



Swan Hill Community Newsletter

Community Newsletter –current as of 29 November 2022

This newsletter is for communities in Victoria.

For information & warnings relevant to NSW, please check www.ses.nsw.gov.au

Catchments remain saturated following recent rainfall, with flooding and elevated river levels continuing in many locations. Major flooding is occurring in Wakool Junction and Boundary bend. The water levels in Lake Boga will continue to rise over the next week. Emergency Services continue to monitor flood water affected areas and are working on maintaining levees. For update weather forecasts check www.bom.gov.au

Fire danger period commenced in Mallee Fire district Monday 28 November 2022 for Buloke & Swan Hill municipalities

Make sure you know what you can and can't do during the Fire Danger Period. Visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/can

Please refer to the following websites or scan the QR Code for updated information.



Flood warning Services

Definitions of Warnings



<http://www.bom.gov.au/water/floods/floodWarningServices.shtml>



River Heights Wimmera, Murray - Mallee



http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/wrap_fwo.pl?IDV60148.html



Financial support for flood-affected farmers



<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/emergency-management/floods/flood-advice-and-support>




School Closures in Victoria



<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/closures.aspx#link37>



Returning home after a flood



For information on actions to take when returning home from a flood and other relief information visit <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/relief>



www.emergency.vic.gov.au



Blue-green algae in farm water supplies

The recent flooding event combined with warmer weather conditions has produced favourable conditions for blue-green algae to thrive in farm water supplies and standing flood water. Senior Veterinary Officer Dianne Phillips said livestock owners need to remain alert – ingestion of blue-green algae can result in the poisoning of livestock.

Further information on blue-green contamination in your livestock water supply is available at Agriculture Victoria website.

An information note 'Managing contaminated stock water' is also available at here, which steps through how to manage flood contaminated stock water supplies.

Online interactive map

View the map at www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/flood-maps to check if you are in an at-risk area and see where levees are located. People north of Piangil to Boundary Bend should use the *Mid Murray 1% AEP Flood* layer for an indication of where floodwaters may reach, and those around Robinvale and Wemen should use the *Mid Murray 2% AEP depths (m)* layer.

Actual flooding observed will differ from that shown. We encourage all people in at-risk areas to develop a flood plan in response to this event.

Murray River closure

The Murray River is closed downstream of Hume Dam to Nurtram Billabong (Hattah), not including Lake Mulwala. This applies to all river users. No boats can enter the river and people cannot enter for recreational purposes such as fishing or swimming. SES Murray River emergency area

Refer to the below link for all up to date Flood and storm impacted parks and closures
Parks Victoria

Road closures and travelling in the area

Numerous roads have been impacted and are closed. Updated information is available via 13 11 70 or <http://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/>

Wildlife - if you see animals that appear injured or caught in flood water call **136 186** or download the **Wildlife Emergency App**. **Wildlife that are trapped by flooding should be left alone to wait for the water level to drop.** Injured wildlife (away from flood waters), please contact your local wildlife carer, rescue group or call **Wildlife Victoria** on (03) 8400 7300 Wildlife affected-floods and Fact sheet-Animals & floods



Animal Health

Anyone with urgent animal welfare issues can contact Agriculture Victoria on 1800 266 266. Further advice on a range of flood related issues for is available on the Agriculture Victoria Website [Agriculture Victoria link](#)

Levee safety

Be careful around levees. Prolonged water pressure on levees, like we are experiencing, can cause sections to collapse without warning. Please report issues with levees directly to VICSES or Swan Hill Rural City Council.

- Call VICSES on **132 500** to report emergency levee overtopping and breaches.
- Call Council to report other concerns with levees, such as low points or seepage.

Sandbag distribution points

People in at-risk areas should call **132 500** to request sandbags if your property is at risk of flooding or you require any other support. Collection of sand bags have closed at the following locations-

- Ken Harrison reserve- Swan Hill
- Community Centre- Lake Boga
- Beverford- next door to Beverford Tavern
- Nyah Nyah West FS
- Speewa Hall

Financial assistance

- Rural Financial Counselling Service provides agricultural industries and small rural businesses with free, confidential and independent planning and support services. Call **1300 735 578** for assistance.
- To apply for a Victorian Emergency Relief Assistance Payment and understand eligibility criteria, [complete the online application form](#) at <https://emergencypayments.dffh.vic.gov.au>. To understand if you are eligible for Emergency Re-establishment payments call Flood Recovery Hotline **1800 560 760**.
- If you require assistance relating to insurance, please call the Insurance Council Australia's Disaster Hotline on **1800 734 621**.

Relief and recovery

- People wanting a structural assessment of their property can register at www.vic.gov.au/register-structural-assessment-october-2022-floods

Rural Aid provides farmers with support, including confidential counselling, fodder, domestic water, financial assistance and by providing access to volunteers through Farm Army – register [online](#) at or call **1300 327 624**.

Drinking water

Lower Murray Water advise that people may notice discolouration in their water due to blackwater within the Murray River. Please be assured that your urban water remains safe to drink and is tested to comply with Australian Drinking Water standards.

However, due to poor raw river water quality, treatment plants are taking longer to bring water to standards, so **please conserve water** where possible due to the current treatment challenges.

Wellbeing, recovery and support

If you're feeling overwhelmed or concerned about your wellbeing you can call Mental health & Wellbeing Hubs for free support on **1300 375 330**

Flood Recovery Hotline to access a range of services including mental health and wellbeing support. Call **1800 560 760** and press 9 if you require an interpreter. 7:30am – 7:30pm

Remember, there is always help available via:

- Your GP or local mental health professionals
- [Lifeline](#) 13 11 14
- [Beyond Blue](#) 1300 224 636
- [MensLine](#) 1300 789 978
- [Kid's Help Line](#) 1800 55 1800
- [Parent Line](#) 13 22 89

Mosquito-borne disease

Mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria include the Ross River Virus, Barmah Forest Virus, Murray Valley Encephalitis (MVE) and Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV). MVE AND JEV can cause severe illness and death in some people. Your only protection against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry is to avoid mozzies bites:

- Cover up as much as possible - wear long, loose-fitting clothes.
- Use an effective mosquito repellent containing DEET or picaridin on all exposed skin.
- Prevent mosquitoes from getting inside by using fly screens on windows and doors.
- Use mosquito coils or insecticide candles in small, outdoor areas.

Health and Safety

- Floodwater is toxic - **never play or swim in floodwater**. Wear protective clothing when cleaning up. Infectious diseases including gastrointestinal infections and Hepatitis A can spread from contact with contaminated floodwater. A small cut can easily get infected and make you very sick.
- Be aware of **hazardous trees** in the area resulting from soft ground, erosion of roots on levee banks and high winds.
- **Snakes** look for shelter and food in flooded areas. Be careful around houses and sheds near floodwater. Call DELWP on 136 186 for advice on snake controllers in your area. If someone is bitten, call Triple Zero (000) immediately.
- **Mould** poses a risk to health, growing in damp and poorly ventilated areas. The risk of mould being present in your home after flooding is high.

Asbestos

Asbestos can be found in fibre cement sheeting and pipes, vinyl floor tiles, electrical parts and roof materials. It is not always possible to tell if a material contains asbestos by looking at it. If you are disposing of flood-related waste and are in any doubt whether it might contain asbestos:

- Do not disturb the material
- Prevent others from disturbing the material.

We recommend you use a licensed asbestos removalist to clean-up. They know how to remove and dispose of asbestos safely, without risk to you and your neighbours. If



you are using a contractor to remove asbestos, they must be licensed by WorkSafe Victoria.

If you're considering doing the clean-up yourself, follow advice available for homeowners at [Asbestos Victoria](http://www.asbestos.vic.gov.au), including the asbestos identification tool: <http://ow.ly/imOt50LiLQY>.

Used sandbag disposal

- Clean sandbags: Residents can keep clean and dry sand for reuse at their residence.
- Smelly or visually contaminated sandbags can be disposed of at the Swan Hill Landfill free of charge.
- Always wear gloves when handling used sandbags and other flood-related waste. Go to www.epa.vic.gov.au for more information.

Residual Floodwater

- Floodwaters are still moving down the Murray River and through northern catchments.
- Due to saturated catchments, floodwater may remain in some local areas.
- In some instances, stagnant water will create access problems or affect business operations for individual properties.
- It's vital to manage water flow safely. Landholders should not cut channels or levees to remove stagnant water from their property without appropriate approvals, as this could impact their neighbours or others downstream.
- Rural water corporations manage irrigation and drainage channels and need to authorize any pumping of water into those channels.
- Floodwater presents health risks. Avoid walking through floodwater as it could contain sewage, and other wastewaters such as food or animal processing effluents, agricultural waste, or chemicals from industrial waste.

Blackwater fish deaths

Eating fish contaminated by blackwater can cause illness. Avoid contact with the water, and don't allow your pets to swim or eat fish found in it. Community members can report fish deaths to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) by calling 1300 372 842. Press Option 2, then Option 1