

MINUTES

Wollondilly Local Recovery and Resilience Committee

Date: 20 July 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	✓	
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	✓	
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
1. Welcome	Ally Dench welcomed attendees and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land (Gundagurra and Tharawal).	
2. Present & Apologies	Apologies noted.	
3. Previous Minutes & Actions Arising	<p><i>Community Updates - OEM</i></p> <p>ACTION: Vanessa asked Kerrie O'Grady to send through details of fire affected properties and insurance issues so the OEM can assist.</p> <p>Council will liaise with OEM to ensure they have a complete list .</p> <p>COMPLETED Once cross reference list has been checked with Karen Akehurst, Red Cross.</p> <p><i>Karen Akehurst noted that Red Cross have some fantastic resources for working with children and young people to assist young children in a crisis, which is for caregivers and parents. The Pillowcase Program is specifically designed for young children around preparedness. Karen is happy to liaise with Council in regard to this and advised that they have trained volunteers to assist.</i></p> <p>ACTION: Ally Dench and Robyn Syphers to liaise with the Red Cross regarding resources.</p> <p>COMPLETED Karen Akehurst has sent link and Council is rolling out the children's project.</p> <p>COMPLETED Rob Moran to send link to the New report released on children and young people's experience of disaster to Tanya Smith.</p> <p>https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/disaster-report-2020</p> <p><i>Karen advised that there has been a spike across the state at the moment with people coming forward suffering from PTSD. Red Cross have announced further expansion of grants. The deadline will remain until 31 August 2020 with the repair grant \$5,000 increased to \$10,000; \$30,000 increased to \$40,000 for home owner occupier; injury grant \$15,000; bereavement grant</i></p>	<p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis</p> <p>Ally Dench</p> <p>Karen Akehurst</p>

	<p><i>\$30,000. It is to be noted that people who have already received grants will be invited for a top-up as well as anyone who has not come forward and applied for a grant. Information and applications are on the Red Cross website.</i></p> <p>ACTION: Karen Akehurst to forward an updated flyer to the Committee.</p> <p>COMPLETED All updated information from Red Cross has been posted on Council's website.</p>	
<p>4. Update – Grant opportunities</p>	<p>Ally Dench provided an update and advised that there is another round of recovery funding for the Economic Stimulus projects in the area.</p> <p>Karen Quinn provided an update in regard to the Salvation Army Grants:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are able to provide Eftpos Gift vouchers (amounts vary) individually provided depending on need to be used anywhere apart from tobacco, alcohol, gambling. Up to \$2,000 and is case by case. ▪ Chemist warehouse gift vouchers. ▪ We are able to provide support for spiritual and our AOD and Doorways program, mental health, domestic violence. ▪ Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre have a range of vouchers including Bunnings, fuel, fill up water tanks. ▪ Hardship Grants – Total \$2,000. ▪ Loss of Residents Grants – Total \$8,500. <p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis advised that she will send an email in regard to free architectural support, the service is there if anyone needs architecture support.</p> <p>Ally advised Council are organising a Workshop with the free architectural support service. Rob Moran advised the convener needed 3 days' notice before he comes into the region. Rob is following up.</p> <p>Rob Moran advised that there is a special round of community grants that Wollondilly Shire Council is opening in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Community Grants Program will be offering grants to Wollondilly based not for profit charitable organisations to provide direct support to Wollondilly ratepayers experiencing severe financial hardship as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>Eligible organisations must complete the application form providing an overview of their proposed program, eligibility criteria, monitoring and evaluation strategies.</p> <p>Funding - A maximum pool of \$30,000 is available in this funding round.</p>	<p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis</p>

	<p>Key Dates - The COVID-19 Community Grants Program opens early July 2020 and closes on 7 August 2020. Successful applicants will be advised in August 2020.</p> <p>For more information go to Council's website https://www.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/resident-services/community/grants-and-sponsorship/community-grants/</p> <p>a. Recovery Coordinator's Position Update</p> <p>Rob Moran advised that Council has completed the recruitment process for the Recovery Coordinator's position and have made an offer to a preferred candidate. The preferred candidate has accepted and her name is Natalie McMullan and she will be commencing with Council on Monday 3 August 2020. Natalie is a local Wollondilly resident who has a lot of experience in human services and working with traumatised people. Her father is an RFS Captain. The role will be assisting with the development of the Activate Wollondilly Local Recovery Plan and working closely with the case management service with Community Links Wollondilly. Once on board Council will send out a media release and advise the community.</p> <p>Peter Wright asked Vanessa Nieuwenhuis in regard to the Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee meetings could Natalie participate so she can connect.</p> <p>Vanessa advised that she is not sure if that has been finalised but there will be a package out in the coming weeks with a briefing of how they link in and expectations.</p> <p>Rob Moran asked if Wingecarribee had commenced recruitment.</p> <p>Tanya Smith advised yes they do have someone who commenced a few weeks ago.</p> <p>Karen Akehurst advised that she would like to consider some in-house training when Natalie commences. Karen is to liaise directly with Rob Moran.</p>	<p>Karen Akehurst Rob Moran</p>
<p>5. Update – Greater Sydney Region Recovery Committee</p>	<p>Ally Dench advised that she is unable to provide an update in regard to the Greater Sydney Region Recovery Committee as she was unable to attend the last meeting, but she is aware that they are progressing with the Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Plan.</p>	

	<p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis advised that she also was not at the meeting but Alison Morgan was progressing up the chain. Vanessa will follow-up and advise.</p>	<p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis</p>
<p>6. COVID-19: Defining vulnerable communities</p>	<p>Ally Dench advised that a pop-up testing clinic was setup at Victoria Oval last week which was due to the incident at Picton Hotel. Council have reviewed our policies and gone back to Stage 1 of our Renew Wollondilly Plan. We are encouraging staff to work from home also encouraging social distancing and personal hygiene. We still have Council services operating - Library, Children’s Services, Dilly Wanderer. All services are on high alert at this point in time.</p> <p>Michael Banasik noted that people on social media need to take advice from the NSW Department of Health. 99% of people are doing the right thing and some people aren’t sure what they should be doing. We should be saying that we need to leave decisions up to the experts.</p> <p>Sandra Harlor asked if there have been any confirmed cases.</p> <p>Michael Banasik advised that as far as he knew there were 4 cases in 2571, but as this is a privacy issue we don’t get the names. He has heard it is all in the 1 household.</p> <p>Ally noted that we do not get that information, we receive the same generalised statistics as the general public. We are getting prepared in case we need to move to wearing of face masks.</p> <p>The biggest issue is the closure of our businesses and the mental health issues because of the impact of COVID-19. Council is willing to assist with any general messaging to the community</p> <p>Tanya Smith advised that mental health referrals have skyrocketed. ACTION: Tanya Smith to find out the exact numbers.</p>	<p>Tanya Smith</p>
<p>7. Wollondilly Council Updates</p>	<p>a. Mayor’s Relief Fund</p> <p>Rob Moran advised that the Mayor’s Relief Fund remains open for donations and we have received a couple of donations which Rob could then refer to the Mayor’s Relief Fund Committee. . Rob asked the Committee if they hear of anyone wanting to donate please ask them to do so and Council can assist.</p>	

b. Waste / clean up issues and updates

Ally Dench advised that in regard to the waste / clean up issues Laing O'Rourke have just about completed the clean-up in the Wollondilly area. Arborists are still busy and Council will be able to assist with trees. Alex Stengl is still assisting with waste but the clean-up has slowed down.

Karen Quinn advised that they are working with a family who advised the clearing by Laing O'Rourke was very limited. They still have a lot of dead wood that needs to be removed. They received a quote for approximately \$20,000 to clear so they can rebuild the sheds they lost in the fires.

Ally Dench advised that Laing O'Rourke had a specific criteria, specifically 50 metres around the home. Council is not legally allowed to clean up on properties. We may be able to assist and Ally can raise at the next Regional Recovery Committee Meeting.

ACTION: Ally Dench to raise this issue at the next Regional Recovery Committee Meeting.

Ally Dench

Sandra Harlor advised that the RFS received a lot of money so maybe because the dead trees on properties are a fire hazard could the RFS go in and cut down. Can we approach the RFS to see if something can be worked out.

Karen Quinn advised that there is a lot of divide in the community regarding the RFS. Maybe through donations if the RFS could come into communities and assist it would improve relations between the community and the RFS.

Michael Banasik enquired that he thought the State Government were assisting with waste removal. Peter McLaughlin had advised that there was state clean up funding for individuals to apply for. Residents in Bargo and Buxton qualified for this grant.

Rob Moran advised they had provided \$1,000 for bushfire recovery that people could utilise but it wasn't dedicated to clean up.

Ally Dench advised that Council gave out grants through the Mayor's Relief Fund to assist, but the Mayor's Relief Fund was now exhausted

Karen Quinn advised that a lot of people weren't ready straight after the fires, it's only now that people are starting to come out and ask how do we manage this, but Laing O'Rourke have already been through those communities.

down or you're traumatised, it is not up to us to decide who should or shouldn't get assistance from the recovery support services. If the Committee sees anyone needing assistance please refer.

c. Feedback from Recovery Hub debrief session

Ally Dench advised that Anne Ledbeater has provided a preliminary report from the debrief sessions. Feedback is that the sessions were very good. We will be rolling out more sessions in the next couple of months – We are seeking feedback on where we did well and where we can improve.

What stood out the most was the contribution from volunteers, community support and communication and connection through the hub. The hub was an essential place to connect and receive support. Help to establish relationships, food, water and donations were made quickly.

The key challenges the Hub faced included an overwhelming amount of donated goods which were difficult to manage, unclear roles and responsibilities. There will be recommendations on how we can improve and address these challenges.

Other Issues included personality clashes, egos, challenges, how stressful and difficult it was for people to navigate and manage. Some of the preliminary feedback that came from the session included how we can be better prepared.

The session was run really well and people felt they were heard and were able to raise their issues.

There will be an opportunity for people to put in their feedback at the next session and also online. The report outcomes will be made public and we will be submitting a report to a Council Meeting and this will help assist with preparedness for the future.

Rob Moran advised that he spoke with community hub members today and they were appreciative of the opportunity to provide feedback.

d. Future recovery workshops / recovery plan

Ally Dench advised that future workshops will go into full swing when the Recovery Officer is on board.

Rob Moran advised that we are discussing proposed dates and venues at the moment.

	<p>Peter Wright advised with the timing of the release of Ann's report it would be good to get the report out to this committee.</p> <p>Ally advised that the process needs to be kept as independent as possible, out to Councillors first then out to the committee after that.</p> <p>ACTION: Peter Wright to liaise with Rob Moran to send out to Councillors and community members.</p>	<p>Peter Wright Rob Moran</p>
<p>8. Community agency updates as required</p>	<p>Ally Dench advised that Kerrie O'Grady is an apology for today's meeting and provided Kerrie's update on her behalf:-</p> <p><u>Kerrie O'Grady, Picton CWA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kerrie advised that there is one container left at the Balmoral hub. The Coates container is still full of FREE tools to be disseminated. We are still working with Masons at Nowra to relocate this container. Unfortunately Shoalhaven Council is not being very cooperative wanting to charge ridiculous fees of over \$600.00 to have these 2 containers sit at Milton-Ulladulla Showground. ▪ The container that was donated to CWA is currently located at my premises and is full of work benches; washing machine awaiting victim's completing their sheds and also approximately 100 quilts for distribution. Defacto Hub!! ▪ We are still working with a number of quilting groups and have we believe delivered a quilt to every <i>Total Loss</i> victim across both Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires. We are working with Bowral CWA and have also delivered quilts to these areas: visiting Quaama, Bemboka, Cobargo, Wolumia and Towamba schools distributing quilts. The smiles on the faces of these kids was so rewarding, some who have not spoken since the fires went through. ▪ Could the Committee ask people if they haven't received a quilt and if they would like one please get their age and their colour preferences? We have been in contact with the families of the three Americans who lost their lives and through our contact have an offer from Ambassador in Canada to do the presentation to the families. We unfortunately received no support from NSW RFS in making this contact. Needless to say we were all very disappointed. ▪ Kim Hill has informed us that the orders for memorial playground equipment is being processed by Wollondilly Council. We are looking forward to seeing this completed. ▪ Several of the Picton CWA; Bargo Men's Shed and other volunteers attended the Hub debrief and were 	

very positive about the process. We look forward to seeing the report when it becomes available.

- Kim and I had a meeting with the Paul Ramsay Foundation- our discussion was around how they could look to spend up to \$30 million dollars on recovery and resilience. They are interested in community projects. If you have any projects which you feel would fit their request please forward them onto me and I will send them off to our contact for consideration.
- Volunteers would also appreciate seeing the submission from Wollondilly to National enquiry if possible please.
- We purchased on 10th July \$9,000.00 worth of gift cards (mix of Aldi and Woolworths) for distribution to fire victim's- those who were successful in round one applications. This brings a total of \$750.00 dollars' worth of gift cards distributed to Total Loss victims. We still have some funds available and will discuss most appropriate way of disseminating these soon.

Tanya Smith, Community Links Wellbeing

There is not a huge amount of referrals from Wollondilly LGA at the moment. Can this committee think about how we can encourage people to reach out from the fire impacted areas. We know from our mental health team that there are a lot of people coming out of the woodwork slowly. Any ideas or thoughts of how we can reach out, remind people of the recovery service, refer to the Community Links website and it is also on Wollondilly Shire Council's website.

Peter Wright asked has the outreach survey that NSW Resilience has been doing assisted with people being referred?

Tanya advised that before the second rollout there were 9 responses, 5 they could pick up straight away. Shoalhaven had over 100 referrals.

Peter asked does the referral that goes to the recovery support service occur because someone fills in the survey and then someone assesses it.

Tanya advised that there is a question in there asking would the person like to have a referral. We don't think it is translating at the moment and need to have better ways of referral services.

Peter advised that he was not sure of the timing and could Vanessa Nieuwenhuis seek further advice?

Ally advised that Rob and her experience is that people thought they weren't deserving and thought other people were more deserving. People might be thinking that they didn't lose their house so they feel like they can't ask for help.

Tanya advised that people are not sure if they feel like they can still ask for assistance.

Tanya wanted to raise emerging issues:-

- Many people who did lose their houses and have been in accommodation paid for by insurance is coming to an end now or over the next 6 months. People are not in a position to build especially with COVID-19. People don't know how they will be able to keep their families together while rebuilding. Pods are finished, mobile houses cost a lot of money, they have to be transported and connected and have standards to meet. The initial conversation with insurance of Australian may extend. Initial conversations with State Government in terms of how people can be supported, state issue but will impact us locally.
- Suicide clusters – around 6 months people hit the wall with their mental health when they see their properties are still not cleared and they may not have jobs. Difficult to get data. There have been some attempts and one last week that was fire related. Need to be vigilant and look out for each other.
- Clearance issues with fencing is the biggest issue we see and incredibly costly. Properties that back onto crown land have assistance but if you don't there are people trying to clear and then there is an increase of accidents. If anyone can think of any way to assist these people please share.
- Wingecarribee have a number of small working groups looking at rebuild, there is so much crossover did the Committee want to consider joining with Wingecarribee.

Ally asked what were the working groups in Wingecarribee working on? Tanya advised that they are doing a lot of mapping exercises, very practical and on the ground level.

Ally advised once our Recovery Officer comes on board we will be able to determine the level of resourcing that could be given to this request.

Karen Akehurst suggested to identify community leaders and events that may overlap between the two LGA's.

Karen Quinn noted that people are very overwhelmed and people forget what they have applied for and what they have received.

	<p><u>Sandra Harlor</u></p> <p>Sandra 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>ACTION: Rob Moran to follow up with the RFS.</p>	Rob Moran
9. General Business	Nil.	
10. Next Meeting	<p>Meeting Closed 4.35pm</p> <p>The Committee agreed that meetings are to be held every 4 weeks and the next Meeting will be Monday 17 August 2020, 3.00pm via Microsoft Teams.</p>	