

MINUTES

Wollondilly Local Recovery and Resilience Committee

Date: 26 October 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, Resilience NSW		✓
Alison Morgan, Resilience NSW / GSC		✓
Vanessa Nieuwenhuis, Resilience NSW	✓	
Matt McFarlane, Resilience NSW		✓
Natasha Lowe, Resilience NSW		✓
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		✓
Superintendent Paul Fuller, Commander, 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		✓
Ryan Roumieh, Lifeline	✓	
Kim Hill		✓
Daneeka Bertolissio, South West Sydney Local Health District	✓	
Kate Johnson, South West Sydney Primary Health Network	✓	
Cr Matthew Deeth, Wollondilly Shire Council	✓	
Cr Judith Hannan, Wollondilly Shire Council		✓

Deputy Mayor Michael Banasik, Wollondilly Shire Council	✓	
Ben Taylor, Wollondilly Sire 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
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>Confirmation of Previous Minutes - ... September 2020</p> <p>MOVED: Sandra Harlor and SECONDED: Tanya Smith</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.</p> <p>ACTION: Peter McLaughlin has referred on and awaiting on an answer.</p> <p><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>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>ACTION: Rob Moran to follow up with the RFS.</p> <p><i>UPDATE: Rob has not had a chance to speak to the RFS.</i></p>	<p>Peter McLaughlin</p> <p>Rob Moran</p> <p>Peter Wright</p>

	<p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis advised Resilience NSW is aware programs can take longer than 12 months to reach people and have impact. It is something Resilience NSW is hearing from across the state and there will be a review.</p> <p>ACTION: Vanessa will take this on notice and advise the team. It was agreed now is the time to advocate to ensure momentum is not lost.</p> <p><i>UPDATE: Vanessa advised that Resilience NSW are looking at the recovery support service with proposals, watch this space, there is a lot of work and we acknowledge the work the recovery support services are providing across the state and will be looking at extending.</i></p> <p>Ally advised that we will advocate for the extension for the bush fire recovery support service and recovery officers but put a note that there is concern and we would like to expand disaster recovery issues for the future as well.</p> <p>ACTION: Mayoral Minute to advocate for the extension of the Recovery Support Service and the Recovery Coordinator role with Council for a further 2 years.</p> <p><i>UPDATE: Ally advised that an extension of services was raised at the last Council Meeting on 20 October and was well received by Council. The resolution was to write to Resilience NSW to thank them for their support and request an extension of funding for a minimum of 3 years, for the continuation of the Community Recovery Support Service Located at Community Links Wellbeing and Councils Community Recovery Officer, to help our communities on their recovery and preparedness journey. There will be a letter sent from Council to the Ministers – COMPLETED</i></p> <p>Cr Banasik asked Peter Wright to remind the community of the Red Cross services in the next community newsletter.</p> <p>ACTION: Peter Wright to remind the community of the Red Cross services in the next community newsletter.</p> <p><i>COMPLETED</i></p>	<p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis</p>
<p>4. Update – Wollondilly Recovery Support Service – Community Links Wellbeing</p>	<p>Tanya Smith provided an update:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Last month there were 35 brand new cases across both LGA's and we are up to 20 referrals this month. ▪ Word of mouth is spreading as well as other promotional activities. ▪ Financial Grants and clean-up are the main issues. ▪ Things we know that will become more prevalent is changes in accommodation, especially around the 12 month anniversary mark we will see a change and we will be keeping across it. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is rebuilding and support around the DA process. ▪ It is really, really busy. <p>Matthew Deeth asked Tanya to elaborate on the need for support of DA services.</p> <p>Tanya advised that it is a case by case basis, we approach like a case conference and we go to Natalie McMullen as the first point of call. This is a joint effort - resident, Council and us.</p> <p>Ally Dench advised that Council have a dedicated planner for these DA's, let us know if there are issues.</p>	
<p>5. Wollondilly Council Updates</p> <p>a. Community Debriefing sessions</p> <p>b. Update on Recovery Coordinator activities</p> <p>c. Greater Sydney Region Recovery Committee</p>	<p>a. Community Debriefing sessions</p> <p>Natalie McMullen advised that 6 Community Debriefing sessions were held, there was originally 5 and then an additional one was held with the Yerranderie community.</p> <p>115 people attended across the sessions with Oakdale by far our biggest with almost 60 people attending. We spoke to people we haven't had an opportunity to speak to yet.</p> <p>Feedback to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A broad support of people through the hub. ▪ Council's quick response. ▪ Feedback around preparedness, some residents were surprised how little some people knew and were not prepared. ▪ A lot of practical feedback on how we can do better. ▪ Recognition for the RFS. ▪ Environment was a big feedback with global warming, loss of wildlife, loss of habitat. ▪ Sad ongoing grief from some residents. <p>Anne Leadbeater did a great job with the sessions and provided a nice safe space and environment for people to give feedback. We are looking forward to Anne's report.</p> <p>Tanya Smith and Karen Akehurst came to the forums in person and were able to support people who required support services. A family came that had support regarding bricks for their house. Karen Akehurst found out that family were eligible for a \$40,000 grant as well. They have now lodged a DA.</p> <p>Karen Akehurst agreed and advised that they received a lot of networking from these forums.</p> <p>Michael Banasik noted that residents were pointed in the right direction for funding. Members of the local RFS were there in high numbers. Buxton had more residents from</p>	

Wingecarribee than Wollondilly and as a Council we need to be ongoing with partnering more with Wingecarribee on these issues.

Sharon Robertson noted that Wingecarribee residents are not getting the same support that Wollondilly residents are getting.

Vanessa Nieuwenhuis advised that this is something they have heard and residents in the southern areas are working closely with that Council.

ACTION: Vanessa Nieuwenhuis to raise this issue again.

**Vanessa
Nieuwenhuis**

Ally Dench advised that we will make sure that we share information with Wingecarribee as we have a mentoring relationship with Council.

Natalie McMullen advised that she is meeting regularly with Amy from Wingecarribee, once we get past these busy next few weeks.

Ally advised that we are keen to get Anne's report as soon as possible. We will be feeding recommendations from the community hub debriefing session which will help with what funding opportunities we are applying for. We will look at the report to guide us in those applications. There are two Streams in grants for bushfire funding. We will be looking at a toolkit which will incorporate a lot of different issues with the recovery hub processes and resources to assist the community and Council in implementing any future recovery hubs. A report is going up to Council's November Meeting with the preliminary findings from the community recovery hub and where we are heading to date. The report going to the February Council Meeting will be tabling the recovery plan to go out on exhibition next year.

b. Update on Recovery Coordinator activities

Natalie McMullen provided an update:-

- Six 'Green Wattle Creek Bush Fire Recovery Actions Review Community Forums' were completed. These forums were facilitated by disaster recovery expert Anne Leadbeater. 115 people attended across the six forums. Information gathered in these forums will be compiled into an independent report by Anne Leadbeater. The information gathered in this process will also contribute to the development of Activate Wollondilly 2020 long-term Recovery and Resilience plan. One fantastic direct outcome from the forums was one family who attended were introduced to a staff member from Red Cross who have since found out they were eligible for a further \$40,000 in grant

funding. The family were also given information by the CRO about a program for fire impacted residents where they can receive free bricks. The family have indicated that this will save them approximately \$15,000 off their re-build. The family stated that they were very glad that they came to the forum as they had just saved \$55,000. Feedback from the forums was diverse and very interesting. In Oakdale the focus was on preparedness and hazard reduction, Buxton residents are still grieving a lot and people across all the forums raised frustrations about the difficulty accessing grants and financial support. Evacuation with animals and livestock was also a commonly raised issue.

- I met with one family who had not previously connected with Wollondilly Shire Council. This family were trapped on their property when the fire impacted and had lost one dwelling on their property (a granny flat that no one was living in at the time) as well as an outbuilding. I met with the family on their property along with Michele from the Recovery Support Service. This connection was made via a NSW RFS volunteer who attended our Recovery Actions Community Forum at Warragamba in September, 2020.
- Wollondilly Shire Council continues to work very closely with the Recovery Support Service-Community Links Wellbeing. The RSS Coordinator and Case Workers regularly contact the CRO with queries about council (for example planning regulations) or concerns on behalf of bushfire impacted residents. CRO and the RSS also regularly share information which may benefit fire impacted residents. This communication has allowed for quick resolution of issues, sharing of valuable information with residents and the development of community capacity building projects.
- The Greater Sydney Outreach Survey which commenced in September, 2020 continued in October 2020. The email survey closed in October 2020. A total of 24 responses were received to the email survey. The Greater Sydney Outreach Survey progressed to phase 2 in October 2020, and Red Cross are now calling all contacts who did not have an email address or who did not complete the survey when it was sent via email (starting with residents who were total loss or who had damage to their property). So far 17 people have responded to the telephone survey. We're getting some really useful data back in the surveys and have made several new connections with residents who wish to give positive feedback about council's immediate recovery response and who have now been added to the list to receive additional plants through the nursery.

- Four families collected their plants from the nursery in October 2020. Although this is only a small gesture, it appeared to bring a lot of joy to the impacted residents who collected plants. This initiative will continue for several months allowing all fire impacted residents to access the program if they wish to. Ibrahim was a great source of information and gave really helpful tips on which plants would suit residents land and which plants were more fire resistant.
- Wollondilly Shire Council secured a \$6,000 grant from Picton Rotary Club to provide vouchers to the 19 total loss residents within Wollondilly Shire to purchase established plants from a local wholesale nursery. This project will commence in November, 2020.
- Rob Moran, Ally Dench and I have been busy preparing for our submissions for the Recovery and Resilience Fund Stream 1 grant. This took a significant amount of time, which was a challenge with the short turn-around time of the grant application. Wollondilly Shire Council put in a submission for the project titled Activate Wollondilly 2020: Community Capacity Building Projects.
- Four total loss residents were referred to the NSW Rural Fire Service free Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) Assessment program which was announced in October, 2020. A BAL assessment must be submitted by residents with their DA to rebuild their homes after the fire. Thank you to Case Worker Raelene Daley from the Recovery Support Service who passed on information about this program to the CRO the day after it was announced by the RFS. Wollondilly was not invited to the announcement workshop or included on the list of eligible councils, however, RFS have indicated that they will accept referrals from Wollondilly.
- Two total loss residents were also referred to the Architect Assist program for free Architectural assistance to rebuild their homes. We are also in the process of finalising an online workshop about rebuilding in a high fire risk area. Three architects have agreed to host this workshop.
- Wollondilly Shire Council verified details for two bushfire impacted residents with not-for-profit organisations Red Cross and the Salvation Army. As a result both residents received additional grant funding. One resident was extremely grateful and told the CRO that the grant funding will allow him to repair his fire damaged property and return home to live.
- Clean-up of Green Waste continues to be an ongoing issue in Wollondilly Shire. Many people are still concerned about dangerous trees which are dead/dying and may fall over in the future. The other issue is clearing fallen and felled trees. Wollondilly Shire Council is looking at two avenues to resolve this issue:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partnership with Habitat 4 Humanity and the Recovery Support Service. Wollondilly Shire Council met with Habitat for Humanity and Community Links Wellbeing to discuss delivering Chainsaw Operator courses and the people who complete the courses joining Habitat for Humanity as volunteers to assist with clean-up of green waste. Habitat Humanity welcomed this idea and have since secured a commitment from Moss Vale TAFE to provide 2 Cross-Cut Chainsaw Operator Courses. This will allow 16 people to complete the course. Day 1 of the course will be completed on-site at TAFE and days 2 and 3 of the course will be completed on site at homes in Wollondilly Shire. After the course has been completed community members who complete the course will be asked to assist at clean-up days in Oakdale and Bargo/ Buxton. The clean-up days will be a partnership between Habitat for Humanity, Community Links Wellbeing and Wollondilly Shire Council. ○ Wollondilly Shire Council was advised by the Environmental Planning Agency that there will be grants coming up in 2020/21 for councils to assist with clean-up of properties impacted by the Black Summer bushfires. ▪ Natalie and Ally Dench met with Superintendent/ NSW RFS Southern Highlands Community Safety Officer David Stimson Meeting with Rural Fire Service. A number of projects were discussed including the provision of Community Education programs such as bushfire awareness, Hot Spots and landscaping in a high fire risk area as well as the recommencement of the Wollondilly Bushfire Committee. The community education programs discussed formed a part of Wollondilly Shire Council's Stream 1 Bushfire Recovery and Resilience Fund Stream 1 Grant submission. We also discussed the recommencement of the Bushfire Committee made of council and RFS staff. ▪ A big focus of October was preparing for the Youth Voices project which is being funded by the Rotary Club of Wollondilly North. We have released a flyer and media release for the program and arranged for attendance from psychologists from the SWSPHN and Appin RFS. Registrations have started to occur. ▪ Wollondilly Shire Council was asked to present at the Integrated Planners Conference. Ally and Natalie gave a presentation on deliberative engagement outlining the types of community engagement that has been undertaken by Wollondilly Shire Council during recovery from the Green Wattle Creek bushfire. This was quite an honour, as some of the other councils asked to speak are held up as best practice in disaster recovery in Victoria. 	
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	<p>Sharon Robertson noted that Bunnings had vouchers for bushfire victims and Rob Moran advised that Bunnings had limited stock, it was a first in best in basis.</p> <p>Rotary provided gift vouchers for people with total loss to get plants.</p> <p>Geoff O'Brien asked if there were plants available that are fire resistant?</p> <p>Natalie advised that Ibrahim Muharrem, Council's Sustainability Coordinator has advised residents which plants are more fire resistant. As part of the grants submission we have workshops planned and architects available to advise us and this is great for new residents coming into the area.</p> <p>Ally noted that part of our application is landscaping and the environment.</p> <p>Kelli Bennett-Smith advised that there is a media release for new grants between \$5,000 and \$150,000 as part of propagation and the environment. ACTION: Kelli Bennett-Smith to send the link to Rob Moran.</p> <p>Natalie McMullen advised Ally Dench and herself presented at the Integrated Planners Conference, as part of a panel with four other Councils and we were able to talk about how we use the lessons learnt from the storm event in Picton in 2016 and incorporated it into our bushfire recovery response. We were honoured to be on the panel.</p> <p>c. Greater Sydney Region Recovery Committee</p> <p>Ally Dench advised the reshaping of these committees is continuing.</p> <p>Vanessa Nieuwenhuis advised that there is not a lot to add at the moment, some Councils are engaging and others are not. Alison Morgan is on leave but will pick that up when she returns. We will let you know how it goes. The Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee continues for the time being.</p>	<p>Kelli Bennett-Smith</p>
<p>6. Community Agency Updates as required</p>	<p><u>Karen Akehurst, Red Cross</u></p> <p>Karen provided an update:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This week as part of the National Recovery Program, we are doing some psychological first aid with the Wollondilly Arts Project. 	

- Grants will be extend to 31 December 2020.
- There is a whole lot of applications that are merging.
- There will be a new grant available soon with a much broader criteria and Karen will forward details to Natalie McMullen as soon as they are available.
- We have worked with the ABC's "big weather" including a toolkit. Let Karen know if you would like a copy.
- Supporting our volunteers in regard to the anniversary and if anyone is planning any anniversary/memorial events let us know and Red Cross can assist.

Sharon Robertson

There is an Outreach Program at Balmoral that is bringing the community together. Shining Stars are once a month barbecues, plus outreach every fortnight at the IGA's.

Catherine Stuart, WREN

Involved with a group of organisations being trained by Karen Akehurst on Friday, part of a larger process to establish a website where communities of Wollondilly and Camden can upload their stories. The website should be up sometime in December.

Geoff O'Brien, Picton Chamber

Geoff is currently working with Appin Chamber and Wilton Chamber and is yet to touch base with Sandra in Warragamba. Geoff has spoken with the Community Recovery Support Service and Resilience NSW will come down and speak to businesses. Many businesses have been generous.

Ally Dench advised that someone from Council's Economic Development Team will be there to support on the day. We are not out of the woods when it comes to storm events and weather. Ally has spoken to the team regarding putting up posts for getting ready for wet weather in particular the shops in Picton.

Sandra Harlor advised that Warragamba does not have a Chamber of Commerce but there are some business owners who she thinks will be interested. If we can get a Media Release to those business owners she can get it to them.

Kate Johnson, South West Sydney Primary Health Network

People can apply for up to \$10,000 and this closes Monday next week. There is consultation for community wellbeing and participation measures. We will be setting up a survey from possibly people in this group and bushfire communities as well.

Ally Dench advised that we have gathered a lot of information and depending upon what you are after we can assist.

Ryan Roumieh, Lifeline

We have the 1300 Lifeline and during Covid we had a rise in calls. Beyond Blue and Kids Helpline also went up, we have a big need for assistance. We have had some calls in regard to the big weather and this has triggered people. Natalie McMullen advised that she can forward on information.

Karen Akehurst agreed that big weather has triggered people and she is seeing things on Facebook that is quite alarming.

Daneeka Bertolissio, South West Sydney Local Health District

No updates from SWSLHD but it has been really good for her to listen to what is going on in the area and the different needs in the area. Part of her work is to create links for people with mental health.

Kerry O'Grady - Community Recovery Hub activities

- CWA Picton has now distributed approx. 400 quilts to fire victims. I have recently spoken with Peter Piggott from Resilience NSW to identify other victims who may have been missed. We are currently holding approx. 100 quilts, most of these are lap or single bed size. If any members of the Committee are aware of people who would qualify please contact me at kez_5740@hotmail.com and we will organise delivery.
- CWA Picton will be assisting with catering for both the private and public openings of the RFS Memorial at Telopea Park at Buxton. (7th November & 5th December). Our branch has been able to donate \$1,000.00 towards the memorial.
- I attended the Bushfire Recovery Workshop at Mittagong RSL Saturday 10th October and the theme is the same as has been evident at all the forums held

	<p>by Wollondilly - ongoing property clean up; dangerous tress; delays with DA approvals; increased costs of rebuild; insurance company disputes; preparation and planning needs going forward; improved infrastructure particularly as it pertains to communications systems, etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Recovery Hub are still offering access to our records; protocols and procedures if requested. • CWA Picton intend to apply for the grant through SWSPHN to provide training for its members and others within our Group area for: self-care; vicarious trauma; accidental councillor. • I will be attending along with two other members of our branch the vicarious trauma training on 28th October at The Oaks. 	
<p>7. COVID-19 a. Emerging Issues</p>	<p>Ally Dench advised that she has received a report back that people are coming back into the CBD and visiting coffee shops.</p> <p>Michael Banasik advised that Development Applications are up 40% compared to last year. The main reason is new homes but also a lot of extensions and swimming pools.</p> <p>Sharon Robertson advised that Shining Stars Outreach Program is at Picton and Bargo fortnightly and they handed out nearly 80 meals, single serviced meals. There are still people needing help.</p>	
<p>8. General Business</p>	<p><u>Bush Fire Recovery Grants</u></p> <p>Natalie McMullen advised that there will be a round of Bush Fire Recovery Grants early next year with Resilience NSW funding, hopefully first quarter of next year.</p> <p><u>Public Opening of RFS Memorial</u></p> <p>The Public Opening of the RFS Memorial is Saturday 5 December. This will be facilitated under a Covid Safe Plan. This event is by invitation only.</p>	
<p>9. Next Meeting</p>	<p>Meeting Closed 4.06pm</p> <p>The next Meeting will be Monday 7 December 2020, 3.00pm via Microsoft Teams.</p>	