



Flood Recovery underway in Pyrenees region

Spring rains are normally welcome in the hills and paddocks around the Pyrenees region, but 2022 has proven you can definitely have too much of a good thing.

Three major flooding events hammered the Shire in October and November, and residents, farmers, businesses and community groups are still reeling from the blows.

The impact has been significant. While assessments are ongoing, at this stage it's estimated that 60 private residences have been impacted throughout the Shire. In the ag sector, hundreds of kilometres of fences have been damaged, hundreds of sheep have been lost and almost 7000 hectares of land has been affected, though only around a quarter of agricultural land has been assessed so far.

Important community assets like playgrounds and recreation reserves have been put out of action and major tourist drawcards like the Avoca Cup, Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally and Beaufort Agricultural Show - along with a host of smaller community events - have been cancelled or postponed.

The flooding also caused major disruption to the road network, and while Council

teams have managed to reopen most of the roads, costly repairs to the 1000-odd defects caused by the flooding will take many months.

This is the challenge faced by Council and the whole community as we turn our thoughts to long-term recovery. There's no quick fix for the impact on people's lives or the knock-on effect the floods have on the community, economy and infrastructure of our Shire, but recovery efforts are well underway.

Council is assisting individuals and businesses in accessing funding available, as well as pursuing funds from State and Federal Governments. The aim is to use this money to not only repair roads and community assets, but to build in resilience against future floods.

This approach proved successful following the 2016 floods where, for example, the addition of concrete edge beams meant

some major culverts on gravel roads that would have been completely washed out in 2022 only sustained minor damage.

Repairing the damaged roads must be done using contractors so Council can be reimbursed for these costs. Contractors are being engaged to get on with this work as soon as practical. Meanwhile, ratepayer funds will be used on our ordinary road grading, gravel re-sheeting, resealing and construction.

Rural recovery is swinging into action with a basecamp established for BlazeAid at Moonambel Recreation Reserve to accommodate volunteers working with the community to clean up, repair and replace flood-damaged fencing.

If you need support or have questions about financial help or other resources to help you recover, please call Council on 1300 797 363.



Contact Your Councillor

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Leadership steady at Pyrenees

Cr Ron Eason will again serve as Mayor for the next 12 months after Council re-elected him at the November Statutory Meeting.

This is Cr Eason's third term as Mayor after his first term during 2016-17 and second term in 2021-22.

Helping the community continue to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and the spring floods last month will be Mayor Eason's focus coming into the New Year.

"Ongoing economic recovery from the pandemic in a climate of global uncertainty, inflation and significant national debt highlights the vulnerability of small rural councils to factors beyond our control and more recently with the floods, we now have a large list of new repairs," Cr Eason said.

"I am committed to continue advocating for our Shire to get the help we need to fix the damage from the floods and to start bringing events back to our small towns."



Cr Ron Eason on the steps of Victorian Parliament House.

Have your say

Having your say on projects and initiatives run by Council is important.

We have an online Engagement Hub where you can sign up to participate in discussions, let us know your thoughts on planned projects, and see some of the programs Council may be planning for the future.

You can log on to our online portal at engage.pyrenees.vic.gov.au.

You can also attend our regular Councillor Cuppa and Chats, where you can talk directly with your councillors and senior Council staff about issues important to you and your area. This year, we've moved the Cuppa forward to 5pm to help more people attend.

The Councillor Cuppa and Chat moves around the Shire on the second Tuesday of each month. You can find out more at pyrenees.vic.gov.au/cuppaandchat.

Building bridges

It's easy take bridges for granted - unless you happen to be driving across Sydney harbour - but they are a critical part of our road network, representing a major investment in both dollars and engineering know-how.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the recent floods, this year has capped off a major bridge renewal program in the Pyrenees Shire.

With funding from Council and other sources including the Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program, four major projects have been replaced in the past year. These include bridge 110 on the Moonambel-Warrenmang Road, Bridge 38 on the Chepstow-Pittong Road, Bridge 86 on the Lamplough-Greenhill Creek Road and most recently Bridge 32 on Carngham-Streatham Road, which opened to traffic in late November.

The new bridges have been designed to allow oversize and overmass vehicles, which is a benefit to support agriculture and transport sectors.

Two additional bridges will be replaced in the coming months: Bridge 139 on the Raglan Elmhurst Road and Bridge 11 on the Beaufort-Carngham Road.



Works on Bridge 32, Carngham-Streatham Road.

Mobile library service spreads its wings

The Pyrenees Mobile Library is now covering even more ground as part of an exciting expansion of the service.

The library's new fortnightly schedule will now see it roll into Lexton, Amphitheatre, Waubra, Trawalla, Snake Valley, Landsborough, Barkly, Natte Yallock, Moonambel and Redbank.

And while it packs a lot of books into a small space, you're not limited to what's on board – as part of the Central Highlands Libraries group, Pyrenees libraries gives you access to a huge catalogue of books, magazines, DVDs and audio books from across the region ... and it's free to join.

Visit pyrenees.vic.gov.au to see when the Mobile Library hits your town, or visit one of our libraries in Beaufort and Avoca.

Prepare your property for the Fire Danger Period

While it's been a wet and soggy start to spring and summer this year, there is still a risk of fire danger through the summer period.

The wet conditions with spring sun encourages fast vegetation growth, so now is the time to prepare your property to reduce the spread, speed and intensity of a possible fire.

The wet weather and cold, dreary days make summer feel a long way off, but it won't take long for the days to warm up. While the CFA hasn't declared the Fire Danger Period for the Pyrenees at the time of writing, it is expected to start soon.

Making sure your property is prepared before the Fire Danger Period is declared is important. You can make sure your property is ready for summer by:

- Keeping grass 10cm or shorter in length
- Cleaning your gutters regularly
- Removing flammable items from decks and verandas

- Removing dry leaves, twigs and other fire hazards
- Pruning shrubs and trees
- Moving woodpiles away from your house.

Even if you don't live in the bush, your family and your home is still at risk of fire. Property owners in and around urban areas can take advantage of **free green waste disposal** at all Council transfer stations when cleaning up.

Reducing the vegetation around your home will help keep you, your family, and the community safe. This your responsibility, and Council will issue and enforce fire hazard removal notices to property owners when required, potentially resulting in hefty fines.

Check out www.cfa.vic.gov.au for more information and resources to help you get fire ready.

To find out when the Fire Danger Period is for the Pyrenees region, visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-danger-period-restrictions.

Pyrenees Shire welcomes new Australian citizens

Tom Ostrom, Aimee Whelan, Nga Vo and Lillyosa Mapombee were recently awarded Australian citizenship in front of a proud group of family and friends gathered at the Beeripmo Development Center in Beaufort.

Mayor Ron Eason conducted the swearing in ceremony and Councillors David Clark, Tanya Kehoe, Robert Vance and Damian Ferrari, along with Pyrenees Shire CEO Jim Nolan and directors Kathy Bramwell and Douglas Gowans, attended.

We wish our new citizens all the best!



Nga Vo became an Australian Citizen in October.



Community satellite Wi-Fi project completed

Twenty NBN Satellite internet connections have now been installed at halls and recreation reserves across the shire, giving free Wi-Fi access for the public all-year round and improving telecommunications during emergency events.

The final installation in the STAND (short for Strengthen Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters) program was completed at Barkly Hall in August.

The Federal Government Program was developed following the 2019 bushfire season and all 20 buildings nominated by the Pyrenees Shire Council were successful.

The installations were overseen and supported by Council's ICT (Information and Communications Technology) staff, with users now benefiting from internet connectivity with better speeds than Telstra 4G when they are within 50 metres of the installation.

Locations of the sites can be found on Council's website.

Keeping Pyrenees Green

Trees bring a lot to our community. They soften the urban landscape, improve aesthetics, reduce noise and pollution, moderate temperature and wind, provide shade and shelter, habitat and biodiversity, and historical value.

We have some wonderful trees in our Shire and our outdoor team are here to look after them all. They have found that many established trees are suffering stress from old age, recent drought, and a changing climate.

Using heat mapping, we have identified hot spots in townships where landscape-based cooling using trees or green infrastructure would be valuable. This research also identified trees that are better suited to our region and have greater drought tolerance.

Our tree planting program in recent years has focused on the entrances to townships and the potential hot spots found in our study. Trees planted include natives as well as exotics, to keep the character and heritage value of our streetscapes.

Tree planting has been happening in Beaufort, Avoca, Moonambel, Raglan, and Waubra. We will undertake a tree assessment for our

remaining townships across the Shire. Council will need to look at funding options to maintain the momentum generated in the last few years.

Our team has worked with communities to restore our Avenues of Honour in Stockyard Hill and Tanwood, replanting trees, and bringing them back to prominence. A plaque has been installed to honour those who served, and a table and seats have been added at Stockyard Hill to give visitors a place to reflect and remember.

We look forward to being able to keep our streets green and trees safe for our community and visitors to enjoy for many years to come.



Refreshed Community Funding Program kicks-off

Council has received an extremely positive response to round one of its 2022/23 biannual funding program. The refreshed Community Funding Program attracted more applications than anticipated, indicating strong community appetite for new projects and initiatives in the wake of the pandemic.

The revamp includes a step-by-step online guide for local community groups, organisations, and businesses looking to deliver projects that benefit our thriving Pyrenees Community.

A range of grants and subsidies covering events, projects, equipment, minor capital works, and one-off programs/activities can be accessed through the program.

Among them is a new Shop Façade Improvement program designed to encourage investment in our local shopping precincts and breathe new life into our beautiful streetscapes.

Council is assessing applications received in December and any available funds will be readvertised for the next round of applications from 23 January 2023. Keep an eye on Council's funding hub at [pyrenees.vic.gov.au/funding](https://www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au/funding) for other funding opportunities available.

Out and About

The clouds are parting after a long wet winter, so it's time to get out enjoy yourself in the Pyrenees.

- **Carols in the Rotunda** | Dec 16, 7pm – 9pm | Beaufort
- **Avoca Twilight Christmas Market** | Dec 18, 4pm – 8pm | Avoca River Bank
- **Pyrenees Hideout Festival** | Feb 11, 2023, 12pm – 10pm | Beaufort
- **Beaufort Truck and Car Show and Shine** | Mar 5, 2023, 10am – 8pm | Beaufort
- **Beaufort Agricultural Show** | Mar 19, 2023, 9:30am – 4:30pm | Beaufort
- **Avoca Autumn Races** | Mar 25, 2023, 11am – 6pm | Avoca Turf Club
- **Pyrenees Unearthed Festival** | Apr 22, 2023, 11am – 5pm | Avoca River Bank

You can find more information about events at www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Pyrenees Shire Council acknowledge the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Djab Wurrung and Wotjobaluk tribes, whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire. We pay our respects to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the Elders and people of these tribes.