Focus on the journey ahead

Supporting our community in recovering from the experiences of last summer and preparing for the summer ahead are important focus areas for us.

Our Community Recovery Bushfire Reference Group is now meeting regularly and working towards these outcomes.

We have some changes in the recovery space within MidCoast Council, with both Carly and Janine moving into other roles within our organisation.

We are currently in the process of recruiting for a Community Recovery Officer who will work with the community to identify needs, develop local recovery programs, and assist in accessing information and resources.

In the meantime, for any of your recovery needs, please contact Michelle Jobson on 7955 7543.

We are also underway in our audit of community hall facilities as part of our hall network upgrade program to ensure these facilities are well equipped to provide our communities with a safe and useful resource if and when another emergency occurs.

Survey looks at preparedness

We are supporting the work of Resilience NSW with their Regional Disaster Preparedness Program Evaluation Project.

An important part of the project is to gain a deeper understanding of what preparedness looks like now and how to strengthen preparedness in regional communities.

We ask everyone with an interest to participate in the following survey to help the project gain an understanding of what is required from the community.

https://www.research.net/r/rdppevaluationcommunitysurvey

Taskforce focuses on approving rebuilds

Supporting efficient clean-up and fast tracking approvals for rebuilding homes and property damaged in last year’s bushfires has been the focus of MidCoast Council’s bushfire recovery taskforce, with 22 development applications for rebuilding already approved.

The taskforce was established soon after the bushfires to provide proactive assistance and advice for property owners impacted by the 2019 fires.

The Bushfire Recovery Taskforce team continues to support owners when they are ready to clean up and rebuild property, and can be contacted by calling 7955 7777.
Bushfire Affected Coastal Waterways Program

Council applied for and was successful in receiving funding under the NSW Government’s Bushfire Affected Coastal Waterways Program.

The main aim of the program is to assist local Councils to implement post fire environmental remedial actions to minimise and mitigate the impacts of bushfires on sensitive estuary and coastal ecosystems.

Council’s project funded under this grant aims to restore burnt littoral rainforest, coastal wetlands and other native forest communities located on 2,364 hectares of Council managed land within 35 reserves located in the coastal zone through intensive weed control efforts, the propagation and replanting of local native species including koala food trees, and the provision of nestboxes and other supplementary habitat measures for displaced and affected fauna.

The project is proposed to be undertaken in partnership with existing volunteer groups such as Manning Coastcare and Hallidays Point Landcare who currently work in some of the nominated reserves. The project will also support the bush fire recovery efforts of other government agencies such as NPWS and wildlife rescue groups such as Koalas in Care.

Bushfire videos release and links

A three-part video series focusing on the recovery of the local environment following the 2019 bushfires across the region, has been created to inform the community of the work being undertaken in the region to protect and recover natural areas and native species.

Filmed at a range of locations each video focuses on a different aspect of biodiversity.

The series highlights the work Council and other organisations including community groups are undertaking to gain an understanding of the impacts of the bushfires and how they will implement actions to protect and recover natural areas and native species.

The first of the videos looks at the recovery of native wildlife, including the threatened Long-nosed Potoroo and Squirrel Glider and actions being taken to support the surviving species in the area through nest box installation, weed controls, pest animal controls and habitat enhancement work.

Video number two focuses on reserves and habitat management, particularly Minimbah Reserve and Cattai Wetlands.

The third video of the series is focused on the recovery of koalas across the region, looking at the importance of the koala population in the Kiwarrak area, particularly the Taree South, Purfleet, Tinonee, Mondrook, The Bight, Bootawa, Burrell Creek and Hillville localities.

Family of squirrel gliders find new home in bushfire recovery box

Council’s Natural Systems team with assistance from FAWNA and Conservation Volunteers Australia have been working hard to install nesting boxes that were affected by the recent bushfires.

Nesting boxes help tree dwelling native animals like gliders, possums and birds by providing them with shelter while the fire impacted bushland recovers.

Thank you to volunteers
A big thank you to all those people who are working tirelessly to support our community in our recovery journey.

Being fire prepared
For information on how we can all be prepared for a bush fire follow the 4 simple steps from the NSW RFS website

1. DISCUSS
what to do if a bush fire threatens your home.

2. PREPARE
your home and get it ready for bush fire season.

3. KNOW
the bush fire alert levels.

4. KEEP
all the bush fire information numbers, websites, and the smartphone app.
Local organisations assisting in the recovery effort

**Lincoln Brickworks**

Lincoln Brickworks understand the desire to build a home that allows you and your family to feel safe and comfortable. A space to call your own that provides a solid foundation to move beyond the events of last summer.

They are one of a handful of bespoke brick makers left in Australia. They custom make specialty bricks and pavers. Whether you have an old brick that you want to match, a photograph or a memory to recreate, go and talk to them, Michael is a master brick matcher. Lincoln Bricks are able to match colour, size, face and texture, to help you solidify your vision.

If you need a few pavers or you are dreaming of a statement fireplace, they have the experience and knowledge to help you find the right brick for the job. Feel free to visit their brick yard, talk to an expert and view some of their sample walls.

Lincoln Brickworks would like to extend a helping hand by offering a 10% discount to all registered Bushfire affected residents within the Manning Valley for the 2020/21 financial year.

Michael & Adele Baker  
www.lincolnbricks.com.au

**Port Macquarie Landcare Nursery: Plants for regenerating after fire**

The nursery is open every Monday morning, 9am - 12pm and is run by volunteers, stocking local trees, shrubs and grasses from the local area. All plants are grown from locally sourced seed.

Located on Blackbutt Road, Port Macquarie, inside the National Parks and Wildlife Services compound.

**Contact:** Estelle Gough  
ph: 6583 6508 or 0432 141 605  
email: nursery@landcareportmac.com.au

**Tinonee Outreach Incorporated**

They don’t just cater to clients in the Tinonee area but the whole MidCoast region.

They work with many government departments and organisations trying to provide a one-stop service to all those impacted by drought, bushfire and COVID-19.

They are a friendly mob and will always listen and try to find solutions for the current hurdles we are facing.

Tinonee Outreach was born after a community minded group of women discovered how much the local landholders were suffering, not just from bushfires but drought as well. This was also causing some division in the community as no community group was catering for all.

That night they received a call from their first donation, The Sydney Food Angels and Sutherland Shire Convoy stating how much the southern area has received and is turning trucks away. The timing was impeccable “yes we need to get it out to our guys as long as it’s not just bushfire but drought as well”. The local Tinonee RFS helped with a lot of volunteering as well as a lovely group of locals and those impacted wanted to give back. During the process, they received mentoring by many of our community leaders.

Tinonee Outreach are hoping to be in their office shortly and are working on delivering partnership programs which they have been working on. Community days will return but delivered a little differently but will be great to say “gidday” to all their mates new and old.

For more info contact:  
Shaz: 0400 372 767 or Gina 0409 810 876  
email: tinoneeoutreachinc@gmail.com  
https://www.facebook.com/TinoneeOutreach/
Samaritans - financial assistance for people impacted by bushfire and COVID-19

Samaritans is here to support the people across the MidCoast area. They understand that it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the recent challenges and identifying what needs to be done to help rebuild communities.

Assistance available may include:

- Food vouchers
- Essentials vouchers
- Utility grants (power/gas, telephone/internet)
- Special household/personal grants (clothing, bedding, kitchen utensils, furniture)
- Personal needs (medical & pharmaceutical)
- Vehicle grants (registration, insurance and petrol)
- School assistance (books, uniforms, excursions)
- Financial counselling
- Homeowners effected by bushfire needing support to return to the land (people whose primary place of residence has been destroyed or rendered permanently uninhabitable and people whose place of residence that has not been destroyed but needs structural repairs to make it safe to return home.

Phone: 1300 656 336

Global Care
Located at 147 Cowper St, Taree, the team would love to meet you. For more information please contact Jenny - jenny@harbourchurch.com.au.

Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services
Please call 6553 5121 for information or an appointment.

Australian Red Cross Bushfire Recovery Support

Australian Red Cross Emergency Services provides support to communities before, during and after emergencies. After last year’s fires our trained Emergency Services Volunteers supported people at evacuation and recovery centres and through outreach.

Red Cross is still here for you. They provide:

- Community recovery sessions like Recovery Basics & Self Care which looks at why recovery after the fires is so tough and tips on how you can look after yourself and others.
- Emergency preparedness sessions using the Red Cross RediPlan and the Pillowcase Program, for primary school children. Take a look at the Red Cross website www.redcross.org.au/prepare
- Emergency Grants – Was your primary residence destroyed or damaged by the fires? Were you injured or bereaved? Find out more about our grants at www.redcross.org.au/grants or by calling 1800 733 276.
- Do you have ideas for community events and projects that will help your community recover? Talk to them about how Red Cross can support you.

Eleanor Harris, Australian Red Cross Recovery Worker, Mid North Coast, 0426 916 984, eharris@redcross.org.au.
Mid Coast (NSW) Community Quilters
Anne and Jenny have donated many beautiful quilts that they would like to go to bushfire-impacted residents. If you or someone you know would like a quilt please contact Jenny Fletcher on 6554 1201.

Grant Updates / Changes
Red Cross Re-establishment Grant
$40,000 per household for home owner occupiers $10,000 per household for people who were renting a home or whose primary place of residence was a caravan or mobile home (formerly known as the Rebuild Grant). Visit: www.redcross.org.au/grants. The Reestablishment and all other Red Cross grants are open until 31 August 2020.

Thank you for supporting residents to access these grants. As of Monday 2 June, of the $216 million raised, $109.24m has been spent or disbursed. This includes $98.24m paid in grants to 4,334 people. Visit www.redcross.org.au/bushfirefunds. Please get in touch if you know of anyone who needs support to access grants or who would like to share their story of how the grant funds have helped them.

The Salvation Army
The Salvation Army Disasters Assistance team is available to help those affected in any state or territory across Australia. Contact them today for advice and support:
email: sal.disasters@salvationarmy.org.au,
phone: 1300 662 217,

Agencies available for support:
The best starting point for accessing support services:

Service NSW
Bushfire Customer Care Service
Call 13 77 88
Service NSW bushfire customer care has specialists to help guide you through applying for cleanup and support, including grants and replacing essential documents. Book an appointment with Bushfire Customer Specialist - call 13 77 88.

Supporting NSW Through COVID-19
Call 13 77 88
Visit the Service NSW website for information and advice on assistance available for NSW residents and businesses including support for individuals and businesses, assistance packages and advice on how to stay healthy.

Cost of Living Service
Call 13 77 88
The NSW Government is helping with your cost of living with more than 70 rebates and savings. Answering 6 easy questions will give you a personalised list of rebates that include energy and utilities, tolls, travel and active kids vouchers.
MidCoast Council – Bushfire Recovery Officers

Need information on how to go about rebuilding, stopping rubbish collections and capping damaged septic systems? OR have a bushfire recovery question and not sure who to ask? Council’s Bushfire Recovery Officers are available to support residents through the recovery process, whether it be replacing destroyed garbage bins, capping damaged septic systems or information on how to start the rebuild process.

Email: recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au
Ph: 7955 7543

In need of mental health support...

Manning Mental Health Services - bushfire recovery

Not feeling like yourself after the bushfires? It can help to talk ... It’s OK to not be OK. It’s normal to have strong emotional and/or physical reactions after a significant event. You may be feeling this way if you were impacted in any way by the 2019-20 bushfires. Everyone may react to these feelings in a different way. If you’re not feeling like yourself after the bushfires (and now COVID-19), it can help to talk. Lots of people in similar circumstances are finding it helpful. You might too.

Bushfire Recovery Mental Health Clinicians are available in our local area to assist people within bushfire affected communities to have access to emotional support and the right level of mental health care for their individual needs. This is a confidential and free service.

Jinu Abraham - ph: 0407 609 690 or email Jinu.Abraham2@health.nsw.gov.au
Tony Colechin - ph: 0407 801 331 or email Anthony.Colechin@health.nsw.gov.au

Rural Adversity Mental Health Program


Local contacts:
Kylie Atkinson: 0437 268 325
Orry Berry: 0409 834 501

Feeling isolated and lonely...

Hunter New England Health – Drought Support Peer Worker
Situated at Gloucester Community Health assisting people adversely affected by drought, fires and the current pandemic.

Providing support to people in the community who may be currently experiencing isolation, loneliness and any issues in relation to their general mental wellbeing.

Leanne Tilse 0419 747 276
HNELHD-DroughtSupport@health.nsw.gov.au

Local Land Services

Can help with ‘boots on the ground’ services during fire recovery. Staff can assist fire impacted property owners with livestock and pasture advice, animal health issues, pest animal problems, applying for roadside grazing permits and available Travelling Stock Routes.

LLS Contact details: 1300 795 299
Email: admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au
Financial assistance for replacing boundary fencing joining public land

Private landholders who share a boundary with public land and were impacted by the Northern fires of late 2019 and early 2020 are eligible to receive up to $5,000 per kilometre to contribute to the replacement of damaged boundary fences. For more information phone 1300 778 080.

Department of Primary Industries - Recovery Support

Need help after the fires? Working with primary producers, small landholders and communities across Rural NSW to support your recovery after disasters or adverse events. Peter and Julie can provide practical and personal support to help you manage your recovery, link you with services, assist you in decision making and future planning.

Mid Coast Area Recovery Officers:
Julie King 0417 483 339
Peter Brown 0437 671 459

Help with farm finances...

Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW Northern Region (RFCSNSW- NR) supports eligible farmers, fishers, forest growers, harvesters and small related rural businesses* who are suffering financial hardship, and who have no alternative sources of impartial support, to manage and adjust to the challenge of industry and climate variability.

Taree Office: Michael Ramstadius
Phone: (02) 6551 5879

Help with general money worries...

Mid North Coast Financial Counselling Service

Free non-judgemental advice to individuals, couples, families, sole traders, company directors.
Phone: 1300 662 540

Are you dealing with a dispute...

Community Justice Centres (CJC)

Disputes can arise in many areas of life - whether it’s a misunderstanding with a neighbour over a fence, a disagreement between you and a family member, conflict in your workplace, or a dispute over debt. CJC is:

- Free
- Informal
- Confidential
- Voluntary
- Professional
- No waiting lists
- Convenient
- Quick and timely
- Accessible

People reach agreement in about 80% of mediations.
Ph: 1800 990 777
Email: cjc@justice.nsw.gov.au

General contacts

MidCoast Council 7955 7777
Red Cross: 1800 733 276
Rural Assistance Authority 1800 678 593
The Salvation Army Disaster Assistance 1300 662 217

Children and Young People

Kids HelpLine 1800 55 1800
Headspace National (03) 9027 0100

Health and Wellbeing

Lifeline Bushfire Recovery Line 13 43 57
Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
Mensline 1300 789 978
NSW Mental Health 1800 011 511

Animal and Agricultural Services

Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline 1800 814 647
We’d love to hear about your thoughts on Recovery. Please let us know about anything you have been doing (good and bad) that you would like us to include in the next newsletter.
Email: recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

If you have received this via post and would prefer to receive it via email please let us know.