

Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Committee community newsletter

Edition 3 | 15 March 2017

Need extra hands rebuilding? BlazeAid is here to help.

Mates helping mates

If you need help rebuilding after the Sir Ivan Fire, no job is too big or too small for BlazeAid.

BlazeAid is a volunteer organisation which helps rural communities rebuild fences and other structures after a natural disaster.

When it comes to people needing help, they see everyone's needs as being equal.

With more than 5000 kilometres of fencing to be done after the Sir Ivan Fire, BlazeAid is here to help. They have set up camps in Dunedoo and Cassilis, with a third camp to be established in Coolah from 27 March 2017.

Dozens of volunteers are visiting properties to help property owners strip out old fences, tidy up, remove fallen trees and get the land ready to put new fences in.

To get help from BlazeAid, it's simple. Call them on:

- Dunedoo camp 0418 349 317
- Cassilis 0428 984 117
- Coolah 0412 815 800.

Are you insured?

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

Recovery Information Point

You can get support from 9am – 4pm weekdays by:

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

Upcoming community events


Community talk – Coolah

Date: Wednesday, 29 March 2017

Venue: Coolah Sporting Club, Goddard Street

Time: 4pm

Dr Rob Gordon, clinical psychologist and State Finalist for Senior Australian of the Year 2014 will be leading a talk about rebuilding and recovery. Rob has spent the past 30 years working with people affected by emergencies and disasters.

 An event flyer is attached to this newsletter – share it with those who may be interested.

Looking after yourself

The most important thing to do at this time is looking after your health and wellbeing.

Psychologist David Younger led a community talk at Dunedoo last week about recovery and wellbeing, the themes of which are summarised below.

1. Effects

Bushfires can bring a community more closely together, but can have some unhelpful side effects. Be aware of these:

- a. some people will remain highly stressed because of this experience
- b. loss, for example, of property, work, income or friendships
- c. disruption of daily routines, which can be stressful.

2. Recovery

It may not be possible to 'get everything back to the way it was'. It may be more helpful to see recovery as involving the flexibility to adapt to things that are outside of our control.

3. Stress

Remain aware of your stress levels and keep them in check as best you can. Look after yourself and those around you.

4. Strategies for recovery

- General: try not to lose sight of the bigger picture and keep attention on all of the other aspects of life; manage the 'disruption', don't let it take over; find a speed for recovery that is right for you e.g. plan to run a marathon versus a sprint.
- Community: be respectful of each other's experience, some people may be suffering but don't want to show it; draw on each other's strengths and resources by sharing information about what works; if you are not sure of something, ask as there is a lot of assistance available.
- Individual: look out for signs of stress e.g. disturbed sleep, irritability, anger, substance use, arguments with family or friends; try to identify a stressor and develop a solution; create some form of routine that includes rest and recreation – make time for fun / positive experiences.

Where to get help

- Your GP or local Multipurpose Health Service
- NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511
- 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.

Assistance for primary producers

Primary producers can call their nearest Local Land Services office for support, advice and assistance with livestock issues or other matters on 1300 795 299.


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

Assistance for small businesses

Small businesses can get help from the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, which, depending on individual circumstances, may include more time to deal with tax obligations. Some may be eligible for assistance payments. For more information, contact:

- ATO 13 2866
- Business Connect 1300 134 359 or www.industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect
- Office of NSW Small Business Commissioner 1300 795 534 or email we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au

 A fact sheet about support for businesses is attached to this newsletter.

Financial assistance

Small financial grants

The Dunedoo Lions Club is still offering emergency hardship grants. Call the club for more information 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.

- 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

Disaster relief grants

The Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Management can provide disaster relief grants to eligible individuals and families who have had damage to their homes from the recent fires.

People with limited financial resources and no insurance may be eligible for a financial contribution towards replacing essential household contents and structural repairs to the home.

Financial assistance is a contribution towards the cost of essential household items and restoring the home to a safe and habitable condition.

To be eligible for assistance you must:

- be a low income earner and meet an income and assets test
- demonstrate that the affected home is your principal place of residence
- not be covered by insurance

- be able to demonstrate that the damage was caused by the disaster
- lodge the application within four months of the disaster occurring.

Please contact Disaster Welfare Services on 1800 018 444 during office hours for further information about how to apply.

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.

Other assistance measures

Motor vehicle stamp duty relief

Contact the Office of State Revenue:

- 1300 139 814.

Insurance Council of Australia

For any questions, concerns or complaints about your insurance, call:

- 1800 734 621.

Legal assistance

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