

Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee community newsletter

Edition 2 | March 2017

Last week, the Recovery Centre closed but support services continue to be available.

Recovery Information Point

The Disaster Recovery Centre closed on Friday, 3 March 2017 but support is still available from 9am – 4pm weekdays:

- Visit the Recovery Information Point at the Council Office, 59 Binnia Street, Coolah. Enter through the Martin Street side entrance.
- Call the Recovery Line on 6377 1122.

Upcoming community events

Post-fire workshop and community talk – Dunedoo

Date: Thursday, 9 March 2017

Venue: Dunedoo Bowling Club

9am to 11am: Post-fire workshop hosted by Local Land Services*

11.30am to 12.30pm: Community talk – Taking care of yourself, family and friends after the fires

- Want to know what are normal reactions to events like this?
- Interested to know how you can support friends and family?

- Want to find out when and how to get extra support?

Discussion will be led by David Younger, a Clinical and Consultant Psychologist with extensive experience providing support and assistance to communities affected by natural disasters.

Sir Ivan Fire Public Meeting – Coolah

Date: Wednesday, 15 March 2017

Venue: Coolah Central School Hall

11am Update on Recovery Assistance/Q&A

12.15pm Community BBQ

1pm Post-fire workshop hosted by Local Land Services*

*These workshops have been developed to provide landholders with information and advice about recovering from the recent fire.

Discussion topics will include financial assistance available, livestock health and nutrition, as well as quick feed, fodder crops and pasture.

Local Land Services, NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW and the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program will be there to provide advice and support.

RSVP to Sarah Giblin at sarah.giblin@lfs.nsw.gov.au or 02 6540 2400.

More information on recovery assistance: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/agriculture/emergency/flood>

Safety

Asbestos testing of destroyed and fire damaged houses has been completed. Please contact your local council for results.

Safety precautions

If you must enter structures which contain damaged asbestos materials, you should wear appropriate personal protective equipment such as P2 face masks, disposable suits and boots which can be washed down.

Avoid creating dust and follow good hygiene procedures. Don't take dusty shoes or clothes away from the site as this may take asbestos fibres into your vehicles and accommodation, potentially exposing you and your family.

Remember, if there was asbestos present there may be contamination of the ground around the building and downwind of the remaining materials.

If asbestos is present or suspected, please DO NOT attempt to clean up yourself but deal directly with your insurer.

More information about asbestos health risks can be found on the NSW Health website: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/asbestos-and-health-risks.aspx>

Cleaning up your property

Disposing of dangerous chemicals

To dispose of chemical waste safely, please call the ChemClear hotline on 1800 008 182 or visit www.chemclear.com.au

To dispose of chemical containers, call drumMUSTER on 1800 008 707 to find your closest drum collection point.

Household waste (including asbestos waste)

You (or your nominated contractor/insurer responsible for clean-up) should contact your local council in the first instance for information about disposal procedures:

- Warrumbungle Shire Council: 1300 795 099 if phoning from within the shire, or 02 6849 2000 (Coonabarabran Office).
- Upper Hunter Shire Council: 02 6540 1100
- Mid-Western Regional Council: 1300 765 002.

If you need further guidance, you can also contact the SafeWork NSW Asbestos and Demolition Unit on 13 10 50.

In most circumstances, including when buildings containing asbestos are destroyed by fire, asbestos removal must be undertaken by licensed contractors and waste disposed of appropriately at accredited landfill sites.

For licensed asbestos removal contractors information please see the SafeWork NSW website:

<http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/information-searches/asbestos-and-demolition-licence-holders>

Burial of burnt materials

All waste needs to be disposed of at landfills that can lawfully receive the waste, unless onsite burial is specifically permitted.

On-farm burial of burnt materials is generally not permitted unless you have approval from Council.

Approval must be sought from Council for onsite burial of any waste.

Please do not bury burnt materials on your farm as this action may cause the site to be classified as contaminated land.

This contaminated land tag may remain with your property until the buried material is removed and the site remediated.

If your farming practices are noted as organic, a label of contaminated land is highly likely to jeopardise your organic certification status.

Burial of asbestos materials (burnt or not) onsite is highly discouraged and may be illegal. The best place for asbestos to be disposed is in an approved landfill where there is no risk of future disturbance or exposure.

When you are ready to rebuild, it is likely that development consent in the form of a Development Application will be needed. Council is required to ensure the site is free of contamination that may present a risk to people, property or the environment before any consent can be granted.

Risks associated with burnt materials

If you need to access buildings which have been destroyed by fires, be aware of risks associated with burnt materials. Burnt plastic and treated pine timber release dangerous fumes and create contaminated ash.

One of the main risks is burnt asbestos cement sheeting which in many cases becomes friable. This means it can be crushed easily and become airborne.

Help is available with fencing and materials

Dozens of BlazeAid volunteers have arrived over recent days to start fencing this week as planned. If you need help with fencing and fencing materials, please contact Laurie Dawson on 0418 349 317.

Livestock assistance

Local Land Services (LLS) is still available to help you with ongoing livestock issues.

While they have scaled back their on-ground staff numbers and closed the Forward Command Posts at Merriwa and Dunedoo, there are LLS offices in Coonabarabran, Dubbo, Mudgee and Merriwa, and plenty of District Veterinarians and Biosecurity Officers spread around the area.

It is anticipated that some animals that have been through the fire and are being cared for on farm will take weeks, if not months, to recover. Please keep in touch with your veterinarian during this period.

If you need ongoing livestock assessments or assistance, don't hesitate to ring your nearest LLS office on 1300 795 299.

Looking after yourself

For psychological assistance, call the NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511. The health line is available 24/7 for support, information and advice if you have concerns for yourself or loved ones, or if you wish to discuss a referral to localised services. Calls are confidential and can be anonymous if you wish.

For any physical health issues please visit your GP or local Multipurpose Health Service to have these checked or attended to. You can also have a general health check to prevent worsening of any existing illnesses or injuries.

You can also call:

- Drug and Alcohol Helpline: 1300 887 000
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- MensLine: 1300 78 99 78
- Domestic Family Violence Counselling – 1800 RESPECT / 1800 737 732
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 – 24/7 confidential support and counselling for kids aged 5 to 25 years.

Financial assistance

Are you insured?

If you are insured, you should talk to your insurance company as soon as possible about how to make a claim.

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 NSW Central Region (RFCSCR) provides free and confidential financial counselling to a range of eligible clients.

Rural Financial Counsellors Susan Kelley and Elizabeth Brown will be working closely with

clients to assist them with their recovery from this natural disaster e.g. reviewing their eligibility and helping them prepare submissions for various government assistance applications.

Counsellors can also provide clients with immediate support in terms of understanding their financial position, liaising with banks to review or renegotiate loans, developing recovery cash flow budgets and referring clients to other essential service providers.

- Telephone: 1800 940 404 or
- RFC Mudgee Elizabeth Brown: 0427 726 660
- RFC servicing Coolah Susan Kelley: 0439 323 443
- Website: rfcscr.com.au
- Email: ceo@rfcscr.com.au

 Two flyers from the RFCSCR are attached to this newsletter.

Farm Household Allowance

This allowance from the Australian Government provides eligible farmers and their partners experiencing financial hardship with income support for up to three years.

For more information, go to <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/ag-food/drought/assistance-measures/fha.pdf> [PDF, 1MB].

Assistance for primary producers

Primary producers can call their nearest Local Land Services office for support and advice: 1300 795 299.

There are many resources on the Department of Primary Industries website, including this fact sheet on pasture recovery: http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/320626/Pasture-recovery-after-bushfires.pdf [PDF, 3MB].

Rural Resilience Officers and Rural Support Workers can also provide information on support available:

- 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

Fodder donations

If you need fodder, contact your local coordinator:

- Dunedoo / Coolah: Catherine Beer on 0417 816 428.
- Cassilis: Kevin O'Malley on 0429 212 368.

Other assistance measures

Motor vehicle stamp duty relief

Contact the Office of State Revenue:

- 1300 139 814

Insurance Council of Australia

- 1800 734 621

Legal assistance

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

Barnados

Barnados can assist families in a range of ways, including help and support with insurance claims and funding applications.

- (02) 6372 1422 or (02) 6842 1018
- kcormie@barnados.org.au

This newsletter has been produced by the Department of Justice and Warrumbungle Shire Council with contributions from the support agencies whose services are featured.