

Update from the Community Recovery Officer

A big newsletter for October and an even bigger thank you to everyone who has completed Council's Outreach Survey. We've seen a strong number of responses and feedback from across the LGA, which has assisted Council in being able to follow up on available supports, identify principal themes and issues and collect important information for recovery operations. If you would like to complete the survey there is still time, please email Recovery@Lithgow.nsw.gov.au or call 6354 9960.

Since starting in mid August calls and visits have been made to 92 members of the community who registered with Council following the bushfires. Over 240 registrations have been received by Council. If I haven't yet reached you, please be assured I will be making contact with each registrant. If your details or circumstances have changed, or if you'd like to check in please contact me.

Thank you to everyone so far for sharing with me part of your story. Each month I'll be sharing a quote/photo/profile of something that's really resonated with me. I hope wherever you're at in your own journey you find some encouragement in this.

Rachel Nicoll - Community Recovery Officer (02 6354 9960).



Community preparedness and responses to the 2019-20 bush fires

The experiences of anyone threatened or impacted by the New South Wales bushfires in 2019/20 will be captured in a new online research survey.

If you were affected as a resident, tourist or secondary home owner, you can help with research being conducted by the University of Wollongong and Macquarie University for the NSW Rural Fire Service.

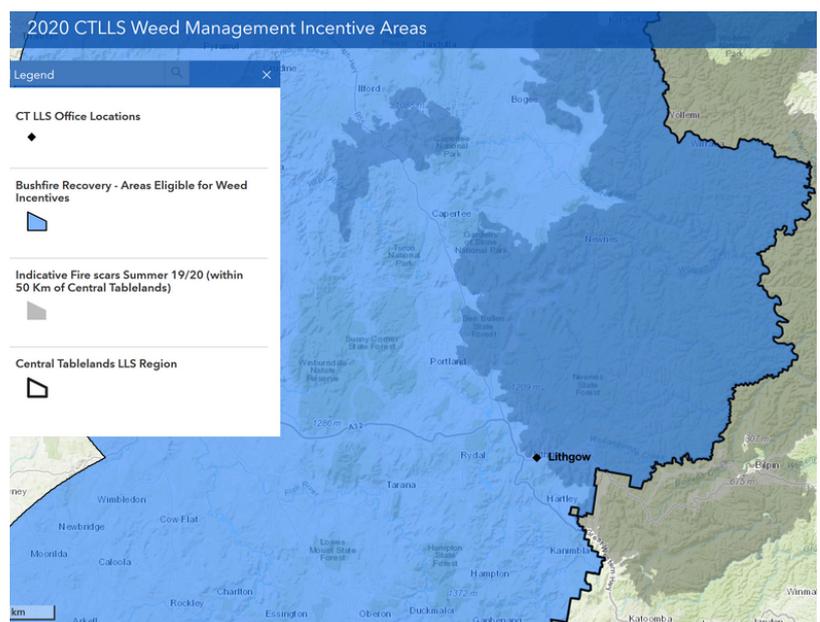
The results will assist the NSWRFs to better understand how people prepared and responded to the fires. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old. The survey is anonymous and is open until 1 November. <http://bit.ly/nswbushfiresearch>

Weeds in Bushfire Recovery

The Central Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS) Weeds in Bushfire Recovery project provides on-ground incentives (between \$5,000 and \$25,000) to private and public landholders in areas impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires for the mitigation and control of weeds. All proposed works need to demonstrate a strategic or targeted approach that contributes to weed management and control in the longer term. The Weeds in Bushfire Recovery project is being delivered by Central Tablelands Local Land Services through NSW Bushfire Recovery Funding.

Applications for Weeds in Bushfire Recovery funding close **5.00pm Friday 6 November 2020**. [Click here to apply.](#)

Any queries should be directed to Marita Sydes, Senior Land Services Officer on 0439 334 282 or marita.sydes@lls.nsw.gov.au.



[Eligible areas - interactive map](#)

[Weeds in Bushfire Recovery - project factsheet](#)

Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund

The Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund gives local communities and industries access to significant grants to drive economic recovery.

The grants are available across 47 bushfire affected LGAs and offer between \$200,000 and \$20 million for projects such as:

- Local community and cultural infrastructure
- Tourism campaigns (including digital product development) and regional events
- Workforce adaptation and work ready training programs
- Community wellbeing and mental health programs
- Tourism infrastructure including walking and mountain bike trails
- Neighbourhood safer places.

The Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund is being administered by Regional NSW and joins the recently announced Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund.

Applications close 10 November 2020. For more information, including guidelines, visit <https://www.nsw.gov.au/blerfund>

NSW Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) grants

Eligible local councils, joint organisations, not-for-profits and non-government organisations from NSW bushfire disaster declared areas can now apply for funding under the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF).

The Fund is split into two streams.

Stream 1 - provides small-scale grants for eligible local councils in the form of payments of \$100,000 or \$250,000. Eligible councils are required to use a minimum of 25% of the funding towards a council-led small-scale community grants program to contribute towards small community initiatives.

Stream 1 applications close noon on 27 October 2020.

Stream 2 provides project funding ranging from \$20,000 up to \$300,000 for application by eligible councils, not-for-profit and non-government organisations in all bushfire disaster declared LGAs since 31 August 2019. Projects eligible for funding could include:

- Regional social events and digital communication initiatives that support social recovery, commemoration and improve community connectedness
- Delivery of new social infrastructure within the region supporting community resilience through community connectedness
- Programs and initiatives that support community recovery and wellbeing including support for improved identity of place, cultural heritage and environmental restoration
- Community education programs to improve regional knowledge and resilience in response and preparedness to future natural disasters and how to be better prepared for hazards into the future
- Local and Regional community strengthening activities that focus on capacity building and planning for the future.

Stream 2 applications close noon on 10 November 2020.

For more information on eligibility criteria and to apply, visit the [Resilience NSW website](#).



BOUNDARY FENCING FUNDING

The NSW Government is helping bushfire-affected landholders with the cost of rebuilding boundary fences adjoining public lands.

Private landholders who share a boundary with public land and were impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per kilometre to contribute to the replacement of damaged boundary fences.

The program has seen 78kms of fencing across 46 projects for a total of \$400,000 in the LGA.

Grants can be issued retrospectively to cover costs already incurred.

Click [HERE](#) to complete the form, or call 1300 778 080.



REC Solar offers free solar systems to bushfire affected community organisations

REC Solar, an international solar energy company, has launched REConstruct – a new program offering solar systems completely free of charge to fire affected community organisations.

Through the program, REC will give away approx. 50 premium solar systems, inclusive of top-of-the-range REC Alpha panels, racking and inverters.

If you or someone you know would benefit, visit www.reconstruct.net.au

New laws to empower landowners and NSW RFS to manage bush fire risk

The NSW Government has announced that it will introduce laws to simplify rules for landowners seeking to mitigate bushfire risks on their properties.

Changes will be made to the Rural Fires Act 1997 to simplify rules for landowners trying to mitigate the risk of bushfires on their properties, and to provide the NSW RFS Commissioner new powers to direct hazard reduction activities.

The changes will:

- Allow rural landowners to clear up to 25 metres on their property from the boundary, without the need for onerous approvals;
- Develop a Code with regard to issues such as clearing in endangered and threatened species habitat, and clearing for non-bushfire risk mitigation purposes;
- Provide stronger and clearer powers to NSW RFS to audit and address bushfire risks, ensuring public lands are treated the same as private landholders;
- Create a statutory obligation requiring all complaints about hazard reduction activities, including those relating to public authorities, to be forwarded to the NSW RFS Commissioner for assessment and action; and Provide the NSW RFS Commissioner the power to issue Bushfire Hazard Reduction Notices to public authorities in circumstances where vegetation should be cleared to protect lives or property.

Full details [HERE](#)

\$192 million to fund NSW Bushfire Inquiry initiatives

New equipment for firefighters, night-time aerial firefighting, enhanced strategic fire trails and improvements to local emergency infrastructure will be funded as part of the NSW Government's response to the independent NSW Bushfire Inquiry.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott have committed a \$192 million funding package that includes:

- **\$16 million over the next five years for enhanced mental health support**, including the establishment of dedicated mental health support personnel in all area commands across the state, in recognition of the significant impact the fire season had on our people;
- **\$5.5 million this financial year for Strategic Fire Trail Network planning and implementation**;
- **\$10.3 million for the upgrading of firefighting vehicles**, to ensure they meet more modern safety standards, in addition to the \$34 million already announced for new vehicles;
- **\$24.9 million for hazard reduction planning and audit over the next five years**, including the rollout of new Bush Fire Risk Management Plans, and ensuring landowners, agencies and the community are held accountable for the mitigation of bush fire risks; and \$8 million to continue the rollout of the integrated dispatch project, to bring the remaining 27 Districts online.

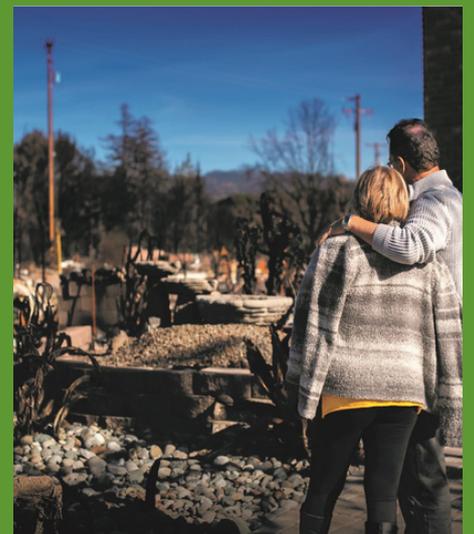
Read the media release [HERE](#)

Brickworks lends a helping hand to bushfire victims

Brickworks Building Products, want to do their part in helping those affected by the summer bushfires. For any bushfire victims who had built their home with Austral Bricks, Brickworks Building Products will replace all the bricks, free of charge, including delivery.

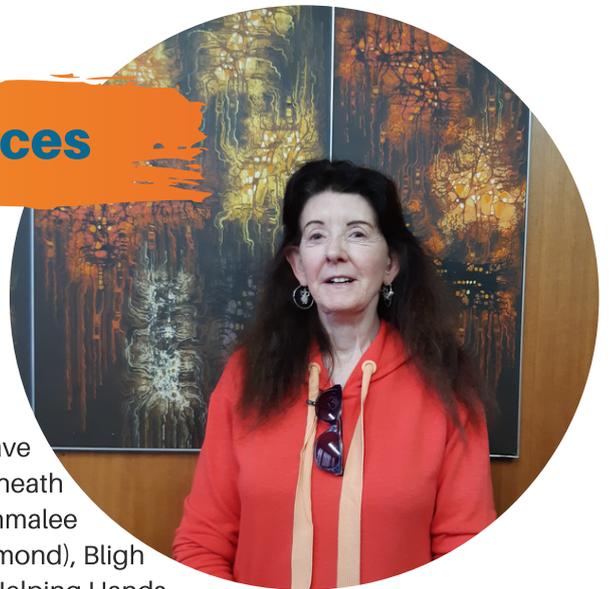
For homes constructed from other building materials, Brickworks will assist the re-build with 50% off all materials in the Brickworks Building Products portfolio. This includes bricks, pavers, roof tiles, masonry blocks and retaining walls.

If you or someone you know has recently lost their home to the bushfires, please contact us on 13 27 42, or fill out the application form [HERE](#)



Bushfire Recovery Support Services

Meet Morna Colbran Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre



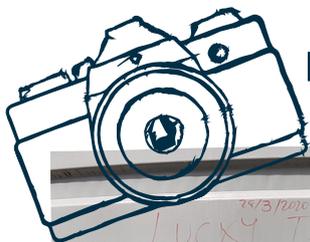
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre provides practical, material and financial assistance along with educational/recreational activities. We have emergency relief outreach in Lithgow (LINC and Thrive Services), Blackheath (BANC), Katoomba, (Thrive Services), Oberon (Christian Life Centre), Winmalee Centre, Gateway Family Service (Blaxland), The Women's Cottage (Richmond), Bligh Park (community centre), 399 George Street Windsor and Hawkesbury Helping Hands.

We are providing the Support with Dignity Bushfire Recovery Project where we can support those affected by the bushfires with vouchers that they feel will be of the most use i.e. Bunnings, Coles, Myer, Target, No Interest Loans (max. \$1500) etc.

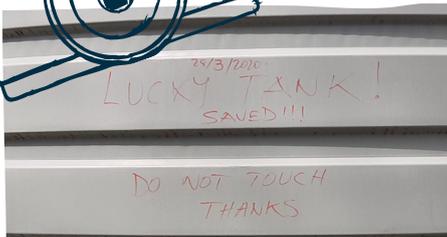
There is minimal paperwork to complete and it does not affect any payment the person may be accessing i.e. Centrelink. We are also assisting people whose employment has been affected by COVID.

When not supporting the bushfire communities, as the Centre Manager my days are full, providing support to the communities we work in, running the weekly art class, stocking our latest venture (Our Community Shop) which is the local Op shop in the Winmalee Shopping Village, applying for grants, government reporting-there is an endless amount of work to get done.

Anyone requiring our support only needs to ring the centre on 47544050.



Photos



I've cracked open the phone photo album to share some snaps from the past month or so. They say 'A picture is worth a thousand words' and I can't help but think of how we respond in life changing moments and what people and the environment are capable of.

Anyone who has a photo, media or artwork and is happy to share please send them through - I'd love to see what's out there!

Top left: "The lucky tank! Saved!!! Do Not Touch"

Mid: This is how you do a Barn Raising weekend

Bottom: Portland BCRRF Meeting

Top right: TAFE Chainsaw training with Habitat for Humanity.

Bottom: A reshooting Wollemi Pine.

