

# Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee

## Community Newsletter

### Edition 8, 2 June 2017

#### **Upper Hunter Shire Council Update**

Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) is pleased to provide the following information for people affected by the Sir Ivan Fire.

#### **Tree clearing**

UHSC is offering a subsidy of up to \$1,000 to property owners in the Upper Hunter Shire impacted by the Sir Ivan Bushfire, to assist in the clearing of dangerous trees on fence lines. The subsidy, capped at \$1,000 per property owner, can be used to pay for plant hire or materials to assist in clearing Council reserve trees on fence lines where they are a threat to new infrastructure or road users. Council will make an assessment prior to approving the subsidy, which is available until 31 August 2017. For more information contact UHSC Special Projects Manager Alan Fletcher on (02) 6540 1103.

#### **Water charges**

Cassilis residents can request a waiver for increased water usage charges on their current bill, for increase water usage during the Sir Ivan Fire. Requests for a waiver must be made in writing to UHSC via:

- PO Box 208, Scone NSW 2337
- any Council Office
- [council@upperhunter.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@upperhunter.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Waiver of Development Fees**

UHSC is waiving applicable Development Application, Construction Certificate and inspection fees until 28 February 2018, for property owners re-building their homes destroyed in the Sir Ivan Fire. The fee exemption is only available to property owners that owned the property at the time of the bushfire. For more information contact UHSC on (02) 6540 1100.

#### **Waste disposal**

Cassilis residents and landowners can dispose of fire damage waste free of charge at Upper Hunter Shire Council's (UHSC) Merriwa and Cassilis landfills. The waste must not contain asbestos and would generally come from sheds, fencing and equipment that is fire damaged.

#### **Bushfire Appeals**

Funds raised through the Upper Hunter Mayoral Bushfire Appeal have now been donated into the Warrumbungle Shire Mayor's Bushfire Appeal (Sir Ivan Fire) to be used to benefit those in the Upper Hunter impacted by the Sir Ivan Fire. Further information on the Warrumbungle Shire Mayor's Bushfire Appeal (Sir Ivan Fire) is provided in this edition of the newsletter.

## Burnt fencing wire collection and recycling

Thanks to Upper Hunter Shire Council, two metal recycling companies have offered to load and remove burnt fencing wire, posts and other ferrous metals from farms that have been affected by the Sir Ivan Fire, at no charge to farmers.

They plan to do this in late May, in a “milk run”, with another run planned later in the year if required.

Materials will need to be stockpiled in a linear heap (rather than in a big pile), with preferably one stockpile per property.

The stockpile would need to be on farm, off roads and with access suitable for a float to be unloaded and B-doubles or semi-trailers to pick up the material.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this offer, please contact the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122** for more information and to be sent a form.

Forms will then be provided to the recycling companies and they will contact the affected farmers to arrange pick up.

Forms can be returned via email, fax or in person at offices of:

- [Upper Hunter Shire Council](#)
- [Warrumbungle Shire Council](#)
- [Mid-Western Shire Council](#)

## BlazeAid Volunteers Benefit from Dunedoo Showground Upgrade

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has been pleased to support BlazeAid through upgrades to facilities at the Dunedoo Showgrounds.

The BlazeAid volunteers have been based at the Dunedoo Showgrounds and at Cassilis since the Sir Ivan Fire while they assist landholders recover through rebuilding fencing.

DPI has funded the installation of reverse cycle air conditioning to heat the main facility used as an operations centre and recreation room. As the cold weather bites it is important that the volunteers have proper heating, particularly during their downtime. The air conditioners, and some other upgrades to the facilities, are intended to keep the volunteers as comfortable as possible for as long as possible, so they can focus on their re-fencing efforts.

The air conditioners will remain after the BlazeAid teams wind up, to benefit the Dunedoo community that has done such a tremendous job in supporting BlazeAid.

### BlazeAid

To hear how BlazeAid can lend a helping hand on your fire-affected property contact them on the numbers below:

**Dunedoo Camp:** 0418 349 317

**Cassilis Camp:** 0428 984 117

## Sir Ivan Recovery Support Service

**Recovery Support Workers** are now available to travel out to farms or meet with farmers and their families in town. They will provide a single point of contact to help connect those affected with the assistance they require, whether it is personal, agricultural or financial.

For more information or to make an appointment with a **Recovery Support Worker** please contact the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122** or call Caroline Hayes on **0407 971 675** or Sue Freebairn on **0429 212 368**.

### Resources for bushfire recovery

Visit Local Land Services (LLS) at [www.lls.nsw.gov.au/emergency/bushfires/bushfire-recovery-resources](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/emergency/bushfires/bushfire-recovery-resources) to access resources for bushfire-affected landholders. Information includes: guide to common sheep vaccines, water requirements for sheep and cattle, feed tests, fire recovery video series, management advice, pasture management and the LLS role in bushfire recovery.

### 'Category C' Recovery Grants for Primary Producers

Recovery grants of up to \$15,000 per farming enterprise are available to eligible primary producers in the Sir Ivan fire zone who have suffered damage to farm buildings, crops, pasture, stock, fencing and/or tools of trade (equipment/ plant).

Talk to an RAA Assessor on 1800 678 593 or your local Rural Financial Counsellor about your eligibility, do not self-assess.

## Rural Financial Counselling Service

Questions have been raised regarding the taxability of insurance payouts and if there is provision for the lodging of BAS statements to be deferred. The ATO does provide some information and assistance on these matters as indicated below.

Insurance payouts for purely personal items don't have to be included in your tax return. However, insurance payouts for items you've used to produce income may have to be included in your tax return. Where you've used items for both personal and income-producing purposes, you need to calculate the percentage of each use. For more information visit

[www.ato.gov.au/individuals/dealing-with-disasters/damaged-or-destroyed-property/insurance-payouts/](http://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/dealing-with-disasters/damaged-or-destroyed-property/insurance-payouts/)

In the days and weeks following a disaster, the ATO understands that your tax responsibilities are not the most important things on your mind. The ATO can give you extra time to meet your obligations.

Even if you have lost your tax file number (TFN), the ATO will be able to verify your identity using other information, such as your date of birth, address or bank account details. For more information regarding this visit [www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Dealing-with-disasters/More-time-to-lodge,-pay-and-respond/](http://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Dealing-with-disasters/More-time-to-lodge,-pay-and-respond/).

Remember no two situations are the same so to best understand how the ATO views your particular situation, seek specific advice from your accountant rather than jump to an uninformed conclusion.

### **Are you insured?**

If you are insured, you should talk to your insurance company as soon as possible about how to make a claim. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your insurance, contact the **Insurance Council of Australia** on 1800 734 621.

### **Merriwa Sir Ivan Fire Appeal**

The application process for the **Merriwa Sir Ivan Fire Appeal** is starting this month.

The process of applying for funds will be outlined on Friday, 2 June 2017, at the **Merriwa Landcare Group Inspire Farm Biodiversity Forum** being held in Cassilis.

Application Forms will be available on the night, and throughout June from agencies that are supporting the recovery including Local Land Services and local rural produce outlets.

Community engagement will continue throughout June, with the assessment and distribution process commencing in the new financial year.

The **Merriwa Sir Ivan Fire Appeal** was established by the **Merriwa Branch of NSW Farmers** who joined forces with **Merriwa Show Society** to do something to assist landholders and residents affected by the fire. The local and broader farming community quickly jumped on board donating cattle, money, grain transport, products and services.

Cattle have been fed at the **Alexander Downs** feedlot, who have generously donated significant resources and labour for the Appeal. Donated money has been used to purchase additional livestock through Tony Inder, Rockwell Livestock & Property, enabling the cattle numbers to grow to 550 head, with an aim of fattening 650 head. The goal is to raise \$1 million dollars to assist the recovery, with funds becoming available for release in the new financial year.

### **Warrumbungle Shire Mayor's Bushfire Appeal**

To date the **Warrumbungle Shire Mayor's Bushfire Appeal** has raised \$195,000 with around \$130,000 worth of funds already distributed to local charities and community groups.

Community members affected by the Sir Ivan Fire who wish to access these funds can do by getting in touch with one of the organisations listed below; or making an application directly to the Mayor's Appeal.

Contact details are:

- BlazeAid – 0418 349 317
- St Vincent de Paul (Dunedoo) – 0427 751 462 or 6375 1462
- St Vincent de Paul (Coolah) – 6377 1160
- Dunedoo CWA – 0428 751 173

Funding for potable water can be accessed through St Vincent de Paul at both Coolah and Dunedoo.

For further information please contact Michael Jones, Director Corporate and Community Services, on (02) 6849 2000.

## Taking care of your health and wellbeing

After a disaster, there are a number of things which are important to keep in mind to ensure you are able to get through this recovery process.

- Physical health check-ups with your GP are important, even if you don't feel or see an issue.
- Take time for activities of leisure and pleasure which you did before the fire – these will help you to recharge your batteries.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Try to get back to a routine. Continue a healthy lifestyle (eating, sleeping, exercise) even if you don't feel hungry or tired.
- Take time out but don't isolate yourself.
- Write down your worries and concerns.
- Express your feelings in your own time and way.
- Accept help when it is offered.
- Limit the amount of media coverage you are exposed to.
- Don't expect to have all the answers.
- Understand you are not alone in your experience.
- Share knowledge and learnings with one another, so we all learn and recover together.
- Try to avoid withdrawing, over-working, using alcohol or drugs for coping, or making major life decisions without completely looking at all options.

If you need support call **NSW Mental Health Line** on **1800 011 511** for information and referral options.

## Breaking down depression & building resilience

Delivered by a trained presenter who has a personal experience of a mood disorder or of caring for a loved one, '*Breaking down depression and building resilience*' is a 60 minute presentation suitable for general audiences with or without a mood disorder. The presentation will provide accurate information about what mood disorders are, their causes, how to spot early warning signs, what to do and how to build personal resilience. The desired outcome is that people will be better informed, better equipped to identify warning signs and feel more comfortable seeking help and communicating more openly and honestly. For more information, see attached flyer.

## Taking care of your health and wellbeing – online talks

Earlier during the recovery process, clinical psychologist Dr Rob Gordon visited Coolah to spend time talking to community members affected by the Sir Ivan Fire. Dr Gordon has spent the past 30 years working with people affected by emergencies and disasters. Dr Gordon has a number of talks online including here: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/emergency-assistance/travelling-the-road-to-recovery-video-series](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/emergency-assistance/travelling-the-road-to-recovery-video-series) . Check out these and other talks online.

## Newsletter Suggestions

If there is information that you would like to see included in the **Recovery Committee Community Newsletter** call the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122**.

## Newsletter Subscription

Would you or someone you know like to receive this Newsletter directly? The Newsletter can be emailed or posted out. To receive the Newsletter directly, call the **Recovery Line** on **(02) 6377 1122** with your email / postal address, or send an email to [info@warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au) with the title **Recovery Committee Community Newsletter Subscription**.

This Newsletter is produced by the **Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee**, with contributions from support agencies whose services are featured.

Past editions of the Community Newsletter can be accessed via Warrumbungle Shire Council's website. Click on the **Sir Ivan Fire Information** icon at [www.warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au) .

## Useful contacts

### Recovery Support Workers

Recovery Line on (02) 6377 1122

Caroline Hayes on 0407 971 675

Sue Freebairn on 0429 212 368

### Financial Counselling

RFCSCR – 1800 940 404

RFC Mudgee

Elizabeth Brown – 0427 726 660

RFC Servicing Coolah

Susan Kelley – 0439 323 443

Website: [www.rfcscr.com.au](http://www.rfcscr.com.au)

Email: [ceo@rfcscr.com.au](mailto:ceo@rfcscr.com.au)