

Update from the Community Recovery Officer

This has been another epic and insightful month with more evidence of the enormous recovery effort taking place across the LGA. I'm hearing some great reports of people completing the BF Course. Congratulations to you all! Don't forget there's enormous opportunity for everyone to play a supporting role as well. A shout out goes to the Clarence/Dargan brigade for their Saturday information session on the Heads Up For Fire (HUFF) and other emergencies program. <http://www.huff.org.au/>

Earlier in the month Resilience NSW Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons visited Secret Creek Sanctuary to hear how the programs run by the Sanctuary and Women's Shed have been helping protect and preserve Australian native species.

We're very grateful to Commissioner Fitzsimmons AFSM and Resilience NSW for supporting the community led recovery efforts occurring across the LGA.



Throughout the region we are witnessing a landscape in recovery. Above average rainfall has generated remarkable growth of crops, grasses and weeds. It is also a sign that now is the time to prepare your property to reduce the risk and threat to properties and neighbours.

Some steps people can take now to prepare for the increased risk include:

- Firebreaks around paddocks, buildings, or other valuable assets.
- Checking that farm equipment is in good repair and ready to deal with a fire should one occur. Also to be aware that when blades of slashers, mowers and similar equipment hit rocks or metal, sparks can ignite dry grass.
- Motorists to avoid driving through or stopping in long grass.
- Ensuring you have a Bush Fire Survival Plan to know what to do on days of increased fire danger.

For further information on how you can protect your property, or to download a Bush Fire Survival Plan, visit the NSW RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or call 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737). For information on current fires, download the NSW RFS [Fires Near Me app](#) to your phone or tablet.



If reminders of the bushfires are causing issues for you, please call the Mental Health line on 1800 011 511.

Keep an eye out next visit to town (between Lithgow and Bridge Streets specifically) for Lithgow City Council's Local Heroes campaign. Aimed at celebrating our community's resilience the campaign is an opportunity to say thank you to the many organisations, services and individuals that have gone above and beyond to support the community through the challenges of bushfires and Covid-19. There may be some familiar faces among the 28 vibrant banners on display!!

Finally, exciting news on the Lithgow Bushfire Recovery Community Day scheduled for 5-6 December, which promises to be an important (and COVID safe) event. While we have some very special interactions and exhibitions planned, there is no time like the present to engage with and deepen your knowledge of how to prepare and stay safe. I hope to see you there!

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



LITHGOW Bushfire Recovery & Community Day

9am - 3pm | 5 - 6 December 2020
The Civic Ballroom Lithgow



Supported by the



The Bushfire Recovery and Community Day will bring together community, emergency and recovery services to support, prepare and equip you with the latest information and services.

FROM 9AM TO 3PM

- Bushfire products and recovery services
- Kids activities
- Sausage sizzle
- Coffee cart

EXPO OPEN FROM 9AM TO 3PM

Bushfire related products and recovery services.

PRESENTATIONS

9.45am - 10:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official opening presented by MC Gavin Coote - Journalist - ABC• Message from Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM, Commissioner - Resilience NSW• Keynote presentation from NSW Rural Fire Service
11.30am - 11.45am	Coordination of the bushfire recovery efforts
1.00pm - 1.45pm	Preparing our community for emergencies, Panel discussion and Q&A's Featuring: NSW RFS, SES, Police, Red Cross, Lithgow City Council, Mental Health
2.00pm-2.15pm	Landscape recovery & wildlife encounters
2.30pm-2.45pm	Recovery Services

Civic Ballroom
George Coates Avenue
Lithgow, NSW 2790 Australia

REGISTER NOW
FREE
COVID SAFE EVENT



Find us on

Enquiries: 02 6354 9960 | recovery@lithgow.nsw.gov.au
www.council.lithgow.com/event/bushfire-recovery-and-community-day

Registrations also being taken at the door. If you would like assistance, please call 6354 9960.



FACEBOOK TO SEND BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY ALERTS

Under a new partnership, approved state fire authorities will be able to send urgent notifications to people who follow their Facebook pages using the Local Alerts tool.

The tool, which also allows posts to be marked as alerts so they stand out in a user's news feed, will be extended to Australian fire services by the end of the year and to other eligible state and local government departments throughout 2021.

Most state fire services already have geographically-based SMS emergency alerts and ways of disseminating information through traditional media.

Resilience NSW commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said fire services were investing considerably in new communication systems. "We were using social media and Facebook as an information-gathering tool," Mr Fitzsimmons said in a statement.

"It all helped build our intelligence and ratify our understanding of where things were up to. We learnt extraordinarily through that period that the more we provided, the more people wanted to know, and the more people were happy to share."

Facebook's local head of policy programs Alisha Elliott said Australians were increasingly turning to social media to find information. "We're thrilled to be the second country globally to expand Local Alerts and provide local fire authorities and emergency services with another avenue to relay vital information in affected areas," she said. "As we approach another tough summer, Facebook will continue to support communities and keep them connected."

GRANTS

Indigenous Fire and Land Management Workshops Program

This \$2 million program will support the delivery of workshops to strengthen traditional knowledge and build wider understanding of indigenous fire and land management practices. This program is available Australia wide to Traditional Owners, indigenous organisations and Indigenous enterprises.

The grant opportunity guidelines, sample application and sample grant agreement are available online with applications closing at 5:00pm on 10 December 2020. <https://www.business.gov.au/Grants-and-Programs/Indigenous-Fire-and-Land-Management-Workshops>

Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and Habitat Community Grants Program

This \$10 million program will support communities to undertake on-ground recovery actions from the 2019-20 bushfires, with grants from \$5,000 to \$150,000 available.

The guidelines for this program, including eligibility requirements, are available via <https://business.gov.au/Grants-and-Programs/Bushfire-Recovery-for-Wildlife-and-Habitat-Community-Grants-Program>

Applications close Friday 27 November 2020.

If you have any questions regarding these programs, please contact the Business Grants Hub on 13 28 46.

Round 5A Mobile Black Spot Program

Round 5A of the Mobile Black Spot Program is now open for applications.

This program aims to continue expanding and improving mobile coverage across regional and remote Australia. Round 5A has a particular emphasis on improving mobile coverage along major transport corridors and in disaster-prone areas.

Further information is available [HERE](#).

Live and Local - After the Fires.

Live'n'Local was a project that brought together talented local musicians, in a series of virtual music performances to reconnect with the whole community - particularly those affected by the bushfires.

In collaboration with the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, the Live'n'Local community music events has been recognised in the NBRA Recovery stories.

You can read the full story on the [NBRA website](#).



Lithgow Community Nursery

The Lithgow Community Nursery, has received funding to give away native tube-stock plants to residents who had their properties affected by fire in the summer 2019/2020 bushfires.

A maximum of 5 plants are available per resident and each tube-stock plant will be accompanied by a guard and stakes.

These give-aways will take place on Monday 23rd November and Friday 27th November between 9am and 3pm.

The Nursery's funding body requires data and evidence of the process, and to get your free plants you will need to:

- Show evidence of ownership of your fire-affected property (e.g.: a recent or current Rates Notice)
- Provide your contact details (name, address, email and phone)
- Agree to email photographs of the trees being planted and pictures of the plants at both the 6 and 12 month periods
- Have a photograph taken receiving your plants
- Sign a permission/release form for the Nursery to send any photographs to their funding bodies

For more information Phone: 02 6353 1126

EVENTS:

DARGAN COFFEE DATE

NOVEMBER 28TH, 11AM-2PM
KILLIBINBIN NURSERY

Bring an ID with your address to claim your plant and coffee vouchers. only 50 available, get in quick!

FREE PLANTS **FREE COFFEE** **BUSHFIRE SERVICES**

Lithgow CITY COUNCIL

NSW GOVERNMENT

Local Land Services

Supporting our neighbours

Have you repaired or replaced boundary fencing bordering public lands damaged during the 2019/20 bushfire season?

Well you can still receive funds to help cover the cost through the Supporting our Neighbours program.

Eligible landholders can receive a one-off grant of up to \$5,000 per kilometre to purchase fencing materials.

We have dedicated Boundary Fence Coordinators ready to work with you to identify your needs and ensure the funds flow as soon as possible.

To find out if you are eligible apply online at lls.nsw.gov.au/fencing or call 1300 778 080.

llsnsw
 @llsnsw

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/fencing



'Supporting our neighbours - public land boundary fencing program'

The NSW Government has committed \$209 million to assist landholders in replacing damaged boundary fencing adjoining public lands after the unprecedented bushfire events between August 2019 to February 2020.

Landholders can receive a one-off government grant of \$5,000 per kilometre to help towards the purchase of fencing materials.

Where there was existing exclusion fencing bordering public land, landholders may be eligible for up to \$10,000 per kilometre.

Landholders who have already repaired or replaced their boundary fencing since August 2019 are also eligible for retrospective funding.

This funding is available to all rural landholders who adjoin public lands and live in an LGA that was disaster declared as a result of the 2019/20 bushfires.

Local Land Services has developed a full [FAQ](#) on the program's eligibility and how to apply visit www.lls.nsw.gov.au/fencing



Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements

The final report of the Royal Commission was tabled in Parliament on 30 October 2020 and included 80 recommendations.

The focus of these recommendations is on establishing clear arrangements for national coordination and decision-making to prepare for, respond to, and improve emergency response and recovery.

This report included a number of recommendations that aligned with the report and recommendations of the NSW Bush Fire Inquiry released at the end of August. Both Inquiries highlighted the importance of improved processes for public and private land management.

The Royal Commission recommended that public land managers publish fuel load management strategies and annual reporting on the implementation and outcomes; and that clarity should be provided regarding the requirements and scope for bushfire hazard reduction and that assessment and approvals needed to be minimised.

The NSW Inquiry recommended additional hazard reduction activities and extended clearing strategies to minimise risk. Importantly, both inquiries recognised the value of more regular hazard reduction including cool burning and Indigenous land and fire management.

The recommendations have the potential to deliver change but funding and behaviour change will be required. The NSW Government has made an initial commitment of \$192 million in the 2020-21 budget which includes funding for a strategic fire trail network, expansion of an integrated dispatch system, and retrofitting of RFS and NPWS vehicles.

Copies of the full report are available for loan through Council or Download the report at:

<https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/royal-commission-national-natural-disaster-arrangements-report>

Bushfire Recovery Support Services

Badar, Dev and Matthew | Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling Service assists primary producers impacted by Natural Disasters (Fires, Drought, Flood etc.) by offering them help and support to get them back on their feet as quickly as possible.

Not only do we assist with the application process for any Federal or State grants and loans, but we also assist businesses into the future by completing a business analysis and helping to develop a strategic and comprehensive business plan to move forward with.

Our Lithgow office has three fulltime Bushfire Rural Financial Counsellors: Matthew, Badar and Dev. We service the Lithgow, Mid-Western, Oberon, Wollondilly, Hawkesbury, and Blue Mountains regions.

The service is **FREE**, confidential, and impartial. We understand that the road to recovery can be lengthy and so we work with clients for up to three years or longer if required.

When we are not helping clients with Bushfire recovery, we are also assisting other primary producers who are facing long periods of financial hardship. We liaise with the farmers in these situations, discuss, analyse and look at options to minimise their risks and find pathways to make them sustainable in their farming operations.

Additionally, all our Financial Counsellors like to do something different when they are away from their office duties. Matthew spends time with his family, plays squash and has a passion for hot air ballooning. Badar has always been fond of experiencing natural landscapes. Dev has a passion for travelling in the country, meeting people and sharing their experiences.

Call us on 1800 940 404, email on ceo@rfcscr.com.au or visit us in our office at 31 A Main Street, Lithgow.



Badar



Dev



Matthew

Bushfire Recovery Support Services

Bronwyn Reed | Australian Red Cross

Hi! I'm the new Red Cross Recovery Officer covering Lithgow LGA, as well as the local government areas of Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains, Mid-western Region and Cessnock. Home for me is Kurrajong on the bottom edge of the Gospers Mountain Fire. My family and I have faced fires 2001, 2013 and now 2019/20.

Since I started, I have been visiting fire impacted communities and listening to their stories and asking what would recovery for their community look like and visioning how that could be achieved.

These encounters with communities occur through a variety of means;

- Formal recovery events like the Lithgow Pop-up Recovery Centre in the library
- Attending community events and chatting with locals
- Introducing myself to small business owners when I buy a coffee or fuel up; and
- Referrals from Red Cross grants team or the other Recovery Support Services to provide individuals advice regarding the Red Cross grants program

I work together with the Red Cross Volunteers, the other community recovery services, community services, local government and communities to increase the community's capacity in preparedness, response and recovery to emergencies.

Some of the community requests are easily met within existing community resources and networks. A couple of areas requested supported playgroups located within their local community facilities. This required linking up existing Child and Family Services with these communities.

For some it is about being better prepared for next disaster – fire, flood or heatwave. I have trained community workers in how to support people to complete their Red Cross REDiPlan. I have also assisted RFS stations in Get Ready Kids delivering the Red Cross Pillowcase program (it was a hit!).

For some individuals they are still seeking information about the Red Cross financial grants to assist the replacement of their homes and associated infrastructure.

Everywhere I go I am talking with individuals and groups, and discussing the impact of the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol on the body and encouraging self-care, and planned leisure and pleasure to support their recovery. Together with some communities we are co-planning some wellbeing programs to support self-care and give opportunities to learn skills to support own wellbeing.

Contact Bronwyn:

Email: breed@redcross.org.au

Phone: 0409 796 682



Bushfire financial assistance grants

CLOSING SOON People who have already received a Red Cross grant may also be eligible for a new additional support grant if they are still facing financial hardship. This grant is open to people with a low income (who are receiving government financial assistance such as a pensioner, disability or health care card).

Applications for this grant close on **27 November 2020**.

Financial assistance is still available for bushfire-affected people in financial hardship.

Cash grants applications have been extended to **31 December 2020** <https://www.redcross.org.au/grants>

Bushfire recovery webinars

Watch online sessions with experts and connect with the Red Cross team:

<https://www.redcross.org.au/recoverywebinars>