



# Alpine Shire Community Recovery Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the Alpine Shire Community Recovery Newsletter, a joint initiative by Alpine Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria. This newsletter will help provide residents and businesses with updates and information on our recovery.

## We're Here To Help

Alpine Shire Council understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted our community. We want all ratepayers to know we are here to help. To do this, we have implemented the following:

- An extension of the due date of the 4th Rates instalment to 30 June 2020 (instead of 31 May 2020).
- No overdue/outstanding interest will be added to accounts for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- Ratepayers who are having trouble meeting their payments due to the effects of COVID-19 are encouraged to make contact via [info@alpineshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@alpineshire.vic.gov.au) or (03) 5755 0555 to discuss a possible payment plan.

Please note that due to COVID-19 our offices are closed for in-person payments until further notice. Please refer to the payment options on your rates notice for alternative payment methods.

## Coronavirus Impact On Bushfire Recovery

During this time, we want to reassure you that we remain committed to our focus on the recovery of the community from the 2019-20 bushfires. We know COVID-19 is the last thing our community needs, however we ask that you follow the latest advice to help limit the spread of the virus. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the most reliable source of up-to-date information.

**Visit:** [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

**Phone:** 1800 675 398

**Follow:** [www.facebook.com/VicGovDHHS](https://www.facebook.com/VicGovDHHS)

We are still available to answer your questions and support in any way we can, including to speak to you about your recovery planning.

You can reach Council by telephone and email:

**Phone:** (03) 5755 0555 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

**Email:** [bushfirerecovery@alpineshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:bushfirerecovery@alpineshire.vic.gov.au)

**Follow:** [www.facebook.com/alpineshirecouncil](https://www.facebook.com/alpineshirecouncil)

**Visit:** [www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au)

Bushfire Recovery Victoria is also here to help via their free helpline:

**Phone:** 1800 560 760

**Visit:** [www.br.vic.gov.au](http://www.br.vic.gov.au)

**Email:** [connect@br.vic.gov.au](mailto:connect@br.vic.gov.au)

## Community Recovery Committee

Alpine Shire Council is working in partnership with Bushfire Recovery Victoria and affected communities to understand recovery needs and to support community-led recovery planning. The establishment of an Alpine Shire Community Recovery Committee (CRC) is a critical step in supporting community-led recovery.

A four-week Expression of Interest for the Alpine Shire CRC closed on 1 May and nominations are currently being reviewed by a selection panel.

The Alpine Shire CRC will have representatives from Myrtleford, Bright, Harrietville, Dinner Plain, Kiewa Valley as well as Mount Hotham and Falls Creek.

We look forward to introducing you to the Alpine Shire CRC members shortly and encourage you to connect with them to ensure we understand recovery needs across the Shire.

## Wellbeing And Support

This is a difficult time for our community, as we juggle the aftermath of bushfire and now the challenges of coronavirus. It is normal to feel scared, overwhelmed, anxious and confused.

If these feelings are affecting you, please seek help. Help is available across the Alpine Shire, including:

### Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program

The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program is available to Alpine Shire residents free-of-charge. Case Support Coordinators can help you with:

- Discussing your personal financial and emotional needs and the next steps
- Information and support to access services, complete paperwork and access grants

You can access the Case Support Program by free call 1800 560 760.

There are lots of mental health resources available to help you and your family through this challenging time:

- **DHHS** - [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19)
- **Australian Red Cross** - [www.redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19](http://www.redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19)
- **Beyond Blue** - [coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](http://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)
- **Phoenix Australia** – Centre for post-traumatic mental health - [www.phoenixaustralia.org/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.phoenixaustralia.org/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Resources for supporting children through COVID:

- **ABC Play school COVID-19 special** - [www.abc.net.au/abckids/shows/play-school/covid-19/12114308](http://www.abc.net.au/abckids/shows/play-school/covid-19/12114308)
- **Emerging Minds** - National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health - Supporting children through COVID-19 - [emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/](http://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/)

## Financial Assistance

The economic impacts of the 2019/20 bushfires, along with restrictions put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 have dramatically affected local businesses and our community.

### Financial counselling and support

Financial counsellors remain available from AgBiz Assist to provide advice on financial matters, available grants, help with applications and support accessing concessional loans.

This includes help applying for the \$75,000 primary producers grant and the \$10,000 small business and primary producers grant.

Call 1300 834 775 to arrange a free, independent and confidential over-the-phone appointment.

Financial support continues to be made available for households, farms and businesses in the Alpine Shire impacted by the recent fires.

For more information visit Bushfire Recovery Victoria [www.br.vic.gov.au](http://www.br.vic.gov.au) or call 1800 560 760.

### Grants

#### \$10,000 Small Business Bushfire Support Grants

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments are providing grants of up to \$10,000 to support small businesses who have experienced a significant loss of income due to the bushfires.

You may still apply for this grant if you have already received assistance under the Emergency Bushfire Response: Small Business Grants or the Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries Grants programs.

This grant program is now open for applications through Rural Finance. It's easy to apply and you aren't required to upload any financial documents if you don't have them right now.

Rural Finance can also help you to find out which grants you're eligible for.

Contact Rural Finance on 1800 260 425 or email [governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au](mailto:governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au)

**Visit:** [www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/](http://www.ruralfinance.com.au/industry-programs/)

More grants and other financial support is available. Visit [br.vic.gov.au](http://br.vic.gov.au) for more information.

## Clean-up Program

Grocon is undertaking Bushfire Clean-Up Program works in the Alpine Shire on behalf of the Government. The Bushfire Clean-Up Program is free of charge for all property owners, regardless of whether they are insured, and is jointly funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

Clean-up is already underway in Alpine Shire. To register your property, call 1800 560 760 today.