It’s been a challenging few months for our community; facing drought, bushfires, floods, and now the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the best interests of your health and safety, we are limiting face to face support but we are working together to ensure you continue to receive support during this time.

We want you to know, we are still here for you. The COVID-19 Pandemic may change the way we do things, but it doesn’t change our commitment to supporting our community.

In times of uncertainty such as this, it is important that we look after ourselves, and each other. On the back of this sheet you will find a table which can help you think about how you or someone you know might be coping, and offers ways you can access support.

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**Laing O’Rourke**

Don’t miss out on receiving a free clean up through the NSW Bushfire Clean-up Program. It’s not too late to get in touch with Laing O’Rourke and register for a free Clean Up after the Summer bushfires. The Laing O’Rourke Team are working in the MidCoast area now and are keen to make sure no one misses out.


Additionally, if you think you’ve registered but haven’t heard from the team yet, please call the Bushfire Clean Up hotline on 1800 007 539 to provide the team with your contact details. A member of the local team will then be in touch to schedule an appointment to inspect the damage at your property and begin the clean-up process.

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**Recovery in the MidCoast:**

There are a number of programs underway to support the recovery of our communities across the MidCoast. The programs target different areas of our community in need of support as we start the long journey of recovering from the devastation of the November 2019 fires.

Over the past few months Council has received a total of $2.5 million dollars in funding to bushfire recovery grant funding to support our community.

These funds will support a number of programs, outlined below, and all funding is required to be acquitted through the funding agencies to ensure funds are spent in accordance with the funding agreements.
Community halls program
More than $1 million of the funding will be spent on projects to upgrade the local community hall network, develop socially resilient communities and improve disaster preparedness in the community. It is recognised community halls play an important part in social connection, support and physical shelter for communities during times of crisis. The community halls program will ensure that halls across the Local Government Area are upgraded so that they have sufficient water, electrical and other infrastructure to support their local community if and when another emergency occurs. We will be working with each community on their individual needs.

Economic recovery
A number of programs have been developed to support economic recovery for local businesses in the wake of both drought and bushfires. These include shop local campaigns, CBD revitalisation projects and business continuity and contingency coaching.

Other programs
A range of other programs are also under development as part of the funding package, including disaster preparedness and community resilience programs. Funding has also been allocated to continuing to employ Bushfire Recovery Officers within Council until the end of 2020 to continue to provide a support service as part of the rebuilding effort, and a range of events held in bushfire impacted communities earlier in the year.

Bushfire affected waterways program
A total of $913,000 has been provided to minimise and mitigate the impacts of bushfires on sensitive estuary and coastal ecosystems. This project aims to restore burnt littoral rainforest, coastal wetlands and other native forest communities located on 2,364 hectares of Council managed land. 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 Recovery Reference Group
A Bushfire Recovery Reference Group is being established by Council to help guide recovery and renewal efforts. The reference group provides a way for communities to support each other and take ownership of their own recovery journey, providing a direct voice to local government, and helping to shape recovery that meets community needs. Group members will bring feedback from their local communities, and to collaboratively provide strategic advice, identify priorities, and establish channels for engaging with the broader community in the recovery process. Nominations for the reference group have closed, with meetings to start shortly after membership is determined.

Rebuilding of Rainbow Flat Fire Station
We are moving ahead with the rebuild of the Rainbow Flat Rural Fire Service station that was destroyed in the fires. Council’s role is to support the NSW Rural Fire Service in the region, and one of the ways we do this is by managing works for their facilities. We are currently demolishing and removing the destroyed station and will be ready to begin to rebuild by the end of May.

Approving development applications
Development applications for the rebuilding of homes lost in the November 2019 bushfires are currently being approved with an average turnaround time of 10 days. Our bushfire taskforce established to support the rebuilding and recovery efforts of the community is focused on supporting all property owners who lost buildings to navigate the rebuilding process. To date the taskforce has also inspected 104 of the bushfire damaged premises, the majority of which had asbestos disposal issues, which makes the clean-up process more involved. So far we have received 15 applications to rebuild homes. Not every application is going to be straightforward – it will depend on a range of factors – however we will continue to process applications as quickly as we can and offer advice to help navigate the system.

Minderoo pods
A number of Minderoo pods are being installed in the region. These self-contained units provide people with access to the basic facilities required to keep them on their land in the short-term while they rebuild homes. A number of pods have been made available around the State as part of a partnership between the State Government and the Minderoo Foundation.

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.
Agencies available for support:

The best starting point for accessing support services:

**Service NSW**
Service NSW are acting as a triage agency, taking in details and referring on where needed. Contact Service NSW for assistance with applying for cleanup, funding and replacing essential documents; COVID-19 support for individuals and businesses, assistance packages and advice on how to stay healthy; information on the more than 70 rebates currently available to help with the cost of living, including energy and utilities, active kids vouchers and more.

Call 13 77 88 or visit their website for further information - https://www.service.nsw.gov.au

**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...

**Rural Adversity Mental Health Program**
The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program links people to local mental health services and resources, educate workplaces and communities about mental health and wellbeing and respond in times of natural disasters and severe adversity.
Local contact:
Kylie Atkinson: 0437 268 325

Feeling isolated and lonely...

**Hunter New England Health – Drought Support Peer Workers**
Situated at Manning and 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.

Sheila Sansom (Taree) 0417 752 164
Leanne Tilse (Gloucester) 0419 747 276
HNELHD-DroughtSupport@health.nsw.gov.au
Support for rural communities...
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 livestock, pastures and fencing...
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.
Private landholders who share a boundary with public land and were impacted by the 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 by contacting us on 1300 778 080.
LLS Contact details: 1300 795 299
Email: admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au

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

COVID-19 Primary Industries Liaison Team
NSW Department of Primary Industries has established a COVID-19 Primary Industries Liaison Team to help primary producers navigate the challenges and impacts of COVID-19 on their business and industry.

The COVID-19 webportal on the DPI website (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/covid-19) has been set up for producers and industry to view the latest updates and information. There is a solid bank of information and regularly updated FAQs available to help navigate a number of topics. You can also contact the Primary Industries Liaison Team direct (email above) to ask about individual business or industry circumstances.
Food production and supply is an essential service. There is a clear commitment from all states and territories to ensure essential workers, including in agriculture, can continue their work, maintain the freight network and manage supply chains.

You can contact the Primary Industries Liaison Team by emailing covidinfo@dpi.nsw.gov.au to discuss your individual business or industry circumstances
covidinfo@dpi.nsw.gov.au
General contacts
MidCoast Council 7955 7777

Health and Wellbeing
Lifeline Bushfire Recovery Line 134357
Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
Mensline 1300 789 978
NSW Mental Health 1800 011 511
Healthy Minds Bushfire Counselling 1300 160 339

Children and Young People
Kids HelpLine 1800 55 1800
Headspace National (03) 9027 0100
Headspace Local

Welfare Services
Australian Government Disaster Relief 180 22 66
Red Cross: 1800 733 276
Rural Assistance Authority 1800 678 593
The Salvation Army Disaster Assistance 1300 662 217
Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services 6553 5121
Tinonee Outreach 0400 372 767

Animal and Agricultural Services
Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline 1800 814 647