Helping the MidCoast community get ready

With the important goal of ensuring every MidCoast household has a bushfire survival plan, MidCoast Council has undertaken a region-wide campaign this spring to help the community Get Ready.

“Every MidCoast household residence should have received a copy of the Get Ready bushfire survival plan in the mailbox this month,” said Mayor David West.

The Get Ready guide takes you through the five simple steps to ensure your household is prepared for the fire danger season.

The NSW RFS says it’s a myth that there’s nothing left to burn – we need to Get Ready now to protect lives and property this year.

“This year, we want every home on the MidCoast to have a bushfire survival plan. It’s important that you sit down with everyone who lives at your place, to make the plan - so everyone knows what you will do and when you will do it - before bushfires start.”

There’s more information, including videos, on our website at midcoast.nsw.gov.au/getready.

Council also ran weekly step by step guides, incorporating the NSW RFS help videos, in our weekly News Wrap e-newsletter. News Wrap is a great way to get all Council’s updates and takes just five minutes to read each week – subscribe here: http://eepurl.com/gYTz5X.

If you didn’t receive your Get Ready guide in the mail, please call 7955 7777 or visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/getready.

If reminders of the bushfires are causing issues for you, please call the Mental Healthline on 1800 011 511.
MidCoast Community Recovery Bushfire Reference Group
Here to provide strategic advice and feedback to Council in supporting the MidCoast to recover and renew following the bushfire events of late 2019. Have a chat to your community members about your recovery needs.

Councillor representatives
- Mayor David West
- Deputy Mayor Claire Pontin

Community representatives
Community Development Professional
- Bree Katsamangos - 6539 2002 - katsamangosb@missionaustralia.com.au

Failford
- Kylie Atkinson - 0428 089 572 - kylie.atkinson@health.nsw.gov.au

Gloucester
- Adam Parish - 0456 104 639 - adamparish1976@gmail.com

Harrington
- Mike Parsons - 0438 247 201 - mike@professionalsharrington.com.au

Johns River / Moorland
- Daintry Gerrand - 0429 198 472 - daintry.gerrand@gmail.com

Killabakh
- Greg Hale - 0412 476 048 - gabiandgreg@gmail.com

Marlee / Bobin
- Kim MacDonald - 0428 744 006 - kimmie2518@hotmail.com

MidCoast Renewal Committee
- Lucinda Fischer - 0429 636 166 - lucindafischer@outlook.com

Mooral Creek
- Lindsay Segal - 0419 621 661 - lindsay@sassafras.id.au

Mount George / Caffreys Flat
- Neal Parker - 0410 664 641 - neal66@netspace.net.au

Old Bar / Wallabi Point
- Bettina Bettington - 0458 555 040 - bettina.bettington@hotmail.com
- Jenny Brewer - 0433 080 480 - jenbrewer77@gmail.com

Rainbow Flat
- Mark Johnson - 0414 887 512 - mjo16677@bigpond.net.au
- Peter Ruprecht - 0437 349 886 - peterdavidruprecht@gmail.com

Tinonee / Hillville
- Sharon Chamberlain - 0400 372 767 - sharon.chamberlain@bigpond.com
- Trypheyna McShane - 0404 145 928 - trypheyna@amazions.com.au (Possum Brush)

Upper Lansdowne
- Alastair Breingan - 0409 712 659 - aistair.breingan@lelal.com

Wherrol Flat / Caparra
- Linda MacKenzie - 6550 7128 - lrmac@westnet.com.au
Questions or issues with boundary fences
Get some information about who would normally pay for what, consider what type of fence is / has gone in, where the fence is, and whether it was urgent work.

Talk to your neighbour, get an agreement in writing about the type of fence, where it should go, who is paying what. If you cannot agree you have some options.

Try mediation, consider serving a fencing notice or boundary notice. It’s often better for neighbours to negotiate agreements using the free Community Justice Centre mediation service phone 1800 990 777 or visit [www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au).

Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre provides free advice to people who have questions about fencing disputes.

For more information, the Department of Communities and Justice has a very informative webpage:

Other sources of information online are at:

Planning an anniversary or memorial event?
NSW Health has agreed that bushfire impacted communities are considered vulnerable for the purposes of the various Public Health Orders. This means that the restrictions do not apply to our bushfire recovery activities ie requiring four square metres per person in a room.

However, we are all committed to keeping our communities and staff safe and so we must balance the risks of COVID-19 with the need for personal interactions in our recovery work.

To assist you with this COVID-19 safe bushfire recovery activities guidelines and tools have been developed. We hope that these can inform your planning and delivery of bushfire recovery activities.

For more information on these tools and guidelines contact Janine at Council.
Ph: 7955 7543 or email: recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

$25,000 grants for home builders
HomeBuilder provides eligible owner occupiers with a grant of $25,000 to build a new home, substantially renovate an existing home or buy an off the plan home/new home.

A new home is one that has not previously been sold or occupied as a place of residence, (eg spec build) and where construction commenced on or after 4 June 2020.

Bushfire affected properties
If your home was destroyed in the 2019/20 NSW Bushfires, and you are rebuilding on your existing land, your application will be considered as a Substantial Renovation.

The 2019/20 NSW Bushfires are defined as:
- North Coast bushfires from 18 July 2019 onwards in a region listed as a Natural Disaster Declaration by the Office of Emergency Management.
- NSW bushfires from 31 August 2019 onwards in a region listed as a Natural Disaster Declaration by the Office of Emergency Management.

Community groups can now apply for bushfire recovery funding

Resilience NSW has announced that Phase 2 of the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund is now open, with local councils and community groups able to apply for grants. The fund provides $25 million to promote community wellbeing, connectedness, social recovery and future disaster resilience, thanks to joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements administered by Resilience NSW.

Community groups, joint organisations and not-for-profit groups can apply for funds to undertake projects that enhance social recovery and preparedness, from $20,000 up to $300,000.

Council encourages groups who’ve already been doing a mighty job to help the MidCoast recover to check whether they are eligible to apply for these funds for future projects. If your group is an unincorporated entity, call our Recovery team on 7955 7543 to discuss how Council can support your application.

If you have a medium or long-term project to support community recovery and help your local area build resilience and hope for the future, you can check your eligibility, find out more and apply online at www.emergency.nsw.gov.au. Applications close at 12pm on Tuesday 10 November.

For further information or technical support regarding the online application form, email bcrrf@resilience.nsw.gov.au

Bushfire Battlers

Do your kids like to draw or paint? We are giving artistic kids the opportunity to share their thoughts, reflections and understanding of the recent bushfires in our region. Their artwork will be combined into a book for the community.

Entries are required by 31 October to be included in the book.

Visit the Farm Force webpage and click on Bushfire Battlers and discover how your kids can be involved - www.envirostories.com.au/get-involved/farm-force/

Farm Force - Farm kids standing guard against bushfire, pests, drought and flood.

Property Recovery and Resilience Action Planning

for Bushfire Impacted Communities

- 5 November - Johns River
- 12 November - Hillville / Rainbow Flat
- 19 November - Bobin

Tackling the changing conditions of the MidCoast, with the ideas and knowledge needed to increase the resilience of your properties to these new extremes, including bushfire, drought and frost.

Working on individual action plans throughout the day, attendees will be compiling a draft property action plan. Together with their neighbours and the help of Landcare, these plans will assist landholders in their future decision making, planning and may form the basis of funding applications for joint initiatives.

Places are strictly limited due to COVID restrictions. For more information and to register your interest visit www.midcoast2tops.org.au

This will be a COVID safe event in accordance with NSW Health guidelines.
Fire recovery fencing program

Helping MidCoast landholders after last summer’s bushfires.

Grateful property owners Bob Nicholas and Louise Veale have a 20 hectare property with a large orchard and cattle agistment in the Caparra area near Wingham.

Bob and Louise had 99% of their property burnt during last summer’s devastating fires, including almost five kilometres of boundary and internal fences.

They were overwhelmed their home and large orchard were spared.

“We were pretty lucky really, but we did lose around three and a half kilometres of public land boundary fencing which impacted our cattle agistment,” Louise said.

Rebuilding boundary fences is a first crucial step for many fire affected farmers, who have destocked or are continuing to care for any remaining stock and pastures coming into summer.

“I found the support provided by Local Land Services for fencing easy to apply for and it felt uplifting to have someone helping us after such a difficult experience,” Louise said.

“The major advantage of this process was how easy it was for us as landowners to apply for the $17,000 funding we received and the compassionate staff who assisted us.”

The fencing has also helped Bob and Louise protect 350 trees they planted to help regenerate the Caparra Creek area of their property since the fires.

The grants cover up to $5,000 per kilometre to replace fences that border public land damaged by fires from late 2019 to early 2020.

More information about the Supporting Our Neighbours boundary fence grants is available online at www.lls.nsw.gov.au or by calling 1300 778 080.

Fencing photo: Before

Fencing photo: After
Local organisations assisting in the recovery effort

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
e-mail: nursery@landcareportmac.com.au

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 bushfire grants
Applications for all existing bushfire grants has been extended and will now remain open until 31 December.

Disaster Recovery Advisors & Mentors Australia (DRAMA)
DRAMA is a Red Cross program linking people with recovery experience to those currently working in recovery, including recovery officers and community leaders.
Contact: Eleanor Harris, Australian Red Cross Recovery Worker, Mid North Coast, 0426 916 984, eharris@redcross.org.au.

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.
Phone: 1300 656 336

Mid Coast Outreach Incorporated
Helping those impacted by Bushfire, Drought, Flood and COVID-19 in the Mid Coast rural areas.
Operating hours
Tuesday, Wednesday & Fridays - 8am until 5pm
Thursday - 8am until 7pm
Closed public holidays
Contact
Shazz: 0400 372 767
e-mail: tinoneeoutreachinc@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/MidCoastOutreach

The Salvation Army
The Salvation Army Disasters Assistance team is available to help those affected in any state or territory across Australia.

Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services
MVNS can provide financial and/or material support to the MidCoast community impacted by the recent bushfires and who are continuing to experience financial hardship or crisis. They are able to help out by providing vouchers, food, utility bills and other payments on an individual basis.
Please call 6553 5121 for information or an appointment.

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.
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 – Community 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 Community 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:  
Mathew Milne: 0437 989 044  
Orry Berry: 0409 834 501
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.

Online psychological help: Rural Health Connect

Rural Health Connect is a psychology platform and social enterprise particularly focused on finding psychologists willing to do bulk billing and linking these sessions up with the people who need them.
They also focus on reducing waiting lists and making access easier in rural areas as well as working with NDIS participants. Sessions are through video conferencing or by phone.
Visit: www.ruralhealthconnect.com.au

Lifeline face to face counselling

- No charge. No referral required. Counselling services can help people struggling with personal issues. Lifeline, with the support of PHN, are proud to be able to provide a counselling service at no cost to those who have been impacted by recent bushfires.
- You do not require a referral to initiate contact with our counselling service. Phone 1300 152 854 to book an appointment.

Farmgate Support Program

The farmgate support program provides free mental health and emotional support to farmers, farming families, local businesses and service providers affected by the drought, bushfires & COVID-19. It is designed to meet the needs of individuals, couples and families; from a chat through to counselling options.
The program is a free mobile service throughout the Hunter New England Local Health District with workers being able to visit and provide service on farms, in homes, and businesses.
Call the Farmgate intake line on 0477 322 851 or email FarmgateSupport@health.nsw.gov.au.
Local Farmgate workers are:
Leanne Tilse 0419 747 276 and David Rosewarne 0428 136 447.

Architects Assist

Architects Assist is an initiative of 600 firms from the built environment industry to help and support those affected by bushfires and other natural disasters, aiming to help communities ‘build back better’. You can request free or reduced cost assistance with plans for replacing homes or community assets. Assistance may range from simple advice to full service.
To request assistance, see the Architects Assist website: https://architectsassist.com.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.
We can also help with the recovery of the environment by providing advice on vegetation, wildlife, soil, waterways and much more.
Contact: 1300 795 299
Email: admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au
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

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

Wesley Mission Financial Counselling Services
Free, independent and confidential financial counselling provides:
- Support in times of crisis
- Both short-term crisis management and long-term prevention strategies
- Counselling, education, analysis, personalised options, negotiation, advocacy, mediation and referrals where needed
- Assistance with options and help to negotiate with insurance and credit providers
- Navigate Emergency Relief support
Phone: 0448 065 529
Email: leah.woods@wesleymission.org.au

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

Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre
A legal service that provides free legal help to people on the Mid North Coast affected by bushfires and can help with civil law problems like insurance, debt, employment, traffic matters and a range of other situations.
Ph: 6580 2111
email: info@mncclc.org.au
web: www.mncclc.org.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.
## How are you going?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How are you feeling?</th>
<th>WELL</th>
<th>UNWELL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-aware &amp; calm</td>
<td>Irritable or impatient</td>
<td>Angry or frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping well</td>
<td>Worried or nervous</td>
<td>Very nervous, panicky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Feeling hopeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivated &amp; kicking goals</td>
<td>Putting things off, forgetting stuff</td>
<td>Unmotivated, not working well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping normally</td>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>Restless, disturbed sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Low energy levels</td>
<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping active</td>
<td>Not doing as much as usual</td>
<td>Not enjoying activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling connected</td>
<td>Withdrawal from social activity</td>
<td>Annoyed with everyone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What can you do?

- **Keep it up!**
  - Ask for support, try not to judge yourself
  - Talk to friends and family
  - Do something you enjoy

- **See your GP**
  - Don’t put it off, act now
  - Contact Community Health or your EAP

- **You must get help**
  - Help is available

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**MidCoast Council Bushfire Recovery Newsletter - October 2020**
CHARITY CLEARANCE

AUCTION

Taree and Coastal Crane Services Industrial Area Golf Avenue
Taree
Sunday 1st November 2020
Start 8:30am
Viewing 7.30AM
Covid 19 compliant
Bidders only

All funds going to Mid Coast Outreach Incorporated helping bushfire, drought and covid 19 impacted in rural areas of Mid Coast.

Tractor, chainsaws, tools, tools, tools, tools, tools, power, and manual boating gear solar inverters dining table tall boy still equipment

Chaff cutter roofing iron rubber matting scaffolding solar hot water electric fencing

List available soon

Contact: sharon.chamberlain@bigpond.com
0400372767
office hours only.
Coping with Anniversaries:
You, your family and your community

Recovering from disasters can be a slow and stressful process. Milestones, like anniversaries, can be challenging and carry expectation that recovery should be over. Everyone recovers differently; there is no one thing or time that marks the end.

It is normal to still feel sad or stressed around the anniversary of a disaster event. It takes time, but these feelings can fade if you have the right support and look after your wellbeing.

Some tips from Disaster Recovery Mentor Dr Rob Gordon on looking after yourself and those close to you:

• Rest and listen to what your body, mind and emotions tell you. You will eventually get energy back - you just have a big overdraft.
• Give yourself recreation activities you enjoy which add energy and make things feel worthwhile.
• Put energy into rebuilding relationships, family and important friendships. Make time to be together by changing routines and patterns. Check in on children.
• Have health checks and review diet and exercise.
• Take time for things you enjoy.

Seeking further support

Sometimes, personal recovery needs to be supported by specialist knowledge to ensure that stress doesn’t linger unnecessarily or lead to other health problems. Stress can resolve with advice from professionals, such as GPs, counsellors or psychologists. Consider seeking further support if:

• Physical or other symptoms are causing concern
• There is no one to talk to or relationships are being affected by the stress
• You feel emotionally numb, depressed or more anxious than normal
• You continue to have disturbed sleep and nightmares
• You are unable to handle the intense feelings or physical sensations
• You are becoming accident prone or increasing the use of drugs and alcohol
• Recovery has stalled or does not seem to be proceeding.

Anniversaries of disaster events can be upsetting, particularly if media coverage is intense. There may be formal events to mark the anniversary which you are invited to attend. There may also be informal events arranged by others affected. You may find these times difficult, so it is helpful to have a plan to reduce the impact. Limit your exposure to media coverage, plan your day with relaxing activities and make sure you have people available to support you, should you need it.

Help is available online: https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/coping-after-a-crisis
Help is available by phone: Lifeline 13 11 14