MidCoast Council Community Recovery program

Janine has moved from the bushfire recovery position to the position of Community Recovery Officer. This is a 12-month position. A second Community Recovery Officer coming on board at the end of September. The Community Recovery Officers will be working with the bushfire affected communities to promote and establish resilient and prepared communities, as well as develop and support general community recovery efforts. Janine and our other Recovery Officer will be getting in touch with individual communities in the near future to listen to your ideas and develop some plans for how we can support your community further in recovery, resilience and preparation.

Please do get in touch with our Community Recovery Officers to share your ideas on what will make your community more resilient and prepared.

Janine is still your primary contact for all Council related bushfire enquiries and community recovery information. She can be contacted on 7955 7543 or email recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

Free pizza nights coming your way soon!

MidCoast Council has been successful in getting funding to host free pizza nights in the following locations:

* Burrell Creek  * Wherrol Flat  * Rainbow Flat  * Mount George  * Johns River  * Mooral Creek  * Tinonee

Stay posted for more information - dates and location to be confirmed.

These events are about providing a space for communities to come together socially. MidCoast Council will host these events, and they will be a relaxed night for you to get together with your community. We will be working with local bushfire recovery agencies to have support staff there if you have any bushfire recovery issues that you would like assistance with, but there will be no formal component to these nights.

MidCoast Council is committed to keeping our communities safe and we will be following the COVID-19 safe bushfire recovery activities guidelines developed by NSW Department of Health.
Update on rates and pensioner concessions

The State Government has extended the rates relief program for 2020-2021, Quarters 1 and 2 for all home owners whose primary dwelling was destroyed beyond repair in the 2019-2020 bushfires. These will be the rates instalments due on 30 September and 30 November. It is expected that the additional rates relief will be automatically applied to eligible landowners over the coming weeks. People already registered for this rates relief with Service NSW should receive a letter from Service NSW advising of this eligibility. If you think you should be eligible for rates relief and have not received it, please visit your local Service NSW office at Taree or Tuncurry and ask to speak with your Bushfire Customer Care Specialist or contact Jo Mountney on 0409 890 356 to arrange a phone appointment.

Wanting to rebuild after the fires?

We recognise how difficult the last nine months has been and we want to make it as easy as we can for you to get back into your own home as soon as possible. Council has waived all fees and charges associated with the replacement of houses, sheds, farm buildings and septic systems so Council approval can be gained free of charge to replace lost structures. All you need to do is lodge a Development Application form (DA) and provide a set of plans.

To this effect, Council’s Building Surveyor Chad Vowles is dedicated to advising you what needs to be included in a development application so you can get a speedy approval and your build can go ahead. Chad is available for face-to-face consultations from 8:30am – 10:30am weekdays, or you can contact him ph: 6591 7296, email: chad.vowles@midcoast.nsw.gov.au.

Please do book in a pre-lodgement meeting with Chad to get you started. Chad is part of bushfire recovery taskforce which is dedicated to ensuring you have a fast turn-around time on your development application so you can focus on getting on with the physical rebuild of your new home.

To date we have approved 30 development applications (bushfire rebuild) in an average of 10 working days. Information regarding the use of shipping containers used for temporary storage can also be discussed with Chad.

Get Ready MidCoast

The official bushfire danger period has started for our region - it’s time to Get Ready MidCoast!

Visit your local RFS Brigade Station on Get Ready Weekend (19-20 September) for help to get prepared or visit www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/getready and follow the five simple steps to Get Ready.

Get Ready Weekend - Tinonee Brigade Shed

A great four hours is planned with actual fire drill demos, fun activities for kids using the fire hose, learn how to use a fire extinguisher, photo ops in their new fire truck and a tonne of great resources to prepare our community for the upcoming fire season. The whole brigade is involved and the local Tinonee cafe is setting up a coffee cart and the brigade is planning a sausage sizzle.

We can’t afford to let the community be complacent this year just because we’ve had some rain. We want people to think about their fire plan before the season reaches its peak.

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We recognise how difficult the last nine months has been and we want to make it as easy as we can for you to get back into your own home as soon as possible. Council has waived all fees and charges associated with the replacement of houses, sheds, farm buildings and septic systems – so Council approval can be gained free of charge to replace lost structures. All you need to do is lodge a Development Application form (DA) and provide a set of plans.

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To date we have approved 30 development applications (bushfire rebuild) in an average of 10 working days. Information regarding the use of shipping containers used for temporary storage can also be discussed with Chad.
Service NSW update

- **Bushfire Customer Care Program** - Service NSW are still working hard to assist you with accessing financial assistance to help you with your bushfire recovery. Funding is still available via Charity Grants and Government assistance. Your Bushfire Customer Care Specialist will help you to determine eligibility and assist with applications.

- **Clean Up** - At the end July, direct responsibility of site clean-ups was handed back to Public Works Advisory who will lead efforts on the next stage of the NSW and Federal Government funded bushfire clean-up program. As this hand-over occurs, the NSW Government and Laing O’Rourke remain acutely aware that there are still eligible properties registered to be cleared. Please be assured, we are absolutely focussed on ensuring no one is left behind and that properties are cleared as quickly and as safely as possible. Registrations are still open; the bushfire clean-up program does not currently have an end-date to opt-in. You can register by contacting Service NSW on 13 77 88 or visiting [https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/register-opt-nsw-bushfire-clean](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/register-opt-nsw-bushfire-clean)

- **Support for Businesses** - Business Support Grants are still available for eligible businesses who have been impacted by bushfire.

To access assistance please visit your local Service NSW office at Taree or Tuncurry and ask to speak with your Bushfire Customer Care Specialist or contact Jo Mountney on 0409 890 356 to arrange a phone appointment.

Appliance Replacement offer

Service NSW bushfire customer care specialists are able to help you with obtaining discounted fridges and tvs if your appliances were destroyed in the fire. Expect to pay 50% of the normal retail price plus a delivery fee for a new fridge or tv. To be eligible you need to have either lost your home or the appliance must have been damaged in the fire and have registered with either:

Jo Mountney (Service NSW Taree)  Ph: 0409 890 356
Natalie Baker (Service NSW Tuncurry)

Appliance replacement offer for low income households - appliances not damaged / destroyed by fire

If your appliances weren’t affected by the fire, you could still be eligible for financial assistance with getting new energy efficient appliances. Eligibility is for those who are holding a Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card or Low Income Health Care Card from Centrelink or a Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card. Applicants must have an older appliance to return as the program is a replacement offer.


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MidCoast Council: Continuing to support you

Together with Service NSW and Resilience NSW, MidCoast Council is seeking to ‘check in’ with everyone in our region who has been affected by the 2019 bushfire event. If your residence was damaged or destroyed during the fires, we’ll shortly be in touch by email or phone to check in and find out how you are doing.

There are some people for whom we still do not have email or phone contact details – if you think we may not have your details, please call or email us, so that we can continue to better understand your needs and find assistance and services that may be able to help you.

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

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Free nutrition & cooking presentations by the Wholesome Collective (see info attached)
Grants for community organisations supporting recovery and wellbeing

To support communities recovering from bushfires the Public Health Network (PHN) is funding another round of grants for activities that promote wellbeing in communities affected by bushfire.

Funding of up to $10,000 is available for:

- Community events or workshops that promote resilience and reduce stigma associated with mental illness and accessing mental health and suicide prevention services
- Complementary and lifestyle group activities to improve physical and mental health
- Community education on topics such as managing stress, anxiety, depression and stigma
- Community-based activities that promote social connectedness.

For more information, to find out when the next round opens and to apply, go the website: https://peoplebank.hneccphn.com.au/bushfire-recovery

Education and Workplace Pathways Grant

Young people looking to continue their education or get support in look for work can get financial assistance with:

- Paying education fees
- Accessing technology to support work or education needs
- Purchasing work related attire such as safety gear.

To qualify for assistance, you need to:

- be between 15 and 25 years old,
- have identification (or government letter) to demonstrate your residence was in a bushfire impacted area, and proof of residency (e.g. utility bill)
- provide evidence of education enrolment
- provide evidence of your workplace situation (this can be negotiated)

To apply or get more information, call the Salvation Army bushfire disaster team on 1300 662 217 or email sal.disasters@salvationarmy.org.au

Equestrian Fire Relief Australia Grants

Grants of up to $15,000 are available for individuals and not for profit clubs / organisations to support equestrians to assist with equestrian welfare, wellbeing and return to participation in equestrian sports by assisting the recovery of the equestrian community in bushfire affected areas. EFRA is accessible to fire affected members of the equestrian community based on need, not membership of any particular organisation.

Funds are to be focused on equestrian relief, horse welfare and the equestrian community, not general drought and fire relief. However joint activities may be supported if they contribute to equestrian outcomes. Grant applications need to be submitted by 30 September 2020.

Grants can be used to repair or replace essential items damaged or lost in the bushfires, including:

- Equine facilities, eg fencing
- Gear eg bridles, saddles
- Training or competition equipment eg show jumping poles
- Cross country jumps
- Small infrastructure eg shelters
- Outdoor arenas
- Feed/hay
- Floats

To apply, go to: https://www.equestrianfirerelief.com.au/apply-for-support

MidCoast Renewal are hosting events this month

- 16 September - 10am-11am - Book Club at Taree Literary Institute Library. Pick up a copy of this month’s book ahead of the meeting. Facilitated by Librarian Kylie with morning tea provided by Cafe 1twenty3.
- 19 September - 10am-1pm - Needle Felt an Aussie Animal at Manning Valley Neighbourhood Centre in Wingham. Facilitated by Gemma from “Scraps of Happiness” - beginners welcome.
- 25 September - 1pm-4pm - Art & Craft at Manning Valley Neighbourhood Centre. You can use one of our DIY kits to create something or bring a project from home. Facilitated by the wonderful Jen from “Sweet Pea & Mumma” - light refreshments.
Partnering to regenerate - tree giveaway program

In response to the impacts of the 2019 bushfires on our natural environment, Council has been working in partnership with landholders and agencies to assist in the recovery of healthy functioning natural areas.

Through our nursery facilities, we have supplied interested landholders in bushfire and drought affected areas with thousands of native trees and shrubs to replace those lost and to enhance damaged ecosystems. All of the plants are grown from locally-collected seed including those harvested from local koala feed trees. The project is funded through Council’s Environmental Rate and will result in benefits for water quality, catchment health and biodiversity, particularly the koala.

Council is now partnering with Mid Coast 2 Tops Landcare to deliver more native trees and shrubs to bushfire-affected landholders via a new tree giveaway scheme. The first round of trees will be available in late September. Interested landholders have been asked to register their interest on the Mid Coast 2 Tops website www.midcoast2tops.org.au/ via an Expression of Interest form. The trees will be provided to landholders free of charge, with recipients asked to plant, protect and maintain these trees. Landcare and Council staff are available to provide advice on planting and follow-up care. Up to 2,000 native trees and shrubs will be delivered in the first round of the program. Subsequent rounds of the tree giveaway program are proposed depending on interest.

To find out more about Council’s bushfire and drought recovery work visit: www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/bushfirerecoveryvideos

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

The challenges farming families face when dealing with the impacts of bushfire, pests, drought and flood have an enormous effect on our rural communities. In these times it is our children who can feel like they are uninformed and unheard.

The ‘Farm Force’ program provides our kids from the Hunter region a chance to have a voice. It will see the creation of a series of books addressing these issues that are written and illustrated by local kids, to be used as a resource for the local community.

Bushfire Battlers

The 2019/2020 bushfires were the most severe on record as they affected so many of our rural regions.

We want rural kids to reflect on past experiences, learn about the importance of good bushfire preparedness and recognise how communities come together to support each other in times of crisis. This will make them a ‘force’ to be reckoned with as they are better equipped to help their families prepare for future events.

Please visit the Farm Force webpage and click on Bushfire Battlers to discover more information on how to be involved - www.envirostories.com.au/get-involved/farm-force/

This program is supported by Hunter Local Land Services, Hunter Region Landcare Network and Mid Coast 2 Tops Landcare Connection.

For further information contact Daniel Trudgeon on daniel.trudgeon@lls.nsw.gov.au or 0419 436 185.
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 30 September.
A new grant will be available by early October, to support those with the least capacity to recover and who remain in financial hardship as a result of the bushfires.

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

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

Tinonee 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 or Gina 0409 810 876
e-mail: 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.
Phone: 1300 656 336

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.
 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:

Kylie Atkinson: 0437 268 325  
Orry Berry: 0409 834 501
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.

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.
Contact: 1300 795 299
Email: admin.hunter@lls.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

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; whether they require short term conversations and information or ongoing formal counselling options.
Phone: 0477 322 851
Email: FarmgateSupport@health.nsw.gov.au

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/

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 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

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.
FREE NUTRITION AND COOKING PRESENTATIONS

In collaboration with Manning Valley Neighbourhood Centre, The Wholesome Collective is visiting your area to offer a series of fun and interactive nutrition and cooking presentations. They will bring some joy and show you how to cook a delicious meal using every day, seasonal ingredients that are good for your health (without skimping on FLAVOUR)!

Join TWC for some fun, laughs and good food – we all need that right now!

WHAT’S INCLUDED:

- A live and interactive cooking presentation
- A copy of The Wholesome Collective’s nutrition and cookbook featuring 78 recipes
- Taste testers of food prepared

TO BOOK:

- Online bookings are preferred. To do this, visit https://www.thewholesomeco.com.au/shop, find the presentation that you want to attend and complete the booking details. Please complete a booking order for each person attending due to COVID-19 requirements.
- Or call 0402 368 551 and leave a message with booking details if you cannot book online.

All locations, dates and times are listed below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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| 21 September 10am – 11.30am | Bobin Hall  
2509 Bulga Road, Bobin |
| 21 September 3pm – 4.30pm | Little Plains Hall Community Support Hub  
Glenwarrin Road, Elands |
| 22 September 3pm – 4.30pm | Killabakh Hall  
1676 Comboyne Road, Killabakh |
| 23 September 10am – 11.30am | Nabiac Showground Hall  
39 Nabiac Street, Nabiac |
| 24 September 10am – 11.30am | Manning Valley Neighbourhood Centre  
4 Farquhar Street, Wingham |
| 24 September 3pm – 4.30pm | Tinonee Hall  
11 Manchester Street, Tinonee |
| 25 September 10am – 11.30am | Biripi – Purfleet Clinic  
2a Edwards Drive, Purfleet |
| 26 September 10am – 11.30am | Biripi – Taree Hub  
39 Mudford Street, Taree |
| 27 September 10am – 11.30am | Johns River Community Hall  
54 Johns River Road, Johns River |

The Wholesome Collective is a mobile nutrition and cooking education service predominantly servicing the Central Coast, Newcastle, Hunter Valley and New England areas. They aim to make nutrition and cooking education fun, practical and achievable.

These presentations are proudly supported by Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network as part of their drought and fire relief funding. The Wholesome Collective hope to bring some joy to your community during these challenging times.
MidCoast Council is encouraging families and neighbours to pull together to prepare for bushfire season and to start a broader conversation about being prepared for all hazards, kicking off with NSW RFS Get Ready Weekend on 19-20 September.

“The 2019/20 bushfire season was the most devastating bushfire season in NSW and MidCoast regional history. We have seen our community really pull together to help each other recover from the impact of these fires, and that is ongoing,” said Mayor David West.

“I am sure that as a community, and as individuals, we will all make an extra effort this year, to ensure everyone is prepared and has a bushfire emergency plan.”

Make sure you note Get Ready Weekend on the calendar on 19 – 20 September, and help each other get ready. Local NSW RFS brigades will be throwing their doors open, or holding events to help you find information and Get Ready for the bushfire season ahead.

For more information on your local brigade event, and to get started on preparing for the season ahead, visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/getready.

The MidCoast emergency hub, at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/emergency has information to help MidCoast residents plan and prepare for a range of hazards, and be disaster ready.

While the focus for ‘Get Ready’ is on being prepared for future fire events, we know that many on the MidCoast are still recovering from the tragic impacts of the Black Summer fires which swept through our region in November last year.

For Don Pattison and Cheryl Pacey, MidCoast locals who lost their home at Caparra on Friday 8 November 2019 when the Rumba Dump fire spread out of control, the most important thing we can all do is to continue to support and encourage those in our communities who are still recovering.

Don says to those who are recovering “if you reach out to your local community, I’m sure they will do what they can to help you.” He encourages all those affected by the fires to seek out help, with checking the website link below a good start.

And Don says for those of us who are reaching out to people recovering, once is not enough: “people will respond they are okay, but you need to go back (and check in) three, four, five, six times before they will say ‘you know what, I could do with a hand’ “.

Don and Cheryl have shared their inspiring story of resilience, recovery and rebuilding their home with MidCoast Council.

For bushfire recovery assistance and to view Don and Cheryl’s story, please visit midcoast.nsw.gov.au/bushfirerecovery or call 7955 7777. If the videos, or reminders of the bushfires are causing issues for you, please call the Mental Healthline on 1800 011 511.