire Recovery website - [www.sa.gov.au/recovery](http://www.sa.gov.au/recovery)**

**SA Bushfire Recovery Facebook page - [www.facebook.com/SABushfireRecovery](http://www.facebook.com/SABushfireRecovery)**

### Local Councils

- Wakefield Regional Council – [www.wakefieldrc.sa.gov.au](http://www.wakefieldrc.sa.gov.au) or (08) 8862 0800
- District Council of Mallala – [www.mallala.sa.gov.au](http://www.mallala.sa.gov.au) or (08) 8527 0200
- Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council – [www.claregilbertvalleys.sa.gov.au](http://www.claregilbertvalleys.sa.gov.au) or (08) 8842 6400
- Light Regional Council – [www.light.sa.gov.au](http://www.light.sa.gov.au) or (08) 8525 3200

### Agriculture and Livestock

- PIRSA Stock Assessment Hotline – (08) 8207 7847
- Livestock SA and Primary Producers SA – (08) 8297 2299

### Insurance

- Insurance Council of Australia Hotline – 1800 734 621

### Disaster Recovery Assistance

- Commonwealth Government Information Hotline – 180 22 66

### Health

- Northern Health Network – (08) 8209 0700

### Counselling Services

- Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
- Youth Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Mens Line Australia – 1300 789 978
- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
- National counselling helpline - 1800RESPECT or [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)

### Volunteering

- Volunteering SA & NT – [www.volunteeringsa.org.au](http://www.volunteeringsa.org.au) or 1300 135 545

### Waste Management

- Environment Protection Authority – (08) 8204 2004 or 1800 623 445

### Business Support

- Rural Business Support – [www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au](http://www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au) or 1800 836 211

### Natural Resources

- Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges, Gawler Office - (08) 8523 7700
- Natural Resources Northern and Yorke, Clare Office - (08) 8841 3400

### Community support

- BlazeAid – 0467 999 909 or 0477 330 488 or [www.blazeaid.com](http://www.blazeaid.com)
- Samaritan's Purse – 0490 314 552
- Habitat for Humanity – (08) 8344 6009 or email: [enquiries.sa@habitat.org.au](mailto:enquiries.sa@habitat.org.au)