



BEYOND BUSHFIRES

Presentation in Yarloop



The Shire of Harvey was privileged to welcome Dr Lisa Gibbs to the Harvey Bushfire Recovery Centre last Monday, 1 May 2017. The Australian Red Cross invited Dr Gibbs to share information on the

Beyond Bushfires: Community Resilience and Recovery study that was conducted over 6 years to examine the impacts of the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires in Victoria on local communities.

Dr Gibbs presented at the Yarloop Bowling Club to 35 people who were interested to hear how others managed in Recovery following a disaster event. The focus of the presentation was on the physical and mental health issues that can be experienced after a traumatic event. Dr Gibbs explained that the ongoing disruptions in people's lives after a major bushfire can affect relationships, health, income and accommodation.

Research after the Black Saturday Bushfires showed that there were varied approaches to recovery throughout the community. Some people aimed to reclaim their lives and others felt the need to reinvent their lives. The study showed those who chose to move away after the fires missed the disruptions but also missed the public sharing, support and services being provided. Those who stayed to rebuild experienced a closer connection to the community but still felt the loss of previous social networks.

There were many examples of family members responding differently to the experience of the bushfires and the aftermath. We are all different and

something that helps you may not be helpful to others. Dr Gibbs said to be kind to yourself and others. It can take a significant amount of time for some people to recover from a disaster experience.

Dr Gibbs explained that children even the very young, can be affected by the disaster and what is happening around them for years afterwards. It is important to ensure that children and young people of all ages feel safe and secure and are involved in recovery decisions and activities in age appropriate ways. Parents may find parenting challenging as they accommodate their own and their child's reactions to the disaster trauma and subsequent disruptions. Remember other parents have felt this way too, sometimes it's about doing the best you can in tough situations. Often people found that online connections were a helpful way to gather information and share experiences.

According to the study, being involved in community groups can lead to better mental health outcomes in Recovery. However, it is important to share the load. Don't leave it to just a few people to make sure these local groups keep going. Local groups need leaders and members to survive, and those who do "too much" can become overburdened.

Changes in the natural environment can influence people's recovery. Dr Gibbs said people at first found the blackened landscape hard to accept, yet as time went on people found that watching the bush regrow and recover was helpful for their own wellbeing and recovery.

[CLICK HERE](#) for your copy of the Beyond Bushfires report or visit www.beyondbushfires.org.au



Bushfire Recovery Art Project



The Shire of Harvey is seeking feedback from residents on a Bushfire Recovery Art Project based on the themes of Recovery and Regrowth. The project will include a series of **FREE** Art workshops and will culminate in an exhibition to acknowledge the two year anniversary of the January 2016 Bushfires.

The **FREE** workshops will be facilitated by skilled artists and will create an opportunity for existing artists and anyone who would like to learn, to come together for some fun and creativity. We would like to hear from local residents interested in participating as to the type of Art activities they would prefer and which may include mosaics, sculpture, textiles, painting and photography.

For feedback forms [CLICK HERE](#) or visit the Shire of Harvey Website at www.harvey.wa.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-art-project-feedback/. Forms can be also accessed from the Shire of Harvey Administration Office and the Bushfire Recovery Centre at 1 Becher Street, Harvey or you are welcome to email mareee@harvey.wa.gov.au to request a copy.

Burning Season is now Open

As of **Wednesday 26h April** until **2 November 2017** burning is permitted. This applies to the whole of the Shire. Out of courtesy, please let your local bushfire brigade and neighbours know if you are planning a substantial burn off.

Community Recovery Activities

- ⇒ **Farmers Breakfast** - Held at the Holthouse property, *Moojelup Farm*, 129 Thompson Road, Cookernup on **Friday 9th June, 7.30am**.
- ⇒ **Cookernup Morning Tea** - Join the Cookernup crew on Wednesday mornings from **10.00am** at the Cookernup Hall for morning tea and great company.
- ⇒ **Yarloop Connect Luncheon** - Every Tuesday from **11.30am**, Red Cross with CPFS are holding a BBQ lunch at the old Yarloop Anglican Church Hall.
- ⇒ **Harvey Morning Tea** - First Thursday of the month at the Bushfire Recovery Centre, with the next event on **Thursday 1st June, 10am**.

Yarloop Townsite Update

The One Tree Park in Yarloop has a new ablution block that will be open for use very soon.

Tenders are being finalised for the Yarloop Fire Station. The Department of Fire & Emergency Services has agreed to contribute towards the building which was a crucial step of the rebuild.

The Shire has held a meeting with ToxFree contractors who will be returning on the 15th May as the scope of works to finish the clean up at the workshops site has now been agreed upon.

The final draft for the Yarloop Town Development Plan will be presented to Council this month to be adopted. This document provides a clear road map the redevelopment of the town and will support funding opportunities.



SafeTALK Workshop

Red cross is hosting a SafeTALK presentation at the Cookernup

Community Hall on **Wednesday 31st May 2017**, from 10am to 2pm. This information session alerts community members to signs that a person may be considering suicide. Participants will learn to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide and how to respond and link them with the help they need.

If this interests you please register by contacting **Colin Anker** on **0427 904 501**. Morning tea and lunch will be provided for this free informative half day presentation.

Relax & Rediscovery Yourself

Interested residents joined Sarah last Thursday at the Harvey Bushfire Recovery Centre for a relaxing workshop that focused on promoting body awareness where we tend to hold stress. Sarah says it is vital that we stop regularly to check on where we're heading. The group in attendance learnt breathing techniques, and how they can help restore balance between the mind and the body.

Sarah is hoping to run additional sessions in the near future through the Yarloop CRC. Watch this space for updates on Sarah's workshops in Yarloop.



Sign up for this Newsletter

Please email us at recovery@harvey.wa.gov.au

Or download the newsletter from

www.harvey.wa.gov.au

