

# COMMUNITY News



Yerranderie airstrip during the bushfires.

## To our Community I say THANK YOU!

27 November 2019 is a date that will stay in the community's collective memory as the day that the Green Wattle Creek fire began burning deep in the Burragorang Valley in Wollondilly. The days that followed were certainly unprecedented in every way imaginable, from the unpredictability of the nature of the fire conditions to the extreme weather conditions; but what was most truly inspiring was the determination of the human spirit to rise to the challenge.

We saw and watched a formidable army of RFS and emergency volunteers come together with the sole focus to protect life, property but most of all our community.

To those who became our front line of defence, I will be eternally grateful for all that you have given.

To the families and friends of RFS and Emergency Services volunteers I say thank you. We know you have missed many special moments over the Christmas period and made many personal sacrifices behind the scenes to make sure our community was protected.

Devastatingly, two RFS members gave their lives protecting us. Words can never express the pain their families and colleagues are going through, or the depths of our gratitude for the sacrifice they made to protect our community. We are forever thankful for their courage and will not forget what they gave for the Wollondilly Community.

The communities of Oakdale, Werombi, Orangeville, Buxton, Tahmoor, Bargo, Couridjah, Nattai, Yerranderie, Lakesland, Theresa Park, and Thirlmere sustained damage from these fires, but what was incredible was the significant amount of property and lives that were saved by our RFS and Emergency Services.

What heartened me the most was to see the resilience, strength and outpouring of generosity from our community. It was astounding to see everyone rally together in times of emergency to look after one another - to give, to cry, to support and sustain one another, but most importantly to pull together as one. I saw strangers taking care of strangers and neighbours pulling together, united in the recovery efforts. I am incredibly proud to be part of such a remarkable community. This is who we are, who we have always been, and who we will always continue to be. It is part of our DNA.

As we look to the road to recovery I know that together we will get there. We will walk side by side together, help those that need help and care for those that need care, because ultimately – that's just what we do as a community. This is Wollondilly.

*Matthew Deeth*

*Mayor of Wollondilly*

## Bushfire Impact in Wollondilly...



# What's happening IN WOLLONDILLY

## BUSHFIRE RECOVERY MEETINGS

As part of the recovery process, Council hosted a Community Recovery Meeting on Monday 13 January 2020 at the Bargo Community Hall. Federal Member for Hume, Angus Taylor and State Member, Nathaniel Smith as well as representatives from Council, the Office of Emergency Management and the RFS were on hand to provide information to affected residents regarding response and recovery in relation to the bushfire situation and discuss steps to rebuild affected communities.

A second meeting was held at Buxton Public School on Monday 17 February. Council staff were on hand to talk about waste and clean up, infrastructure, rebuilding and funding assistance. The videos can be viewed on Council's website on the Fire Event page under Bushfire Relief Meeting. Council has a Community Recovery & Resilience Committee which meets on a regular basis to help guide recovery efforts.

## THE BATTLE FOR YERRANDERIE

The Green Wattle Creek Fire caused widespread damage across our Shire and ravaged vast tracts of remote water catchment and national park lands. Yet despite being located in the heart of the fire ground, one of our most valuable and treasured heritage assets, Yerranderie, withstood the onslaught.

In its heyday, Yerranderie was a silver mining town of up to 2000 people. The mining industry eventually collapsed in the 1920s and the town was later cut off by the establishment of the Warragamba Dam and Lake Burrigorang in 1959. Yerranderie nevertheless lasted as a carefully preserved historic town with a number of important buildings and industrial mining heritage. It has continued to provide a unique and rewarding heritage tourism experience for those who make the trek to visit.

During the course of the Green Wattle Creek Fire, Yerranderie and some of the scattered rural properties in its surrounds came under direct threat multiple times. A sustained effort by RFS, National Parks, and members of the local community managed to save the iconic town and the nearby rural properties. All of our community can be thankful for this heroic effort and great outcome.

## COUNCIL TO WAIVE DA FEES TO SUPPORT BUSHFIRE VICTIMS

Council wants to help our community members as they rebuild homes and other buildings on their properties.

At a recent Extraordinary meeting, Wollondilly Council voted to waive development application fees for residents whose homes and outbuildings have been lost or rendered uninhabitable in the bushfire emergency.

Fees that will be waived will also include pre-lodgement advice fees, construction and occupation certificate fees, pool inspection fees and other related application fees under Section 68 of the Local Government Act.

Council has set up a streamlined DA process with a dedicated case manager to assist impacted residents.

This will mean residents can be assured they will be helped and supported along the way as they rebuild and recover from these devastating fires.

## APPIN SKATE PARK UNDER WAY

**Wollondilly Council has commenced construction of the new Appin skate park, which is expected to be completed by mid April.**

This is an exciting time not only for the youth of Appin, but for the whole of the Wollondilly Shire. A grand opening event will be organised, so stay tuned for details to be announced in the coming weeks.



## DILLY WANDERER SUPPORTS FIRE AFFECTED COMMUNITY

Council's mobile community outreach van was well utilized during the Green Wattle Creek Fire, delivering donated goods, Christmas gifts and information to fire affected communities in the midst of the fire emergency.

On Christmas Eve, the Dilly Wanderer staff made a special trip to Buxton with food, wrapped gifts and other supplies to support firefighters who were missing the holidays with their own families and to bring some Christmas cheer to residents who had lost property or been displaced due to the bushfire which surrounded the village for days at a time.

The Dilly Wanderer is now back to its usual timetable, travelling through the Shire offering a safe and fun environment, providing information to the community with lots of activities, craft and guest speakers.

Visit Council's website to view the schedule or follow the Dilly Wanderer Facebook page.



## WOLLONDILLY LIBRARY - A WELCOME SANCTUARY DURING BUSHFIRES

The Wollondilly Library has always been a place for locals to retreat, relax, gather and learn; but on 19 December 2019 the library became a sanctuary during the evacuation of Balmoral, Buxton, Bargo, Tahmoor and surrounds.

Library staff had noticed the large number of people streaming into the large car park in Picton during the day as homes came under threat from the fire and residents needed to evacuate. The temperature was extremely hot and families were sitting in their cars with air conditioners pumping, the only way to cool themselves and their animals.

Library Services Team Leader Gail Dunn said, *"The smoke and heat was terrible, these people needed to be indoors immediately."*

*"We knew that they were staying with their cars because of their pets. They thought their pets wouldn't be welcome in the mall or the library. So library staff went to each car and told them that everyone in their family, pets included, were welcome in the library."*

The library was filled with people along with an assortment of dogs, cats, birds and guinea pigs. Nearly 400 people came and went throughout the day. Library staff served bottled water, tea and coffee and snacks, all provided for free by the local Coles.

The library staff helped residents with information about accommodation and emergency evacuation centres. Children were kept busy colouring in and reading and families were updated on the fires constantly.



## ILLUMINATE WOLLONDILLY

Now in its sixth year, Picton's award-winning arts and cultural festival will take place on Saturday 16 May 2020 from 12pm to 9pm.

The township of Picton will be transformed with performing arts and live music, delicious local and international food, market stalls selling unique and eclectic items, and fun activities for all ages. As night falls, visitors will be able to watch landmark buildings come to life with digital projections from emerging and established local artists.

The Kids Carnival will also return to Illuminate Wollondilly in the Picton RSL Memorial Park, with six amazing rides, DJ music, carnival food and Sideshow Alley games for children aged up to 12.

The town's glowing buildings will be the backdrop for the crowd-pleasing lantern parade, where children and adults parade through the festival with paper lanterns they have created. The event will conclude with a spectacular fireworks display over the town.

Head to the official website at [www.illuminatewollondilly.com.au](http://www.illuminatewollondilly.com.au) to find out more!



## STONEQUARRY CREEK FLOOD STUDY

Flooding has been an issue for Picton ever since it was established. On 9 February 2020 Picton Town Centre was once again impacted by floodwaters as Sydney saw its heaviest downpour in 30 years.

Council is proactively working to address flooding issues in Picton, and in partnership with the NSW Government has plans to mitigate flood risks for the community. We've also updated our Stonequarry Creek Flood Study with the latest information. We want your feedback!

Have a look at the:

- Updated Stonequarry Creek Flood Study
- Stonequarry Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study
- Stonequarry Creek Floodplain Risk Management Plan

These will be on public exhibition until 17 March 2020 and can be viewed at Council's Administration Centre, Wollondilly Library, or head to Council's website.

The Flood Study contains updated flood modelling, following new rainfall information and changes to industry guidelines.

The draft Floodplain Risk Management Study examines the options available to potentially mitigate flood risk. The draft Floodplain Risk Management Plan presents specific mitigation options which are recommended for further consideration.

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Checking in with neighbours and friends and looking out for each other is important after a disaster. If you or someone you know needs someone to talk to, the following free services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Mental Health Line:** 1800 011 511

**Lifeline:** 13 11 14

**Mensline:** 1300 789 978

**Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800

**Beyondblue:** 1300 224 636

**Community Links Wollondilly:**

- **Reframe** (for young people aged 12 - 25)

0455 104 104

- **You in Mind:** 4683 2776



# HELPING OUR WILDLIFE RECOVER FROM BUSHFIRES

Council has received many enquiries from the community about how they can help local wildlife that may be injured, displaced, or in need of food and water sources as a result of the recent bushfires.

To help answer the community's concerns, Council has collated information on the 2019/20 Fire Season web page titled 'Injured Wildlife and Animal Welfare' which provides links to relevant government departments and other organisations who are working to care for injured and distressed native wildlife. The web page includes tips on the best ways to help native animals as well as information on responding to the needs of agricultural animals.

Council's Manager Environmental Outcomes, Alex Stengl suggests leaving out clean fresh water for local wildlife.

*"Feeding wildlife is generally not a good idea, because native animals have very special and diverse dietary needs."*

*"Most wildlife is not used to being in close proximity to or handled by humans, and this can cause them distress. However, we have provided some information on suitable food on the website as we know that many people will feel compelled to feed distressed wildlife," she said.*

People should never handle snakes, bats or flying foxes. Instead, you should call a wildlife organisation immediately. If you need to contact one of these organisations or if you are interested in caring for wildlife or becoming a volunteer, please contact Wires on 1300 094 737 or Sydney Wildlife (02) 9413 4300. For non-native species contact the RSPCA or a vet.

Moving forward, Council plans to further support native wildlife by using the community nursery as a way to help revegetate with a lot of native plants. Currently, residents are entitled to 20 free plants per annum. Council is looking to plant more animal food species which will benefit native wildlife across the Shire.



## COMMUNITY RECOVERY HUB CONTINUES TO PROVIDES SUPPORT

A Community Recovery Hub is located at Balmoral Village Hall. This is a joint recovery hub for Wingecarribee and Wollondilly fire affected residents to access support and information.

During the bushfire crisis, a recovery centre was initially established in the foyer of the main Council building to provide information and support, including access to counselling services and referral to other agencies. Residents impacted by the bushfire are able to apply for assistance from the Mayor's Relief Fund.

We have many agencies providing assistance at the Community Recovery Hub. There has also been support from insurance agency Suncorp representing AAMI, GIO, Bingle, APIA, Shannons, Vero and Terri Scheer, representatives from the Office of Emergency Management, Red Cross and Service NSW, who are providing a mobile service at the hub on Wednesdays and some Sundays.

Anyone needing assistance should come to the Community Recovery Hub at Balmoral or come into Council's foyer and speak to our Customer Service staff.



## BUSINESSES OF WOLLONDILLY, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The NSW Small Business Commission is seeking feedback on the impact of bushfires on local businesses.

Please visit the below website and fill out the survey to share what extent the fires have had on your business (directly or indirectly). Responses will inform business and tourism recovery plans to come.

<http://bit.ly/bushfire-feedback>

## COUNCIL AND GOVERNMENT HELP CLEAR BUSHFIRE WASTE

To get the bushfire clean-up under way as quickly as possible, Council set up a temporary bushfire waste drop-off centre at Oakdale, and a free bushfire waste drop-off service at Bargo Waste Management Centre for our bushfire affected residents from December to the end of February.

We were also able to extend this service to our bushfire affected neighbours in the Wingecarribee Shire. State and Federal Governments have offered help with the clean-up of bushfire impacted properties, announcing they will pay for the clean-up of residential and commercial properties. Residents should contact Service NSW directly on 13 77 88 for assistance.

## COUNCIL WELCOMES \$1 MILLION FEDERAL RECOVERY GRANT

Council has welcomed a \$1 million Federal Government grant to assist with bushfire recovery projects and expenses. Council will use this money to best help the Wollondilly community back on its feet.

The funding will help Council establish a Rates Payment Assistance Scheme to directly assist ratepayers whose homes were lost or uninhabitable due to the fires.

Other uses for the Recovery Grant will include community infrastructure in villages most significantly impacted by the fires. Plans include a memorial at Telopea Park Buxton to pay tribute to the memory of the two RFS lives lost while defending the town, a youth facility at Buxton and small scale BMX tracks at Bargo and Oakdale.

Funding will also be provided for economic development and tourism projects to support small business within bushfire affected communities. The grant will also cover otherwise unfunded support and recovery costs to help with the restoration of the Wollondilly community.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE AN E-NEWSLETTER?

Recent resident surveys have shown us that many people in the community would like to receive information about what Council is doing via a direct email. In response to this feedback, we are establishing an e-newsletter as another way of keeping in touch. If you would like to receive this regular newsletter, please provide your email address by calling the Communications Team on 4677 1100 or emailing [enewsletter@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:enewsletter@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)



## MY COUNTRY

The love of field and coppice,  
Of green and shaded lanes.  
Of ordered woods and gardens  
Is running in your veins,  
Strong love of grey-blue distance  
Brown streams and soft dim skies  
I know but cannot share it,  
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding rains.  
I love her far horizons,  
I love her jewel-sea,  
Her beauty and her terror -  
The wide brown land for me!

A stark white ring-barked forest  
All tragic to the moon,  
The sapphire-misted mountains,  
The hot gold hush of noon.  
Green tangle of the brushes,  
Where lithe lianas coil,  
And orchids deck the tree-tops  
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!  
Her pitiless blue sky,  
When sick at heart, around us,  
We see the cattle die -  
But then the grey clouds gather,  
And we can bless again  
The drumming of an army,  
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!  
Land of the Rainbow Gold,  
For flood and fire and famine,  
She pays us back threefold -  
Over the thirsty paddocks,  
Watch, after many days,  
The filmy veil of greenness  
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,  
A wilful, lavish land -  
All you who have not loved her,  
You will not understand -  
Though earth holds many splendours,  
Wherever I may die,  
I know to what brown country  
My homing thoughts will fly.

- Dorothea Mackellar  
*Published 1908*



## YOUTH WEEK 1-9 APRIL 2020

Keep an eye out for these youth events:

- **Young Women in Business** – 7 March
- **Adulting 101 Project** – starting March

Contact [youth@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:youth@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au) or check out the [Dilly YAC Facebook page](#).



## ENROLMENTS ARE OPEN FOR WOLLONDILLY YEAR ROUND CARE

### Before School Care

6:30am - 9am  
(school days)  
Cost supplied on application

### After School Care

3pm - 7pm  
(school days)  
Cost supplied on application

### Vacation Care

7am - 7pm  
(school holidays)  
Cost supplied on application

For more information contact **(02) 4677 8202**.

### Wollondilly Neighbourhood Occasional Care

10am - 2:30pm, Monday, Thursday and Friday (School terms only)  
For more information contact **(02) 4677 8201**.

# CHEMICAL CLEAN OUT SUNDAY 29 MARCH

Wollondilly Shire Council in partnership with NSW EPA Waste Less Recycle More Initiative are holding a Household Chemical Clean Out Day on Sunday 29 March 9am - 3:30 pm

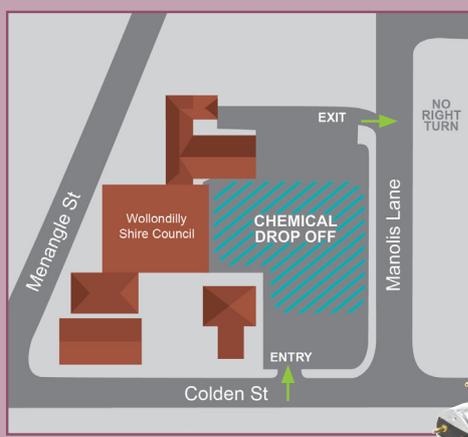
This is a free service for the safe disposal of a range of household chemicals that could cause harm to human health and the environment if they are not disposed of correctly.

## What can I drop off?

- From your home: solvents, household cleaners, floor care products, ammonia based cleaners, batteries, fluorescent globes and tubes
- From your vehicle: vehicle batteries, motor oils, fuels and fluids
- From your garage: paint and paint related products, pesticides and herbicides, poisons, gas bottles, fire extinguishers, pool chemicals, hobby chemicals, acids and alkalis.

**Where:** Colden St carpark, Picton

For more information visit [cleanout.com.au](http://cleanout.com.au)



## BAND TOGETHER

## FOR LOCAL FIRIES

On 28 March 2020, 12pm to 10pm the Wollondilly community will come together to show their appreciation for our firefighters with a concert at Menangle Park called "Band Together." Keep an eye on Council's website and Facebook page for information on the high calibre performers that will be taking part and to book your tickets. Tickets are free for RFS/Emergency Services and their families. Adult tickets are \$20 each with free entry for children. This will be a great opportunity to celebrate the efforts of our emergency service staff and dedicated volunteers who went above and beyond to look after us during the devastating bushfire event. Funds raised will go towards 21 RFS crews, the SES and wildlife organisations. More information can be found at: <https://bandtogether2020.com.au/>

## YOUR COUNCILLORS

### Judith Hannan

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### Simon Landow

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### Matt Gould - Deputy Mayor

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NORTH WARD

### Robert Khan

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### Michael Banasik

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### Blair Briggs

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CENTRAL WARD

### Matthew Deeth - Mayor

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### Noel Lowry

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### Matt Smith

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EAST WARD

## FIND OUT MORE, PARTICIPATE AND GET IN TOUCH...

### Council Forums and Meetings

Community Forums and Council Meetings will now take place on the second and third Tuesday of each month in Council's Administration Building at 6:30pm.

Agendas are available in Council's Foyer and on Council's website seven (7) days prior to the Community Forum. There are no meetings in January.

#### Community Forums - 6.30pm

- Tuesday 10 March 2020
- Tuesday 14 April 2020
- Tuesday 12 May 2020
- Tuesday 9 June 2020

#### Council Meetings - 6.30pm

- Tuesday 17 March 2020
- Tuesday 21 April 2020
- Tuesday 19 May 2020
- Tuesday 16 June 2020

#### Local Planning Panel Dates - 5.30pm

- Thursday 26 March 2020
- Thursday 30 April 2020
- Thursday 28 May 2020
- Thursday 25 June 2020

Council Meeting Live Streaming is available via the Council website

Dates can change, please see Council's website

### Council Contacts

P (02) 4677 1100  
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**In Person:** Frank McKay Building, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton, NSW, 2571

**Opening Hours:** Monday-Friday 8:30am to 5pm