

## MINUTES

### Wollondilly Local Recovery and Resilience Committee

**Date:** 17 August 2020

**Time:** 3.00pm till 4.30pm

**Venue:** Via Microsoft Teams

#### Present and Apologies

Attendance	Present	Apology
Sharon Robertson, Community Member	✓	
Sandra Harlor, Community Member	✓	
Catherine Stuart, Wollondilly Resilience Network	✓	
Brodie Pitt-Owen		✓
Kerrie O'Grady, Picton CWA	✓	
Stephen Swanepoel, St Stephens Thirlmere		✓
Christine Wilesmith, Community Links Wellbeing	✓	
Tanya Smith, Community Links Wellbeing		✓
Michele Lanigan, Community Links	✓	
Greg Dobson, Rotary		✓
Steve Moxon, Rotary		✓
Barry McConville, Rotary		✓
Kelli Bennett-Smith, Angus Taylor's Office	✓	
Peter McLaughlin, Nathaniel Smith's Office	✓	
Ben Brungs, OEM		✓
Alison Morgan, OEM / GSC		✓
Vanessa Nieuwenhuis, OEM		✓
Matt McFarlane, OEM		✓
Natasha Lowe, OEM		✓
Mark McMullen, Red Cross		✓
Jessie Huard, Red Cross		✓
Karen Akehurst, Red Cross	✓	
Karen Quinn, Salvation Army		✓
Mark Pepping, Wingecarribee Shire Council		✓
Charmaine Cooper, Wingecarribee Shire Council		✓
Danielle Lidgard, Wingecarribee Shire Council		✓
Jason Mitchell, Tharawal Land Council		✓
Darren Sly, Superintendent, Camden Police		✓
Vanesa Nievas, Regional Emergency Management Officer		✓
Geoff O'Brien, Picton Chamber	✓	
Karen Zelinsky, St Vincent de Paul Society		✓
Donna Rogers, Southern Highlands Homeless Service		✓
Michael McKibbin, Southern Highlands Homeless Service		✓
Mayor Cr Matthew Deeth, Wollondilly Shire Council	✓	
Cr Judith Hannan, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Cr Michael Banasik, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Ben Taylor, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Ally Dench, Wollondilly Shire Council	✓	
Toni Averay, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓

Michael Malone, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Peter Wright, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Rob Moran, Wollondilly Shire Council	✓	
Natalie McMullen, Wollondilly Shire Council	✓	
Alex Stengl, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Mandy Marino, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Kevin Abey, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Kerrie Shelton, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Brianna Murray, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Chad Neilson, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Kerry Whitehead, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Sharon O'Regan, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Kersti Martin, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓
Kim McGuinness, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓

Agenda Item	Discussion, Decision, Recommendation	Responsible
<b>1. Welcome</b>	Ally Dench welcomed attendees and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land (Gundagurra and Tharawal).	
<b>2. Present &amp; Apologies</b>	Apologies noted.	
<b>3. Previous Minutes &amp; Actions Arising</b>	<p>Tanya Smith advised that mental health referrals have skyrocketed.  <b>ACTION: Tanya Smith to find out the exact numbers.</b>  <i>UPDATE: Rob Moran to liaise with Tanya Smith.</i></p> <p>Michael Banasik advised that he has just phoned Peter McLaughlin and there was money for waste but has now closed. Someone from this group may be able to speak to Peter to see if the program can be extended. There was a cap but it would still assist.  <b>ACTION: Peter McLaughlin has referred on and awaiting on an answer.</b>  <i>UPDATE: It was agreed by the Committee that this is a huge problem with the cleaning up of properties and that people are cleaning up themselves and are incurring injuries.</i></p> <p>Karen Akehurst agreed that people are flying blind because of COVID-19 and it is very difficult to engage. We need to be talking to people on the ground but that is hard to do because of COVID-19. Everyone we see is suffering with trauma and stress. Some of these people are very resourceful people who work on the land, it is very hard for these people for the first time in their lives to ask for assistance.  <b>ACTION: Ally Dench and Peter Wright to talk to their Communications team to develop a communication strategy to encourage people to come forward who were impacted by fires.</b></p>	<p><b>Rob Moran</b>  <b>Tanya Smith</b></p> <p><b>Peter McLaughlin</b></p>

	<p><i>UPDATE: Rob Moran to liaise with Peter Wright. Rob noted that Council are constantly updating their website.</i></p> <p>Sandra Harlor reiterated that an update from the RFS for the next meeting to see what they can do with the dollars they have received to support properties that are fire impacted.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Rob Moran to follow up with the RFS.</b></p> <p><i>UPDATE: Rob has not had a chance to speak to the RFS.</i></p>	<p><b>Rob Moran</b> <b>Peter Wright</b></p> <p><b>Rob Moran</b></p>
<p><b>4. Update – Wollondilly Recovery Support Service – Community Links Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Michele Lanigan noted that it is great to have Natalie McMullen, Council’s Community Recovery Officer on board to assist with gaining access to families. The soft referral makes a big difference and is bringing families to Community Link’s attention. What we are finding across the whole services is that the numbers are growing. People are now feeling comfortable to come forward. Soft approach in terms of community, I can’t emphasise enough that Natalie’s role has been huge.</p> <p>There are issues around inadequate insurance, some insurances will cover the rebuild but doesn’t cover other things. Trees and fencing is a big issue across the board. People are needing to share about what has happened since the fire.</p> <p>We have spoken about the increase of mental health issues and we will continue to see that grow. People are realising they need the additional support.</p> <p>Rob Moran noted that people registering for support are on a very big waiting list.</p> <p>Michele acknowledged that this is important feedback and that Community Links are supporting people until they can get that referral.</p> <p>Sandra Harlor asked if the problem was a lack of Counsellors or Psychologists.</p> <p>Rob advised that it was a combination of both due to funding.</p> <p>Michele advised that the demand is exceeding supply.</p> <p>Natalie advised that a lot of people haven’t received support before and we are trying to access people to let them know that the support is there. There is a stigma and there needs to be an education on supporting people and them knowing that they don’t have to go through their GP for a referral.</p>	

	<p>Michelle noted that there continues to be some people out there with unscrupulous behaviour. We are advising people not to pay anything for clean-up until they have a contract and it is important we remind them as they are vulnerable.</p>	
<p><b>5. Update – Greater Sydney Region Recovery Committee</b></p>	<p>Ally Dench provided an update in regard to the Greater Sydney Region Recovery Committee. Clean-up issues are becoming a concern again. Ally was asked to send through updated data so that we can try and get the program to be extended. Peter McLaughlin is assisting as well. There has been some extra funding that has come out. Some funding is coming out through Council for recovery and resilience work which may help with mental health issues. We can try and be creative in the way the funding is distributed to help with clean-up.</p> <p>Anne Leadbeater identified some really good ideas for projects and support that we can apply for. There is also another round of economic recovery funding, although it is a competitive funding program.</p> <p>There is an elected representative’s forum that we are being represented at. Bush fire recovery and how it can be integrated into COVID-19 recovery proposals and linking the work we are doing.</p> <p>There is currently a review for the Greater Sydney Region Recovery area and they are looking at restructure and possibly splitting and us going back into the Western City structure. This is a good approach so we can be more effective at that level.</p> <p>We are ensuring our Recovery and Resilience Plan links back up to the Greater Sydney Plan so it is all aligned. There is a lot of work to be done in the up and coming months and Natalie will be assisting us.</p> <p>September is Get Ready month – emergency preparedness. We should be looking at what we can do as a committee. The Debriefing Sessions/Workshops are all in September. This is something for other agencies to consider.</p>	
<p><b>6. Wollondilly Council updates</b>  <b>a. Meet and greet Natalie McMullen Wollondilly Community Recovery Coordinator</b>  <b>b. Update on Recovery Coordinator activities</b></p>	<p>Natalie McMullen advised that she has been asked by Resilience NSW to participate in a coordinated Outreach Program. She has been requested to put together a database of fire impacted families in the area. The database went through Resilience NSW and there were 130 families. These families will be receiving an email and have two weeks to reply to the email, after that Red Cross will phone people who have not replied. They are asked a range of questions, for instance are they in their homes, are they coping as individuals and are their communities coping. Data will help with the Recovery and Resilience Program.</p>	

There are five forums being held and we have received a few registrations:-

- 2 September – Oakdale Uniting Church Hall
- 10 September – Bargo Community Hall
- 17 September – Warragamba Town Hall
- 23 September – Buxton Public School Hall
- 30 September – Council Administration Building Picton

Natalie has been out and connecting with families and met with twelve families and provided them with vouchers from the Community Hub. I have contacted families and provided information for the community recovery services. Four have been referred to the Community Recovery Service, four or five have already linked in and some other families took the information and said they may contact the service in the future.

It was noted that the gift cards from the Community Hub have all been distributed and Natalie and Ally acknowledged the Community Hub's efforts in regard to gift cards.

It has been great to go out and meet the community. In regard to mental health services, some people are on the list and some are just getting appointments now. They are talking about practical things ie. clearing land, fencing, getting DA's approved. Some families are now in the decision stage of whether to stay and rebuild.

Rob advised that families are interested in coming along to the free architectural support service. People are having trouble finding builders but after this Workshop they should have more of an understanding.

In regard to the Wollondilly Children's Voices Project, WIN News came along and did a story on the series of Workshops.

A big part of my work will be looking at the northern villages and identify those families that haven't reached out for assistance as yet.

Sandra Harlor asked if she can get sent a flyer of when the Workshop is on. We need to get people to know that they should attend and get prepared. Sandra will get the Neighbourhood Centre to promote the Workshop.

Sharon Robertson also asked for one for Oakdale.

Ally reiterated how important it is to attend to get prepared. There are resources online to get ready and how do you prepare yourself. We also need to look at how we get young people prepared. A development of an

**Natalie  
McMullen**

	<p>app but making it localised and Wollondilly specific. We are hoping this is what will come out of these forums. Also what we did well with how we supported people.</p> <p>Rob Moran advised that due to COVID-19 the Workshops also facilitate zoom as well as face to face.</p> <p>Sharon Robertson asked can we go out to the schools and educate children and they can remind their parents of what needs to be done.</p> <p>Natalie advised that she will connect with David Simpson from Regional office and agrees that we should be connecting with the schools, that is something that she has on her list. It is a statutory obligation that they are to deliver awareness. Maybe the paid RFS staff could go and speak to the schools, this could repair the traumas that people have with the RFS, that it not be a trigger. There would be many benefits from the RFS speaking to schools.</p> <p>Ally advised that Karen from Red Cross is planning to run the Pillowcase Programs in the schools.</p> <p>Karen Akehurst advised that the Red Cross have a fabulous program for Years 3 and 4 children. The process is to talk to the schools in the area especially fire impacted areas. It was noted that young people are affected as well. Talking to teenagers is harder than younger children and the Red Cross have a great program for kids and we have a panel that talks about preparedness and psychological preparedness. We are looking forward to our catch-up with Natalie.</p> <p>Rob Moran advised that he has had referrals for three 12 year old males who need individual support. Michele Lanigan advised Rob that they can talk off-line in regard to this.</p> <p>Ally advised Karen that perhaps our Dilly Wanderer can assist. Karen advised they have been told that the Dilly Wanderer cannot assist due to the 20 limit person COVID-19 numbers.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Rob Moran to speak to Candice Muzevic, Council's Dilly Wanderer Officer.</b></p> <p>Kerrie O'Grady suggested that in regard to the cleaning up of trees can we speak to the SES and RFS and ask if they can use the trees for chainsaw training opportunities.</p> <p>Sharon Robertson advised that she has already suggested this idea and it cannot be done as there are still too many trees that are unsafe. It is a WHS issue and the trees would have to be taken down first.</p>	<p><b>Rob Moran</b></p>
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	<p>Ally advised that we can look at something innovative and creative to put into the Local Resilience Plan which will create more credibility to apply for funding. Ally noted that she has previously mentioned that Anne Leadbeater’s report has come through in relation to the community recovery hub with the top 5 recommendations in the report being Framework for Community Recovery Hub, Working with Community Leaders, Community Recovery Hub Toolkit, Community Leadership and Donations Management.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Ally Dench to put the report on the next Agenda.</b></p> <p>After the next 5 workshops a further report will come out along those lines and will be reporting back to Council. Please encourage as many people as you can to attend those Workshops so we get a robust amount of feedback.</p> <p>Natalie asked Karen if Red Cross still run programs to become a volunteer? Karen advised that yes there is a lot of interest from the community in becoming Red Cross volunteers. To become a volunteer is quite involved and there is a lot of training, it is a bit of a process.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Karen Akehurst and Natalie McMullen to discuss and launch a campaign and organise induction and recruitment.</b></p> <p>Sandra Harlor suggested that this is something that can be shared at local forums. If Red Cross came along to the forums and did some recruiting. Karen Akehurst advised that she will take this on board.</p>	<p>Ally Dench</p> <p>Karen Akehurst Natalie McMullen</p>
<p><b>7. Community agency updates as required</b></p>	<p><u>Darren Sly, Superintendent</u></p> <p>Darren was an apology for this meeting and sent an update:-</p> <p>From a Police perspective compliance from business has been very good. We have issued no fines for non-compliance with COVID restrictions.</p> <p><u>Peter McLaughlin</u></p> <p>No updates and noted that Nathaniel Smith is looking forward to attending the forums.</p> <p><u>Kelli Bennett-Smith</u></p> <p>Noted that bushfire support is extended for primary producers and business has been extended.</p>	

Kelli also congratulated Council on their Business Wollondilly Edition that is distributed each week in regard to COVID-19 and bushfires. There is a lot of information provided, well done Council.

Catherine Stuart

Wren have started working with other organisations in Wollondilly and Camden and we didn't start from a recovery position when we first got together, but we realised we were in the space where everyone had a story and we felt like we should give people an opportunity to tell their story. We have organisations from Camden and Wollondilly and we don't want to do anything that is duplicated. We are keen to have a conversation with Natalie McMullen and anyone else that Natalie thinks we should.

**ACTION: Ally Dench to pass Catherine Stuart's details to Natalie McMullen.**

**Ally Dench**

Christine Wilesmith

Very busy, working with people who were impacted by the bushfires and we are seeing more and more people, people are now ready to speak to us. A lot of people have never had to face the issue of receiving support. There is some stigmas in relation to mental health. Some of the referrals coming to me are quite serious. We are glad to see the number of referrals and we are trying to prioritise the referrals. There are real concerns with the waiting lists and we are concerned that people are out there who are sitting there waiting, it is not acceptable. We need to have a conversation around that and what can be done.

Geoff O'Brien

One person Geoff has spoken to has opened up for the first time about the 2016 floods. There are businesses that are performing at 20% as they are impacted by flood/fire/COVID-19. Every organisation should be mindful of these businesses.

Geoff also agreed that the Business Newsletter from Council is fantastic. Please be mindful that whether you are a business in the main street or a business working from home, that business could be struggling and he doesn't want to see them fall through the cracks.

Ally agreed we need to look at other ways of how we can assist. . Ally encouraged everyone to eat local and shop local.



	<p>Geoff noted that we need to bring jobs home to Wollondilly. Ally advised that there is work happening in regard to employment strategies with our LEP issues being addressed.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Ally Dench to look at how we can connect with businesses and will liaise with Council's Economic Development Section again.</b></p> <p><u>Kerrie O'Grady</u></p> <p>Things have quietened down. We are aware that we have distributed locally 150 quilts. In total over 300 as we are going down the south coast as well. We have another 200 in the shipping container.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Kerrie O'Grady had received a call from Bowral Presbyterian Church, wishing to provide additional support. Kerrie to connect with Michele to provide a contact number.</b></p> <p><u>Sandra Harlor</u></p> <p>Advised that she will be working at the Warragamba Neighbourhood Centre.</p> <p><u>Sharon Robertson</u></p> <p>Shining Stars are providing free meals outside Picton and Bargo IGA's on alternate weeks and Warragamba every second Friday night. These meals are free and cheap provided from Leumeah.</p> <p>Ally noted that this is a very good support and thank you, it would be good to link with the Community Recovery Support service on this.</p> <p>Sharon advised that Shining Stars has just started on Mondays in the area, we need to get the word out to people that the free food is cooked by Hunts and the Catholic Club, so they are properly cooked and prepared meals.</p> <p><u>Karen Akehurst</u></p> <p>In regard to the Pillowcase Program and preparedness we can liaise with any group - Council staff, young people, agencies, old people, etc. we can help to prepare. We are co-working with the Resilient NSW Bushfire crew and they are back on the road and we are revisiting on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly basis.</p> <p>The best way forward is with outdoor outreach and Natalie McMullen and I can discuss where and when.</p>	<p>Ally Dench</p> <p>Kerrie O'Grady Michele Lanigan</p>
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	<p><u>Mayor Matthew Deeth</u></p> <p>In regard to the business taskforce we have had positive things occurring. DA's are up by 40% which is a good positive sign that people are lodging DA's.</p>	
<p><b>8. COVID-19</b> <b>a. Emerging Issues</b></p>	<p>Ally Dench advised that the \$30,000 in Community Grants has closed. Recommendations have been made and approved by Council We will be contacting the successful candidates this week.</p>	
<p><b>9. General Business</b></p>	<p>Nil.</p>	
<p><b>10. Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>Meeting Closed 4.20pm</p> <p>The Committee agreed that meetings are to be held every 4 weeks and the next Meeting will be Monday 21 September 2020, 3.00pm via Microsoft Teams.</p>	