Supporting our community to move forward

Rebuilding and preparing for the future are important focus areas not just for our community, but for us here at MidCoast Council. Our development taskforce team continues to support members of the community through the rebuilding process, and is committed to getting approvals processed as quickly as possible. We encourage anyone who is thinking about rebuilding to get in touch with us early on, so we can support you through the process.

We are also looking forward to our first Community Recovery Bushfire Reference Group meeting. This group will come together to support the recovery and renewal process for communities impacted by the bushfire events.

With COVID-19 restrictions starting to ease, we are hopeful we can soon see more of you in person, however we continue to be here at the end of a phone - and our bushfire recovery officers Carly and Janine can be contacted on 7955 7543.

What’s happening within the MidCoast area

- **Public Health Network Bushfire Recovery Community Grants** – for grassroots community activities that aim to strengthen social connectedness, emotional wellbeing, and resilience as well as assist communities to recover and heal. Recovery Officers are working with local community organisations to assist in applying for this funding. If you have an idea for activities in our area, please contact Carly or Janine at MidCoast Council on 02 7955 7543. Visit: [https://peoplebank.hneccphn.com.au/bushfire-grants](https://peoplebank.hneccphn.com.au/bushfire-grants) for more information. (First round of submissions closing Friday 19 June 2020, the second round will open in late July or early August).

- **Red Cross Phone Outreach** – Red Cross Emergency Services volunteers have been making calls to bushfire-impacted residents in a number of areas. The calls are just to check how people are doing and make sure they are linked with local recovery services. Calls to MidCoast residents are underway. If you know of someone who would benefit from a call, please ask them to register by contacting the Australian Red Cross Mid North Coast office, 6561 4000 or personal message us Australian Red Cross - Emergency Services NSW & ACT.


- **Community Hall Network Upgrades** – This program will ensure that halls across the MidCoast area are upgraded so that they have sufficient water, electrical and other infrastructure to support their local community if and when another emergency occurs. Auditing of current facilities and infrastructure is about to start.
Local organisations assisting in the recovery effort

Mid Coast Renewal Committee and Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services
The Mid Coast Renewal Committee and Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services (MVNS) are working together to bring you the “Easing Isolation” Initiative. This is a collaboration by local community members for those who are drought and bushfire affected. Local facilitators are bringing their skills and resources to our wider community utilising DIY kits of materials alongside online tutorials and lessons. We hope that by engaging in new hobbies and activities that we can help to boost morale, help others learn new skills and ease feelings of loneliness.

The DIY kits that are currently available for pickup from MVNS in Wingham (Old Court House) are:
- Making finger puppets kit
- Card-making kit
- Bracelet-making
- Basic veggie growing
- Bath/foot soak kits
- Chest rub kits

You can also enrol to participate in Virtual Cooking Classes with Donna Carrier from Bent on Food by emailing your details to mvns@mvns.org.au or calling Bent on Food in Wingham to register.

Part of doing the DIY activities is sharing your experience with others using a digital platform, so that you can stay connected and supported, while maintaining social distancing practices.

Please join the “Easing Isolation Activities” Facebook group for more information or follow @Mid Coast Renewal Committee and @Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services for updates.

Pottery with Steve from Dollys Flat Pottery, oil painting with Donna Rankin, and beeswax wrap making to come soon! This initiative is thanks to funding from the Public Health Network and MVNS.

Global Care
Global Care are the social justice and disaster relief arm of the International Network of Churches. They exist to spread kindness and love across Australia and around the world in a very practical way - with a lot of care. During the recent bushfires Global Care was able to assist a large number of families who lost homes or were fire affected, thanks to the generosity of hundreds of people across Australia. They were able to bring much needed emergency assistance including finances, donations of all kinds, furniture, portable showers and toilets, plus a caravan and camper-trailer; as well as lots of cups of coffee and chats. They also provide meals and food assistance to the local community and run our Global Care Shop (available to anyone) on Thursdays and Fridays - 9.30am to 12.30pm. Global Care have been continuing to operate each week, despite Covid restrictions, with boxes of food for purchase and an outdoor fruit and veg stall. Located at 147 Cowper St, Taree, the team would love to meet you, and for more information please contact Jenny - jenny@harbourchurch.com.au.
Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services
MVNS will provide financial and/or material support to MidCoast community members impacted by the recent bushfires and who are continuing to experience financial hardship or crisis. This funding is available until June 2021. The program provides a range of support such as food vouchers, fuel vouchers, taxi vouchers, pre-paid phone vouchers, food parcels, pet food, utility bills, clothing, stock feed and other appropriate third-party payments. Other financial support will be considered on an individual basis.

A basic individual assessment is necessary to ensure that other financial constraints are considered and other referrals and appropriate financial and support options are made available to you. This funding is being made available through Department of Social Services and as such we will be required to gather some information from you for their purposes. This information will be de-identified before being provided to them. This is a confidential service. Items you may require: a form of ID showing the address of your property; any documentation you may have showing that you were impacted by the fires; financial bills or paperwork that verify your circumstances. We will not ask you for any information of your experience unless you wish to share this or are seeking follow up support.

NB during this period of COVID isolation and distancing, we will be providing the service as much as possible via phone link.
Please call 6553 5121 or 0428 0000 for more 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](http://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](http://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 me 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 0265 541 201.

Grant Updates / Changes

Red Cross Re-establishment Grant

$30,000 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.

Rural Assistance Authority


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, web: www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/disasters-and-emergencies/
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?

Carly and Janine, MidCoast 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.

Carly and Janine have been in place since November 2019 working closely with local and state agencies to develop resilience and preparedness initiatives.

Email: recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au
Ph: 79557543

In need of mental health support...

Bushfire Recovery Mental Health Clinicians are now available in the Manning area as part of Hunter New England Health Services.

We work with individuals and families within fire affected communities to have access to the right level of mental health care for their needs.

Don’t wait until you can’t cope before you seek help.

Please contact us for free and confidential support and guidance.

Jinu Abraham - ph: 6539 6343 or email Jinu.Abraham2@health.nsw.gov.au
Tony Colechin - ph: 0423 842 800 or email Anthony.Colechin@health.nsw.gov.au
Rural Adversity Mental Health Program

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

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

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.
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

Bushfire Recovery Newsletter - June 2020
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.