

Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee community newsletter

Edition 1 | February 2017

The Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee is producing this newsletter to ensure that all communities affected by the fire, including those from Uarbry, Cassilis, Dunedoo, Coolah and Leadville, have the information needed to recover from this natural disaster.

Overview

More than 200 fires burned across the State over the weekend 11-12 February, destroying homes, livestock and crops.

Among these was the Sir Ivan Fire which burned east of Dunedoo and south of Coolah.

Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Centre

A disaster recovery centre to help residents affected by the Sir Ivan Fire is now open.

Location: The rear of the Coolah Library

Address: 57 Binnia Street, Coolah (next to Coolah Council Chambers)

Hours: 9am to 5pm daily, until Sunday 26 February 2017

Parking: There is ample parking on Binnia Street and off street parking is available via Martin Street.

Phone: 02 6377 1122

The centre's days and hours of operation will continue to be assessed on a daily basis as required.

Representatives from key welfare, business and insurance agencies will be in attendance or via referral from the site to provide help, advice and information to affected residents and businesses.

The agencies represented include:

- Warrumbungle Shire Council
- Disaster Welfare Service
- Department of Family and Community Services - Housing
- NSW Health
- Legal Aid NSW
- SafeWork NSW
- NSW Department of Primary Industries - Rural Resilience
- Red Cross
- Insurance Council of Australia.

Put us in touch with those who need help

If you or someone you know has been affected by the Sir Ivan Fire, please call Warrumbungle Shire Council on 02 6378 5000 or 02 6849 2000 and give us your phone number and email so we can keep you updated with important information relating to this natural disaster.

Health and wellbeing

For psychological assistance, there is a mental health team present at the recovery centre. There are also several helplines including:

- NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511 for 24/7 triage and assessment for mental health concerns and referral to localised services including Mudgee Community Mental Health
- Drug and Alcohol Helpline: 1300 887 000 for referral into drug and alcohol services for counselling (business hours only)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14 for actual counselling over the phone
- MensLine: 1300 78 99 78 – counselling for men specifically.

Fact sheets from the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program about where to get support, and health and wellbeing after a natural disaster are attached to this newsletter.

Financial assistance

If you have been affected by these fires, you should talk to your insurance company in the first instance.

If you have a query about your insurance, you can call the Insurance Council of Australia for advice on 1800 734 621.

Small financial grants

Contact the Dunedoo Lions Club for information about emergency hardship grants on 0428 751 183.

Financial counselling

The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides free financial counselling to a range of clients, including dairy farmers, who are suffering financial hardship. To speak to a counsellor, please contact Liz Brown on 0427 726 660 or liz.brown@rfcscr.com.au

Assistance for primary producers

Farmers affected by the bushfires needing assistance with fodder, livestock assessment or emergency water and reporting of damage should call the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) hotline on 1800 814 647.

Rural Resilience Officers and Rural Support Workers can provide information on support available for farming families recovering from natural disasters. Please contact:

- Caroline Hayes on 0407 971 675 caroline.hayes@dpi.nsw.gov.au or
- Liane Corocher on 0427 188 643 liane.corocher@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Loans and transport subsidies

The Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) Natural Disaster Relief Scheme assists primary producers (including commercial fishers and oyster growers), small business operators, non-profit organisations and sporting and recreational clubs affected by declared natural disasters.

Assistance available includes:

- Disaster relief loans of up to \$130,000 are available, subject to certain eligibility criteria, at a concessional interest rate for those in urgent need. These loans may be used for essential working capital, replacement and repair of damage caused to the property and associated improvements not covered by insurance. The repayment term is preceded by a two year interest and repayment free period. Claims must be lodged within six months of the declared date of the disaster.
- Transport subsidies of up to 50 per cent of the cost of transporting fodder and/or water to an affected property and stock to/from agistment are available. These rebates apply to primary producers in areas affected by the fire, subject to eligibility criteria. Maximum subsidy available is \$15,000 per annum. Claims must be submitted no more than six months after first movement. Submit all

claim forms to the RAA with invoices, receipts and other documentation.

For the most recent information contact the RAA on 1800 678 593.

Fodder donations

To donate good quality fodder, call the NSW Local Lands Services (LLS) on (02) 6841 6525.

If you need fodder, contact your local coordinator:

- Sandy Cox or Hayden Rhodes (Delta Ag - Dunedoo) on 0428 865 299 or 0428 811 774
- Brett Nasmith or Carol Nasmith (Coolah) on 0427 016 476 or 0428 771 575.
- Tony Hegarty (Cassilis) on 0427 007 398.

The LLS has produced a list of specific contacts for livestock advice, agistment, water deliveries and other services, as well as a fact sheet on managing livestock after a fire – these are attached to this newsletter.

Mayor's bushfire appeal

Warrumbungle Shire Council has set up an appeal and is asking for donations of money to assist victims of the Sir Ivan Fire.

Donations can be made by deposit into the following bank account or by cheque or payment at the Shire's Coonabarabran and Coolah offices, and also at all Commonwealth Bank branches.

Account name: Warrumbungle Shire Council Mayor's Bushfire Appeal

BSB: 062-524

Account number: 10133579

Bank: Commonwealth Bank

Council will provide more information about how these funds will be distributed soon.

Keep an eye out for updates on www.warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au or call:

- Coolah 6378 5000 (for mobiles/outside Shire)
- Coonabarabran 6849 2000 (for mobiles/outside Shire)
- 1300 795 099.

Other donations

The recovery effort for the Sir Ivan Fire is encouraging donations to the Appeal.

If you have goods you wish to donate, please consider selling these and donating the proceeds.

BlazeAid

BlazeAid is a volunteer-based organisation which helps communities in rural Australia rebuild fences and other structures after natural disasters.

President of BlazeAid Kevin Butler has already been in touch and volunteer camps are being set up at Dunedoo Showgrounds and Cassilis Bowling Club. Fencing is expected to start around 27 February 2017.

For general enquiries:

- visit the BlazeAid website at <http://blazeaid.com/>
- call 0475 115 899 about the Cassilis volunteer camp
- call 0418 349 317 about the Dunedoo camp.

Safety

Houses, sheds and other buildings or structures that are burnt in a bushfire can leave potential health and safety hazards in the remaining rubble and ash. These include chemicals, electrical hazards, structural damage and asbestos.

Assessments and sampling are currently being finalised for properties affected by the Sir Ivan Fire.

Please contact Council on 6378 5000 or 02 6849 2000 to confirm if a fire damaged

property has been identified as containing asbestos before accessing the property.

Please wear appropriate personal protective equipment if you do need to access a property and avoid creating or disturbing dust.

If you run a rural business and have not done so please contact SafeWork NSW to see if you may be eligible for small business and quad bike safety improvement rebates (conditions apply).

- SafeWork NSW: 13 10 50.

A SafeWork NSW fact sheet about property hazards following a bushfire is attached to this newsletter.

Upcoming community events

Sir Ivan Fire Public Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 22 February 2017

Time: 11.00am

Venue: Coolah Central School, Main Hall

A community meeting will also be held in Dunedoo in the week commencing 27 February 2017. Details will be provided when they become available.

Community BBQ

Date: Sunday, 26 February 2017

Time: 12.00pm

Venue: Coolah Bowen Oval/Coolah Sporting Club

RSVP details are in the attached flyer.

Other assistance measures

Motor vehicle stamp duty relief

Motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of a natural disaster may be eligible for a stamp duty refund on their replacement vehicle. Refunds are made where the written off vehicle was comprehensively insured and the insurance does not cover duty for a replacement vehicle.

The Office of State Revenue administers these refunds.

- 1300 139 814
- www.osr.nsw.gov.au

Insurance Council of Australia

This service is available to anyone who has a query about their insurance.

- 1800 734 621.

Legal Assistance

Legal Aid NSW helps people with their legal problems. Legal Aid NSW lawyers can provide free legal advice and minor assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues including insurance, tenancy and credit and debt problems.

You can call LawAccess NSW in the first instance to discuss any legal problems and what assistance may be available from Legal Aid NSW, Community Legal Centres and other free legal assistance services in your area.

- Law Access NSW: 1300 888 529
- www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au