

# THE TRIANGLE

COMMUNITY NEWS

Est. Sept. 2002

QUAAMA COBARGO BERMAGUI TILBA & LOCALITIES

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## Are you OK?

Trauma, loss and shock etches the faces of our community – fire fighters, leavers, stayers, evacuees, refugees, the bereft. Our hearts bleed for those lost and their close ones, and for those hurt and burned. Decades, lifetimes of work, security and dreams lie crumpled, gone. Experiences of skies blacker than night at 9 am, people huddled in cars under the fire storm at the Cobargo showgrounds, others shooting their cattle, their pets, native animals wiped out, the heart-opening little things that survived. We are swept into uncertainty.

ABC radio was ever-present with bushfire information - road closed, leave now, too late to leave, fire level warnings – our vital ABC. And such kindness, love, care - the one who reaches out and gently touches, who is present with you in your loss, your silence, your vacant stare, your story which needs telling.

‘There is no scale for grief’, a wise woman once said, no worse/worst comparisons, each is unique, each is lived, felt - the loss, the anxiety, not knowing about loved ones, about home, animals. As a community this is our shared experience.

These are hard, pervasive times which bind differences in the face of what is truly important, sincere and significant – kindness, authenticity, loving acceptance, wisdom - ‘How are you?’ – in this moment the answer is tears, numbness, silence, anger, a joke, heartache – and it changes, it comes in waves. There are still moments of non-belief, of momentary forgetting, then it crashes in again.

And the trees keep falling. The forest is devastated, so bare, stark, naked – no green shoots in the forest yet – they will come. The trees are black now, no sparks, few smouldering logs, gaunt black trunks, so silent, gutted, starkly clear as far as the eye can see – the land, the spirits, the animals, the death, so shocking.

Leadership emerged from unlikely sources, new leaders arising spontaneously, courageously, giving beyond tiredness. The leaders are right here among us.

And the polities – did they come to display, to be seen, the photo opp – or to listen, to be with us, to be one of us, with no media? We had both – the one grabbing unoffered hands, scurrying away into a flash clean car. ‘Did you bring water, food, underwear?’ – apparently not. And she came later and listened sensitively, taking time with each - ‘what do you need?’ Our rep who stood with us, as one of us, speaking up for us.

Oh yes, we are in crisis. All on a thin string, just holding it together, and together we weave something stronger.

We are turning some corner. We have made a foundation of love openly expressed, of care, of connections forged in fear, pain, terror, tears, shock, relief, incredibility, the sense of ‘is this really happening’ – and it was, rapidly and ruthlessly, without exception - and the distress continues, changing its face to depression, to fierceness, to empty realities, negotiating through agencies, waiting on the phone.



Cobargo burns in the wee small hours of New Year's Eve

It's so important we stay together – listening to the new voices, listening to the quietest, listening to each other, sharing our experiences, our hearts, respect, holding together, no opportunism, no exploitation – kindness, acceptance, gratitude, compassion, wisdom.

We were already a tight, caring community. Now we have transcended differences – we are closer – where to now? Not to old ways which no longer serve, not reviving old divisions - better ways call which are inclusive, giving, transformative, sharing leadership - one where people's kindness, diverse knowledge and competence comes to the fore foreshadowing a better way of organising ourselves together as a community.

This hard, on-going experience yet deepens us. We are not out of the fire times or the consequences – Tilba and Bermagui are under ember attack as I write. Looking out for each other continues to be vital. Such an important question – ‘Are you OK?’

*Ro Beaumont*

# Letters to the editors

## Gratitude

We would like to thank Grant, Les, Richard and Sally, and her sister from England, for all their assistance in helping with fire equipment at Sherringham Lane, clearing our land, food and bringing with them humour as this fire brought so much stress. Also, thank you to all the persons manning the evacuation centres, to the fire coordinators and the fire persons supporting our Tilba area.

To each of you that have lost family, houses, and farm animals—you have our deepest sympathy.

Bless each and every one that went through this stressful time and gave their time and efforts to support each other.

*Warren and Jane Coates  
Tilba*

How can we even begin to feel the horror of the recent bushfire catastrophe? However, despite huge geographical separation, the beauty of both the people and the NSW Far South Coast still stay in our memories with tenacious zeal.

In 1981 my wife, Jan, and I moved onto our 100-acre block, Crick Hollow, at Upper Brogo with all our worldly goods contained in a couple of tea chests.

Yes, we were naïve, if not a little stupid, as we knew very little of survival in the bush let alone how to live self-sufficiently, but when you're young you think you're invincible. We failed miserably, but the Far South Coast etched itself onto our psyche.

A small stone and timber home was fashioned, along with the ubiquitous pit privy and rabbit-proof garden, however a pretty severe drought, even back then, made life very challenging.

One of the factors that made life bearable was the incredible support we were given by those who lived around us, always there, always encouraging and always willing to lend a hand. If only we could actually, physically, return some of that favour by getting dirty to help the Quaama/Cobargo communities then we most certainly would, but we are currently resident in the UK. But we're alongside you all in thought and emotions.

We presume that anything that ever remained of our old house would now be destroyed but our memories will always remain. Dear friends, stay strong, pull together and may the Far South Coast communities and landscapes be more beautiful than ever.

*Lee Jankovskis  
Biggin, Derbyshire, UK*

## When thanks is due ...

Cobargo Co-op sends out special thanks to Barry Parks who, despite losing just about everything in the fires on New Year's Eve, opened the Co-op on New Year's Day to get emergency feed out to those in desperate need. We salute you!

We would not have been able to trade in the days following the fires without the help of a dedicated band of volunteers who went above and beyond to work with our staff in appalling conditions to get supplies to our customers. Thank you so much!

The Co-op has started a fundraiser: [www.chuffed.org/project/rebuild-the-cobargo-community](http://www.chuffed.org/project/rebuild-the-cobargo-community). The funds raised will be distributed directly back to our shareholders affected by the fires. Please share this link far and wide. It is also on our new Facebook page (thank you Tony Harrington!) and our website. The intention is to get money back into our community to support the rebuild of Cobargo and surrounds.

*The Co-op team*

The staff and I at Sapphire Coast Anglican College wish to express our deep sadness at the devastation of the recent bushfires. Our deepest condolences to the Salway family and others that have lost loved ones at this terrible time.

The tragedy of these fires has touched the lives of many across the far south coast and while we are all coming to terms with the events, it is important to express our thanks to the brave men and women that gave their time to help those around them battle the fires. To the RFS, St John's Ambulance, Bega Valley Shire Council, the Red Cross, the police, the SES, doctors, nurses, churches, the CWA and many other support agencies and services - we say thank you!

Sapphire Coast Anglican College has students from as far north as Bermagui to Eden in the south, spanning right across the affected areas. As we support families and their children in the aftermath, it is clear that our community is truly amazing. The community spirit, the out-pouring of kindness and generosity and the strength and determination to rebuild across the Valley is evident from everyone I speak to.

While we will never forget these events, we will stand strong together and lean on each other for support and strength and show how special our communities are.

*Tracey Gray,  
Principal  
Sapphire Coast Anglican College, Bega*

I grew up in Bermagui and was visiting my family for the holidays when the bushfires flared up. I don't usually go around ringing church bells, but it was just confirmation to the people who may have heard it that Bermagui was now safe from fire and probable devastation.

It was meant to bring a little hope and joy to their hearts. Once the north-west winds were 'held back' and the south wind stopped (what I was praying for at the steps of churches and the war memorial), the crisis was all over, for Bermagui at least, and confirmed in my spirit. I guess I just became overjoyed and wanted to share it, so rang the bell at All Saints in Bermagui. There is deeper scriptural meaning to the events as well in a symbolic context.

My church and I offer our deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones and property and we are all praying that land and lives are quickly renewed. We also pray that you all receive practical help to rebuild your lives and livelihood.

*Ant Sherwin  
One Direction Christian Fellowship  
Bunbury, WA*

A rather large correction to the 'Thank you to the only three businesses to stay open since NYE fires' stated by Australian Hotels Association's Steve Ferguson at the Cobargo community get-together on Sunday 12 January 2020.

The following businesses were also open as soon as power came back on, and/or they received a generator, and without the support of major corporate companies: Working Dog Bakery, Cobargo Co-Op, Kitchenboys, Sapphire Nu Pulse, Cobargo Automotive, Bowerbird Op Shop, Well Thumbed Books.

And a big thank you to Rapley's Meats, Narooma, for donating all the meat for the Cobargo pub's community get together.

At a time when Cobargo and her satellite sisters are hurting the most with trauma, fear and the reality of being impacted by the biggest fire event in Australia's history, it might be time to put aside any division/divide and excuse to gossip and really work together to rebuild. Of the remaining businesses in Cobargo, some will not be reopening, some will be severely affected by these horrendous events and some will go back to normal due to huge corporate backing. Shopping local, supporting local has just taken on an even great significance. This is the time to include, not exclude.

*Lara Rose  
Cobargo*

*We remember*

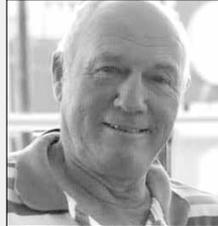
**Patrick James SALWAY**



09. 04. 1990 - 31. 12. 2020

*We remember*

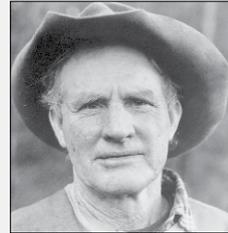
**Robert John SALWAY**



23. 03. 1956 - 31. 12. 2020

*We remember*

**Ross Alphonsus RIXON**



21. 06. 1935 - 18. 01. 2020

## DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed by contributors to the newspaper are their own, to a greater or lesser degree, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial team. Whilst striving to accurately report the news and views of the readers, this newspaper accepts no responsibility or liability for statements made or opinions expressed. All letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and address if they are to be considered for publication.

## Thumbs DOWN

To those in Bermagui who have the water running continuously with water slides for their kids, or for daily washing of their boats, while I'm lugging water around from the shower and washing machine to water plants. I'm aware that there are no water restrictions in the Bega Valley at the moment but, if this valuable resource runs out, how are we and the RFS going to protect our properties in the future?



To whoever stole two pallets of bottled water outside the recovery centre in Bermagui.

To the lowlife who stole an unattended gas bottle from outside the Quaama Store.



## Thumbs UP

To the Bega Evacuation Centre and all the services and volunteers, and to all the other evacuees with their calm compassion.

To the 'Wombat Woman' from Quaama, who saved four baby wombats.

To Kamalashila Buddhist Centre who have been providing curries, baklava and chai to the Quaama community.

To Honorbread who donated a ceiling-high stack of trays, over 500 loaves of bread, croissants, savoury and sweet treats at Bermagui SLSC. Luxury evacuation!

To the kitchen team at Bermagui SLSC, who worked day and night serving beverages and sandwiches. Heartening to see young people serving the food. Rotary and Lions cooked up a storm on their BBQs.

To Bega Council for installing the new water collection station at Whitby Wilson Rd.

To the Lions, who have donated a car to a Quaama family who lost everything on New Year's Eve.

To the *Triangle* committee, who have had to contend with evacuations, power cuts, internet outages and general mayhem, and still plan to put out a February issue ON TIME.

To us, our community, who are stepping up and helping each other above and beyond what could have been imagined.

## Notes to our readers...

Most of the pictures we have received for this special edition are in colour. While the ones we have chosen still tell the story in black and white, their impact has been so reduced that we have decided to put a colour version of *The Triangle* on our website. You can download the pdf at [www.thetriangle.org.au](http://www.thetriangle.org.au).

To anyone who submitted stories or letters for the February issue before New Year's Eve... we have devoted this issue to the fires. If your contribution is still relevant and you'd like it published in our March issue, please resubmit it before 22 February.

Thanks!

Who knew about Cobargo before we were ravaged by fires, inexorably racing through bush and rural properties in Yowrie, Wandella, Brogo and Quaama? Who knew how deadly fast, how randomly, the ‘fingers’ of fire would engulf land and property in some areas and not others?

Before the fires Cobargo was enjoying anonymity, Christmas and the upcoming New Year, and for the town, the tourist season. For better or worse Cobargo has now landed on the world stage: in the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, BBC News, images and words forever seared in our memories. Poster child for fire-ravaged devastation, for a brief moment Cobargo became one of the hot spots for international reportage. Social media was awash, is still awash, with media updates, personal accounts, GoFundMe campaigns, amazing stories of individuals, groups, organisations contributing money, resources, equipment, feed, skills and time to Cobargo and environs.

At times it’s been overwhelming – the School of Arts Hall was filled to the gunnels, every room jam-packed with second-hand goods (mostly), which a small army of volunteers continually sorted, arranged and passed on to those in need. The Australian Defence Force was finally called in to transport the excess goods

to Vinnies in Bega. The support, from individuals through to big corporations, locally, nationally and internationally, is ongoing.

Our Hall escaped the fire; the toilets are singed but still currently usable. The good news is we will be getting new toilets with disabled access, something the committee was already working towards. Maybe our damaged roof will be replaced too? It’s a time of great loss (the ultimate for some families) – our flora and fauna, homes, businesses, high season income (see story of economic realities in the new landscape) and moments of great joy, gratitude and even celebration – a giant, belated New Year’s get-together at the Cobargo Hotel, centre of the universe for many. Selfless sacrifice, social co-operation and moments of anger and unrest, the spectrum of human behaviour on a plate.

I’m a bit biased but I love the sign that appeared (no-one has owned up) on the Well Thumbed Books window and became famous in the piece Richard Flanagan wrote for the *New York Times*: ‘Post-Apocalyptic Fiction moved to Current Affairs’. The disaster has happened but the crisis is ongoing. Our world is in turmoil.

Happy crazy New Year – keep the conversations going.

## And now this

We both arrived to live in this area on 7 November—Felicity in 2017, Scott in 2018. In this short time we’ve been warmly welcomed into a community that has something absolutely unique about it.

Both of us are writers, Scott a book and Felicity a dissertation, so sometimes our only interaction with other people is speaking to Dan or Tim or Sid at the Co-op, or wandering into the Bowerbird where the vollies are invariably giggling, exchanging book recommendations and reviews with Louise and Nicky at Well Thumbed, hitting the butcher for dog bones, bread and honey or joining the chatter in the Post Office where the sun streams through the perfectly

stickered window. We love town days in this beautiful place.

And now this. All of us awash in adrenaline, dread, grief and anger. The sheer bastardry of a thing that would take lives, wound our town, destroy precious places while sparing others seemingly at random. There is no sense to it, it seems. As Well Thumbed Books put it, ‘Post-Apocalyptic Fiction moved to Current Affairs.’ Indeed.

We learned the meaning of community in the first hours of the 2020s. This catastrophe, our lived reality, brought so many expressions of human kindness, often simple and non-transactional. Meals shared, bedding borrowed, generators and tools carted around from giver to receiver, wherever needed most. Now the task is to sustain and scale that ethic of reciprocity and care.

In the wake of disaster, three things we learned with stark clarity. One: we were up to it. A responsive, grass-roots, self-organised mutual aid culture stepped up and got shit done. Two: public services like emergency responders, evacuation shelters and the ABC are the difference between life and death; they have to be funded and resourced properly. And three: the insulting, indifferent sucking vacuum at the heart of Federal politics needs to be dealt with, filled with people who are actually up to the task of protecting us from these disasters and preventing the ones to come. Things must change.

This was, and always will be unceded Yuin land, a place with a 65,000 year

history of landscape-scale fire management that we dismiss and ignore at our peril. We are faced with choices. Is Australia going to show how to respond to climate change intelligently? Distributed clean energy is not a luxury; it’s the only way to ensure the lights stay on when the grid goes down. Nationally and locally, here and now. Unleashing and supporting all the human ingenuities that can heal our town and our bushland, proving they work, and rebuilding with a better future in mind, not one that relies on resources and dollars that we can no longer afford to burn.

We could probably fill a whole edition of the *Triangle* just with thanks and gratitude for the heavy lifting, the generosity seen and unseen, of everyone who supported each other through the worst. Now the long aftermath. With the TV news crews having moved on, the most essential thing is to keep at it, not lose focus, and keep looking out for each other.

In doing what practically needed to get done, we discovered that when the shit hits the fan, communities in evacuation centres and communities with telephone trees and fire plans, groups of human beings, can govern and look after ourselves. Highways were blocked, but this community was not blocked. Telephone lines were down, but this community was not down. Power was out, but this community was not out. Cobargo is unbroken, and on the darkest of days, it spoke for all of us.

Scott Ludlam and Felicity Ruby  
Dignams Creek

### After the rain

when rain has washed ash to dust  
and fields spring a film of green hope  
faith is restored by a clear blue sky  
and golden sun swaddles the coast  
the threat of that baleful red dot  
the acrid taste of smoke and fear  
the uncertainty and the kindness  
the memories communities share

Jennifer Hawkins,  
Dalmeny

## New Year's Eve Firestorm Crisis for Cobargo

The catastrophic firestorm which hit the Cobargo/Quaama area in the early hours of New Year's Eve severely challenged the members of the Cobargo Rural Fire Brigade and the community it serves. The Brigade's four fire trucks were deployed shortly after midnight to the initial fire front west of Cobargo, then briefly to the Quaama/Verona area before returning to defend against the second front attacking the Wandella and Yowrie areas.

The rapidly moving main fire front and spotting ahead of the front created extremely hazardous conditions which regrettably saw many homes and buildings lost and stretched the resources and capacity of the Cobargo and neighbouring brigades to the absolute limit.

As the fire progressed rapidly to the village of Cobargo and further to the east, our units moved to defend the school, residences and other commercial buildings in the town and surrounding areas. More resources from other brigades and services followed and joined in the fight.

Many homes and buildings were saved, but very sadly much has been lost, and the members of the Brigade share the shock and trauma being felt by our community. In particular we share the grief felt for those who have lost their lives fighting the fires.

Amongst the homes lost were those of four members of the Cobargo Brigade, with our neighbouring Quaama brigade suffering similar losses, mostly when those members were crewing on fire trucks defending the lives and properties of other members of our community.

In the aftermath of the fires, the Brigade has received overwhelming support from the local community and beyond, for which we are most grateful. Our Brigade Captain, Mark Ayliffe, and I sincerely and proudly thank all the members of the Brigade for their commitment and many long hours on the fire trucks during and since New Year's Eve.

We would also like to commend the members of our community at large for their response on New Year's Eve in enacting their Fire Survival Plans, ensuring that the loss of life was kept to the minimum.

Now, a few weeks after the crisis, as we move into recovery and rebuilding stages, the Brigade offers its continuing support to the community and expresses its desire to assist in any way it can.



Fire units saving the Post Office in the main street of Cobargo



Fire takes hold of Cobargo shops as fires defend Post Office



Main street after the first fire front

Anyone considering joining the Brigade and experiencing the rewards of volunteering and helping to protect and serve our wonderful Cobargo community will be welcomed.

For more information please contact me on 0412 919 708, or simply come to one

of our training nights held every Thursday fortnight from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Cobargo Fire Station, Wandella Road, Cobargo.

*John Walters,  
President/Secretary  
Cobargo Rural Fire Brigade*

## Losses, love, anger, fear and gratitude



What remains of Gabrielle & Daniel's studio

Losses. On New Year's Eve we lost our studio, shed, son's accommodation and our friend Leah's tiny home caravan. We saved our house but it was a five-hour fight. Plan A was sprinklers, Plan B gravity water, Plan C the fire truck. Most failed over the course of the morning—the fire truck was the winner. And two young lads, Tarnie Long and Bradley Jamieson, are our local heroes. They turned up at 5 am to help us save our house. Our sincere and everlasting gratitude goes to these two lads for driving through flames and offering us help.

Love. The Cobargo community who are helping and supporting each other with

whatever they can.

Anger. At the SlowMo government for not listening to any emails, news, research or reports about our suffering environment and climate change. For not acting or doing anything pre fire that could have changed this event.

Fear. Wind and the return of fire.

Gratitude. For my community, friends and relationships that have and will continue to be our support.

*Gabrielle Powell  
Cobargo*

*People are making apocalypse jokes  
like there's no tomorrow....*

## More than \$115,000 raised for devastated farmers

More than \$115,000 has been raised for farmers impacted by Australia's bushfires in a special appeal launched by Jersey Australia and Global Impact Supremacy.

Funds raised during the drive at International Dairy Week (IDW) are being donated to the Salway family and the Dairy Industry Bushfire Relief Support Fund. Robert Salway, 63, a long-term Jersey Australia member, was killed alongside his son Patrick, 29, as they were trying to protect their farm at Cobargo.

Jersey Australia general manager Glen Barrett said the top item was \$50,000 paid to take the pick of the herd of 10,000 at Moxey Farms.

World Wide Sires Australia donated \$15,000.

Rob and Kerrie Anderson of Kings Ville Jersey matched the \$5880 Jersey sale average at IDW as a donation to the bushfire appeal.

During the Global Impact Supremacy Sale at IDW, a Casino pregnancy due in July out of Lightning Ridge Tequila Fernleaf VG87 was auctioned for \$5000.

The consignment was donated by Frank and Diane Borba, Callum Moscript and Declan Patten.

Jersey Australia provided coffees and donuts for a gold coin donation to add to the appeal.

Mr Barrett said the amount massively exceeded predictions. 'It was extraordinary and only achievable thanks to the fantastic support of those who donated animals, goods, genetics and cash, and supporters who bid so generously,' he said. 'It shows just how caring and resilient the Australian dairy community is.'

A silent auction of 63 donated items and supported Dairy Livestock Services and Elite Livestock Auctions raised an additional \$35,000.

People can continue to donate to the farmer appeal. A charitable account has been set up with NAB Agribusiness and people can make a cash donation to

**2020 Bush Fire Support  
BSB 083-894  
Account 49-781-1553**

*Jersey Australia*

## Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund tops \$100,000

The Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund was set up by four of Cobargo's leading not-for-profit community groups to raise funds to help Cobargo recover and rebuild. More than \$100,000 has been raised in the two weeks since the fund was established, through the GoFundMe page and by direct bank contributions.

The Fund will be used for projects that benefit the medium to long term recovery of the whole community. It is run by community volunteers, so overheads and admin costs will be kept low. This group will contribute to the community discussion on the future of our village. Projects will be identified through community consultation; developed and implemented by local people, drawing on expert help as needed.

The fund is an initiative of the Cobargo Folk Festival and the Yuin Folk Club, the Bowerbird Opportunity Shop, the Cobargo Cooperative Society and the Cobargo Show Society. It will be managed transparently and fully audited. Each of these organisations is run by a reputable committee and all have a history of giving back to the community. Safeguarding the reputations of our village and our parent organisations by ensuring this fund is properly managed is a priority.

The fund was kicked off by a generous donation of \$10,000 from the Yuin Folk Club, drawn from the Club's own community grants and donations fund.

All contributions, big and small, are welcomed. You can contribute through the GoFundMe page (go to [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) and search for 'Cobargo Community Bushfire Recovery Fund') or directly to:

**Cobargo Community  
Bushfire Recovery Fund.  
Bendigo Bank  
BSB: 633 000**

**Account no: 171 210 016**

All enquiries, including media, to [cobargofund@gmail.com](mailto:cobargofund@gmail.com).

*Zena Armstrong  
Cobargo*

**In times of crisis, it is of the utmost  
importance to keep one's head.**

*Marie Antoinette*

## How can we help you ReStore?

We knew this was the place—we'd had a strong emotional connection with the south coast for over a decade through surfing and diving. Sure enough, four years ago I supped down Nangudga Inlet on a paddle board in my wedding dress to marry my partner Tom on Handkerchief Beach. Tom's parents' place backs onto bush in Narooma and we travel down regularly through the year and every Christmas from Sydney.

Our holidays this time around were far from the usual, they were frightening. But through all the fear and uncertainty we saw a different and more incredible side to the community than we had ever experienced before (anywhere).

At the evacuation centre in Narooma on New Year's Day we met gentle, strong folk from Quaama, Cobargo and Verona who had been through the worst ordeal of their lives. They'd had to flee their land, their livestock and their homes with no guarantees of what was going to be left to return to. It was heartbreaking, but the sense of humanity and strength were

nothing short of awe-inspiring.

We all stood huddled together in silence for the announcements, only to hear that more fire threat was on the way for Narooma.

Tom and I stayed down another week to help fireproof Tom's folks' place and muck in at the evacuation centre before returning to Sydney and in that time met many amazing people including Narelle Storey, a resident of Cobargo, who told me she wanted to start an initiative called ReStore Cobargo. Her aim - to help individuals and businesses to manage the imminent difficulty of going back to 'business', to rise from the ashes and try to rebuild, when ordinarily they would be looking forward to their most lucrative, busy season.

On return to Sydney I immediately set to work creating a website to put Cobargo on the map, aiming to create a place to buy, bestow, pledge, share, sell, tell people's stories, to connect the rest of Australia in with the town to support it in any way possible (with a view if possible

to the same for the triangulation of other neighbouring affected towns).

Often, after a disaster, aid and help pours in, but is it always the aid and help that is needed? The most important part (which often gets missed) it to ask and to listen. What do you, the people, the small businesses and the community groups actually need?

So this is us asking, how can we help? What could this website do for you? What do you need right now? What might you need in a month? Do you want to sell your stock online or have your story heard or do you need resources provided? Please email Narelle and Cat anytime at [hello@restorecobargo.com](mailto:hello@restorecobargo.com) or join the ReStore Cobargo Facebook group so we can build something that is useful.

Other resources and groups that may be helpful are: @EmptyEsky, [www.ShopSouthCoast.com.au](http://www.ShopSouthCoast.com.au), #SpendwithThem and, more locally, the Cobargo Wellness Collective.

*Cath Leach  
Kirribilli*



## U3A Bermagui & District Inc

**U3A offers classes taught by local members for members. Membership is available to the whole community.**

**TERM 1 INFORMATION & REGISTRATION DAY  
FOR CLASS ENROLMENT**

**WEDNESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2020**

**10AM – 12NOON (MORNING TEA PROVIDED)**

**BERMAGUI COUNTRY CLUB AUDITORIUM**

**Course enquiries: [www.bermagui.u3anet.org.au](http://www.bermagui.u3anet.org.au)  
or phone Jan Rivers on 0409 901 672**

**An overview of courses and activities for this term so far ...**

Old favourites such as: Indigenous Culture & Traditions, Linguistics, Boules, Lawn Bowls, Apple Technology, Book Chat, Mindfulness and many more ...

New Classes/Courses/Excursions: Travel Tales (Israel, Japan, Larapinta Track, Tasmania), Ancient Romans in North Africa, Pet Care, Australian Literature, Critical Thinking, Movie outings, a visit to Mudworks as well as history classes.

All details will be available in our Term 1 Newsletter and at the Information & Registration Day.

## Surreality (Cobargo: 31.12.2019)

1. The falling of a dark rain  
of escaping eucalypt-leaves,  
dropping black and silent  
charcoal-coloured leaf-  
litter  
falling from nowhere ...  
Homeless.
2. A stirring of smoky-stillness  
quickly picking up pace,  
smouldering, swirling, choking  
compass-less-cauldron  
incanting hell, boiling over, escaping...  
Fearless.
3. Flames from the heavens  
like shooting-stars,  
searing, scorching, exhausting  
incessant ember-  
attacks  
igniting halos of fire...  
Relentless.
4. Unforgettable (NYE) fireworks  
lighting an eerie darkness,  
with a lava-orange/blood-red glow  
morphing day-into-night-into-day  
fusing moments into memory...  
Timeless.

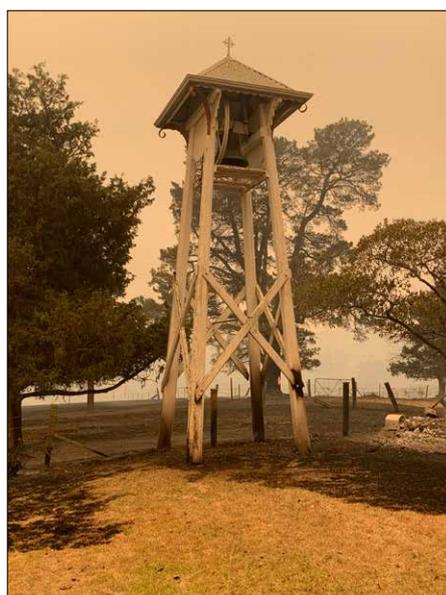
*Poet and Photographer, Cal More*



From the Convent back verandah, looking through the Catholic Church bell-tower to town, 4.57am



6.46am



12 noon

**Cobargo**  
HOTEL - MOTEL

**COBARGO HOTEL MOTEL**

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## Farewell to a grand old lady

'Murrabrine', the gracious heritage homestead that has stood on a hill overlooking the Wandella Valley for the last 140 years, sadly said its last goodbye on New Year's Eve.

Murrabrine was one of the original Tarlinton houses in the area. Built sometime in the 1880s, the home has been owned by Paul Carrington since 1979. When Paul and his wife Judy (dec) bought the property, it was in a very poor condition. They set about restoring it into the grand old house it was destined to be.

Built in the colonial architectural style of the era, the original kitchen at Murrabrine was once a separate building, close to the house but detached. This feature of colonial design was to prevent the heat generated by solid fuel cookers from warming the house during hot summers. Ironically, it was also to prevent the spread of fire, so common in kitchens of this era.

When Paul bought the house, he and a few friends simply hooked the old kitchen building up to a couple of strong tractors, and literally dragged it to a position some 20 metres from the house. This then became the garage.

The house had received some modernisation and modifications over the years, but it still preserved many of its original features. The sweeping verandah, high ceilings and fireplaces in almost every room, and the stained glass, were still intact. As well, the house contained a lot of antiques and works of art by Dora Carrington – member of The Bloomsbury Group in the 1920s and Paul's aunt. A most treasured piece was an old grandfather clock which dated back to the 18th century, along with many English

ceramic pieces dated from the turn of the century.

Paul and Judy set about making the gardens of Murrabrine into a replica of an English cottage garden, in keeping with their English heritage. They planted a stand of oak trees which now stand tall and mature on the property, and filled the gardens with roses, box hedges, and a riot of colourful spring-flowering plants.

In recent years, Paul married Gilda Crovetto. Over the past ten years, Gilda has added her own touch of South America to the homestead.

So much history has been lost. Records of the house's history, of its significance to the pioneers of the Cobargo region, to the original families that built the house, were all lost in the inferno.

Along with the house, the old garage and the shearing shed were victims of the blaze – along with all the chickens.

Murrabrine will not, nor could not, be built again. Paul and Gilda hope to stay in the Cobargo area, but Murrabrine will become a memory to the Carrington family.

If anyone in Cobargo has any information on the history of Murrabrine, could you please get in touch with Paul and Gilda. You can contact them through *The Triangle*, [bermagui@thetriangle.org.au](mailto:bermagui@thetriangle.org.au), and I will pass the information on to them.

Carolyn Banados



The grand old lady, fully restored



What remains of Murrabrine after New Year's Eve

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## 'Leave now, leave now, leave now.' The end of Mayview



The historic homestead was destroyed.

Those two important words, leave now, mean just that.

At 5.15 am on New Year's Eve we got the message, 'Leave now'. It was pitch black and the power was off.

We had a fire plan; the cars were packed, one vehicle with our camper trailer hitched on in case we needed accommodation somewhere. But the plan was to stay and put out spot fires.

How quickly things changed. With the fire pump going flat out and three large fire hoses ready, we hosed down the house, verandas, and anything we thought needed it. Wearing head-torches we grabbed the two dogs and last items.

It was then that we saw a line of fire to the west, to the east, and straight ahead to the north. That was too much. We were off.

Turning into the Cobargo-Bermagui Road, heading for Bermagui, we saw that the grass and trees were alight across the road. We put our foot down, held our breath and drove through the flames onto safer road.

We were lucky. Our neighbours told us later that, minutes after our escape, a very large gum tree came down on

Coolagolite Road and blocked all vehicle movements for some hours.

With the streams of traffic coming into Bermagui, we decided to turn left and secure a safe haven with relations in Narooma. As it turned out that wasn't safe either, but that's another story.

We were told later by our good friends and neighbours (who, by the way, stated that they will not stay if there is a next time) that those three fire fronts coalesced over our home and a fire-generated lightning strike totally demolished the 100-year plus house we had lovingly restored over the previous 20 years. Our neighbours escaped to higher, cleared ground in their cars and felt the enormous radiant heat wave some 200 metres away as our house was incinerated.

Returning days later to assess the damage and to see if anything remained, we were shocked to realise just how intense the fire had been. At first glance, nothing was left but the plastered brick chimney and sheets of twisted roofing iron. Gas cylinders had exploded. The pressed metal ceilings were now tissue paper and cast iron cooking pots welded together. A

## Powerless

Power-less.

I sit in the dark daylight  
and watch the candles flicker.  
I'm wary of the flames  
as the colour and the  
movement  
take me back to the morning  
when the world as we knew it  
ended.

Powerless.

From the house no longer  
there  
we heard the flames devour  
main street shops and cars  
and trees.  
We fled while our world  
turned to ash  
under a blood-red indifferent  
sky.

*Pauline O'Carolan*

two-metre-tall toughened glass sheet in the bathroom now a molten ball, embedded with mosaic tiles.

Amazing how random the fire was; it hit our house, the old dairy, the 'new' dairy, but left the hay shed, workshop and the hen house, a broody hen on the nest wondering what all the fuss was about.

Everyone has been so helpful, the community spirit so strong and palpable.

I was born during the London Blitz and my mother was always talking about the 'Blitz spirit' where everyone came together and helped each other. Cobargo, the whole affected Far South Coast and all the communities within it are showing that spirit. Well done everyone.

*Heather and Alec Percival  
Coolagolite*

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## Cobargo Showground, New Year's Eve

Although we had watched the TV ads and been advised by RFS personnel about having a fire plan, we turned off our phones that night, closed the curtains and went to sleep. We were woken at 4 am by the traffic on the Cobargo-Bermagui Road, a constant stream. Checked the phone—the first warning message, sent three hours before, said to leave immediately. We rushed around the house, gathering a strange selection of belongings, got into the car with the dog, got out of the car and got the chickens, put them in an esky with the lid open. We headed for Bermagui but were stopped at the Cobargo Showground turn-off. The road was closed by fire.

There were about 20 vehicles at the Showground: cars, caravans, horse floats and motorbikes. Alfredo, a friend who knows the site well, advised us where to go—and, along with a few others, kept everyone calm and informed. The toilet block was made of brick and had a water supply so we gathered around the outside walls, sheltering from the blasting, hot wind, and watched the fire approach. Smoke had filled the sky and the red glow was getting closer. Soon we saw huge walls of flame and heard a volley of explosions, one after the other. We later learned that this was cars blowing up at the back of the village garage.

Others arrived at the showground with stories of just escaping with their lives, and the terrible loss of homes and animals, and then the devastating news of the deaths of a father and son trying to save their stock. Suddenly I felt cold. We were all in shock.

As the fire front approached we were advised to go to the oval and get in our cars—we should not panic, the fire would pass over the cars. There were four in our car—us, a friend who only had a motorbike and another who didn't want to stay alone in her car. We waited, but then I had to get out to see what was happening. I went to the toilet block. There was a fire truck crew putting out a grass fire approaching the oval. Then the wind changed and



Alfredo at the Cobargo Showground, New Year's Eve (photo: Sarah Breakey)

instead of burning across us, the fire moved to set alight the panel beater's shed at the entrance to the Showground—a massive, fierce fire with jet black smoke.

Then the fire took the newly renovated home of a friend, who was watching. We tried to console him. Now the fire front had moved on, we could access parts of the town. My partner, Martin, went to fetch food and drink from the house, and I drove into the main street. I will never forget the solemn faces of the three mechanics as they emerged through the smoke; they had towed and driven the remaining cars at the back of the garage past the exploding vehicles and probably saved the garage and surrounding shops. They still gave a nod and a wave.

The fire truck crew had saved many of the buildings on the main street, in the middle of that inferno. My immediate feeling was to join the RFS and know how to defend the next time this beast came through. There was a small group of local men who stayed in the town and prevented spot fires from igniting balconies and gardens; they saw whole buildings ignite and disappear within seconds. They ran from house to house, using old mats and water from buckets and ponds. Brave Australians all.

It was raining now and there was thunder and lightning; a fire this intense can create its own thunderstorm. The sky was a milky, dark red and grey. Martin returned with a wheelbarrow full of food and a few bottles of wine. We backed the cars together, put up the tailgates, bridged the gap with a couple of umbrellas and brought in the New Year with a smoky version of Auld Lang Syne and a sip of Australian red. Then fell asleep in our cars with thoughts of what tomorrow might bring.

Sarah Breakey  
Cobargo



**The story of the fire in Cobargo went around the world and reached my sister in Canada. We had not communicated for about ten years or more, but on Saturday 4 January I received an email from her and as a result we are now in touch again. This sign in Cobargo's Well Thumbed Books went international when it was quoted in Richard Flanagan's article 'Australia is Committing Climate Suicide' in the Opinion section of the *New York Times*.**

Jo Lewis

## When The Cobargo Song became a lament

For more than twenty years, our family holidayed at Bermagui. We swam, we dipped a line in the estuary, we bought oysters from the local oyster farmers, we ate fish and chips that were actually fresh, and we wandered up and down Lamont Street as if we were genuine locals. But eventually, even the addicted need a break from what they have craved for the past year; and it would be then that we went to Cobargo.

We always loved our visits to Cobargo, so much so that from very young ages, our two boys learned to sing The Cobargo Song in the car as we drove from Bermagui. To the tune of 'Volare', it didn't go much beyond 'Cobargo, Oh-oh ... mumble mumble ... Cobargo has given me wings ...' But it probably didn't need any more lyrics than these to convey the excitement of having a meat pie instead of fish and chips or browsing through the well-stocked shelves of Well-Thunked Books (where I once found a rare copy of a Bertolt Brecht play).

Usually we would head for a modest little café on the Princes Highway that was, actually, a retired passenger carriage from

the NSW Railways converted into cubicles, etc, for the Devonshire Tea set. Whether it was called the Toot-Toot Teashop or the Chuffer-Chuffer Coffee Lounge I cannot recall, but it was a regular part of the fabric of our annual vacation. Despite the pesky flies. Despite the heat.

Next door was the old Cobargo Post Office, a beautiful example of optimistic late Victorian architecture, solid and cream and comforting and a mecca for all the locals in town for their daily or weekly necessities. A few years ago, the site and the living went on the market for sale. Neither I, nor my wife, have an entrepreneurial bone in our collective bodies, but I have to say that the only thing that stopped us putting in a bid was the open derision that our piffing offer would have brought from the competition.

Now, I haven't had the heart to look on the net to see whether the post office, the Toot-Toot Teashop and Well-Thunked Books survived the conflagration – for the rubble seen briefly on my television screen seemed only to show what was left of structures on the other side of the Princes Highway.

But my recollection of the rest of the shopping strip of Cobargo is that it was built from the finest building materials available in the 1890s – that is, timber. Single storey, double storey, I realise, with the wisdom of hindsight, that weatherboard Cobargo was a sitting duck at a time of drought, overburdened fuel loads, turbulent winds and flying embers.

And I haven't had the heart to check a rumour that the town ran out of water just when its moment of truth had arrived. Without labouring the point, I hope that if we do have a fair-dinkum inquiry into why these fires were so extensive, so intense and so prolonged, the finger will be clearly pointed at an attitude that puts the turning of a buck *now* above all other considerations. That, in my opinion, is the only way we are truly going to recover from this appalling wake-up call.

Rod Wise  
Armidale

*(This article was abridged from the Brisbane-based national website 'Starts at 60')*



**Sad news** - the **2020 Cobargo Folk Festival** has been **postponed**. Several key volunteers on the organising team have lost their homes or their properties have been very badly fire-damaged. Many of our regular billeters have also lost their homes. They need to put their immediate efforts into recovering from this terrible disaster. Several festival volunteers have been closely involved in the relief and recovery effort and we simply don't have the physical and emotional strength to coordinate and deliver the festival on top of all this. Remember, it takes two weeks to prepare the actual site and many months of work before that to put everything in place. It was also important that we let a lot of our visiting performers know well in advance, so they could look for other gigs or delay their travel from overseas.

We are also concerned that the fire season still has a way to run and having many thousands of people on site at a time when there might be road closures elsewhere would have been reckless.

We are, however, planning a **Cobargo Folk Festival concert bushfire recover fundraiser in April** - a smaller version of Cobargo Folk Festival, with the support of many kind folk from around the country. This will be a massive day of concerts with a folk/country feel.

**Look out for an announcement soon!**

[cobargofolkfestival.com](http://cobargofolkfestival.com)

If you haven't heard yet, Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest is a WA mining magnate who, with his wife Nicola, has a high-profile philanthropic organisation called the Minderoo Foundation. Minderoo provides resources to bushfire-affected communities to help them recover and function in a sustainable manner.

I talked to one of the main people on the ground, Mal James, who is visiting countless small towns, villages and tiny settlements to hear stories of devastation, needs and wants. Minderoo is in partnership with large charitable organisations like the Salvation Army and has the ear of local, state and federal governments.

One day last month he was introduced to 15 Cobargo business people at the pub with a variety of concerns regarding the present and the future of Cobargo and environs. A few days later I sat with Mal over a cup of tea. He seemed like a man who has been listening forever – a man who would look you in the eye, and you'd feel

If I turn my back on the Forest in this very moment when She is burnt to cinders and it appears that life has been extinguished, then I am not a true friend.

If I turn away now because it pains me to see the charcoal embers of my dream, turned to ash in my mouth, then I am committing betrayal.

For this garment that She wears now, the Little Black Number, the ashes-to-ashes killer outfit, is another frock in the wardrobe of the life of Forest.

It is my call to find the Beauty within, to see the promise that is held in waiting, to hold true, stand fast, cradle the seed of tomorrows and acknowledge the whispers of renewal.

If I am a true friend and wish to remain impeccable then I must stay, observe and witness this phase of devastation. I honour your courage in Burning, burning standing, burning falling collapsing, giving all in the face of the fire goddess.

Your loss is my loss. Your pain is

## Minderoo rolls into town

heard. I asked him what Minderoo could do for Cobargo.

He told me about potential new ways to rebuild the community, including working around established bureaucracies. For Mal this means meeting with the great variety of groups that form Cobargo, including retail and service businesses, farmers, schools, artists, musicians, the elderly, volunteers and community groups. Everyone will be listened to in order to rebuild the town, the homes, the shops and the sheds. And yes, this includes those who live 'out the back', people who feel they live on the edge of society and perhaps don't deserve the gift.

Mal was instrumental in assisting in the rebuilding of towns in Victoria after the Black Saturday fires. He believes it is about the community, what they want and need to rebuild better. He is ready to hear from us and has made a two-year commitment of support. Mal can be contacted at [www.firefund.org](http://www.firefund.org) – so get together, talk about

## It was New Year's Eve

my pain.

I, who have heard your screams, will weep hot tears of sacred water for your loss. I will croon sweet songs of lament and sorrow, of hope and resurrection to Her.

Together we shall hold hands and gently, tenderly heal our broken hearts, our broken skin, our blistered and fevered minds. Together we will sing of a new life emerging, a new dance awakening, a new song singing.

This I have learned: the roaring of an approaching fire is hugely loud and immensely frightening. I have learned that fire dances, plays with air, tussles with water and scalds earth, behaves erratically, mysteriously, beyond our plans and ideas.

I have learned that humans are resourceful and brave, that our differences become nothing, that over a fence the farmer and the forest lover can hug and cry together, pleased to see survival in the other.

I have learned that humans are kind,



Minderoo's Mal James in conversation

what we as a community want, and see where Minderoo can help.

Linda Sang  
Cobargo

caring and helpful in times of crisis.

For all the creatures burnt to a crisp or asphyxiated I weep, for all that have survived and returned I rejoice. As the days go on there are turtles at the dam, wallabies, wombats, echidnas, goannas; there is rufous fantail, grey fantail, magpie, whip bird, kookaburra, boobook owl, crimson rosella and yellowtail black cockatoo.

I pay homage to the ancestors, the spirits of land, air, sea and fire, to the angels and wisdom voices, to all that have supported, protected, held me in their embrace. To all of You I give thanks.

I have a dream ... within this flame there is the possibility of Deep Change—effecting renewal, redemption, salvation even—at the very least an opportunity to take stock, to come clear about who and where we are, redesign how we think, how we build, how we create, what we need, what we can have, and who we may become.

Sandra Taylor  
Wandella

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Where do I start? ‘Fire sweeps through town, a dozen houses destroyed’ or ‘Quaama mourns loss of historic church’ or ‘Prime Minister’s Quaama visit makes international news’ or ‘NSW Premier holds town meeting in Quaama park’? Maybe ‘Volunteers prove to be our most valuable resource’ or ‘Local heroes fight to save the village’. For the smallest town represented in *The Triangle*, we sure do have a lot to say this month.

The culmination of this years-long drought wreaked havoc on our village. Some lost very little, some lost everything, especially our neighbours west of the highway, but no one has been left unchanged. *The Triangle* wishes all the strength and support in the world for those badly affected.

There have been so many heroes in all this, I won’t start a list in case I miss anyone. I know the old families played a huge role. They stayed to defend and moved from their own homes to neighbouring homes saving whatever they could. I know the Blanchfield brothers were hard at it and Norm was seen roaming the village on his quad, with a tank and a wand, putting out spot fires. Who knows how many more homes might have gone up if they had been left to get away? And his mum Mayda was seen sitting in front of their house hosing it down while drinking a cuppa. She was here for the fires that tore through town in 1952. They’re made of stronger stuff than I am!

And did our furies ever have their work cut out for them! They have worked tirelessly to do what they could to protect us. While they couldn’t do much when facing a bushfire raging towards

Quaama at 3am, they’ve been hard at it, doing back burning and other containment measures to bring it under control. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude and we hope that this terrible event will result in them getting more support both from the government and from local residents in the form of new volunteers.

Nardy House was caught out like the rest of us and had to evacuate residents in the wee small hours. What an epic task! Well done to the staff there for keeping everyone safe and to the furies for helping them get to safety.

We lost our church—sad. It was a beautiful building that went right back to the early days of our village. But the congregation lives on and we still have our Hall, the shop and the school so we have much to be grateful for.

Yes, the Prime Minister did come to our fire shed and it did make international news. While I won’t bang on about politics, let’s just say that his ‘selling a lump of coal’ style wasn’t well received by our Quaama Fire Brigade volunteers who were on the front lines. The Premier presented a softer tone and appeared to hear voices from outside her party. We can only hope that all our politicians listen to all Australians, not just those with their own views. Personally I hope they throw out the special interest groups and invite in some scientific brains to help us solve the many challenges we’re facing going forward. We need to be the clever country now more than ever and we need clear, decisive and brave leadership.

Our community of ‘all sorts’ has banded together to help and support each other way above and beyond anything I could have imagined—neighbours helping neighbours and strangers helping us too! So much so that we had to re-direct trucks that came here in convoys from all over Australia to give us what we might not have in this time of need. Wow. I’m sure most of you have visited the hall to see it bursting with goods. And all the volunteer organisations and government departments have been there assisting in the recovery effort. There have been lovely meals put on daily, even free massages to help us cope! A big shout-out to Veronica and Warren Abbott and the other volunteers and friends that have put so much time in to make these resources available to us.

How many of you will review your fire plans after all this? I sure will. The RFS have been telling us for years now what we need to do to prepare our homes for such an event, what we need



Fire destroyed several of our town's oldest homes

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Karma, a Tibetan visiting Kamalashila Buddhist Centre in Tilba from his home in Queens, New York, cooked dinner along with his team in the Quaama Hall kitchen last month to help our community in recovery.



Volunteers from the ADF who came here to help open roads and tidy up, joined the community they're here serving over a dinner infused with Karma's good cheer.

to have on hand, when to leave if we're choosing to go. After I evacuated, I realised that I should have packed a swag. No one ever mentioned that I'd be camping! Duh! All I grabbed was my dog, computer disks, trinkets, toiletries and some clothes.

And think about all the things you'll need when you return home to no power and no telecommunications. Who else will never be without a generator in the shed going forward? And torches and batteries, candles, a charger for the car and a transistor radio? So many lessons learned. And perhaps you learned that while you had prepared for the fight and stayed to defend, you might not have been prepared mentally or emotionally for the task. There is no shame in learning that the instinct we all have to protect ourselves by running to safety overwhelms the rational person that made plans to stay. I evacuated and was still terrified by the failure of dawn to break and the blood red sky that followed, all while safely camped inside a show ground. So much to digest.

And while this fire season is not over, we have had a pretty

extensive hazard reduction burn done for us so it feels far less likely that we'll be subjected to fire again in the short term. But to quote the furies, we must remain vigilant. This won't be over until the fires have been put out by some substantial, drought-breaking rain and we move out of summer into autumn. Fingers crossed.

And for some non-fire-related news, our friend Brodie Rixon on Bermaguel Street was laid up in Westmead Children's Hospital after surgery on his hip. He'd been limping for a while and, thanks to his mum Beck's continued persistence at Bega Hospital, has finally been properly diagnosed and action has been taken. We wish him a speedy recovery.

I love this tiny town. I love it now more than ever. Our community has a long road ahead to rebuild what's been lost but I know that we will. I hope that everyone has found the support they need. If you're struggling there are many people and agencies here to help. Don't hesitate to ask, to use what's on offer. Strength and best wishes to all of us.

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## Vale Quaama Anglican Church 7/11/1907 - 31/12/2019

Among the trauma of the loss of homes and livelihoods that occurred during the firestorm unleashed on our district in the small hours of New Year's Eve, came the destruction of one more building, the loss of which caused no injuries and no deprivation. It is one that, nevertheless, will leave a gaping hole, literally, figuratively and spiritually in the small village of Quaama.

The Anglican Church of St. Saviour's was dedicated on Thursday 7 November 1907 after many years of fundraising. It was a significant structure in those days and was the first to impose itself to the view of anyone travelling south through the village along what was then the undiverted Princes Highway.

A report on the opening in *The Cobargo Chronicle* stated, 'The Church is without doubt one of the prettiest on the South Coast... Luncheon was then partaken of, there being about 150 present. The Quaama Ladies left nothing to be desired.' Anyone who has experienced the catering for events there in recent years will confirm that some things haven't changed.

One of these events was the parish's annual Blessing of the Fire Fleet, which was frequently held at Quaama. One of



St Saviour's, c1907. With permission, from 'William Henry Corkhill's *Negatives of Glass*', book by Diana Watson, available at Bermagui Museum.

the greatest positives to come from those horrendous fires was that none of our RFS firefighters from Quaama, Brogo, Cobargo, Bermagui or Tilba was harmed.

The heat of the fire left almost nothing of what was in the church, and only twisted remains of its structural ironwork. The fine Inskip memorial window, dedicated with the church in 1907, was vaporised. Most of the brassware too. A small melted blob is all that remains of the solid brass cross

that graced the altar. Parts of the offertory plate, a fragment of a memorial plaque that we should be able to identify from records, most of the top of the candle snuffer (we also found the fire extinguisher!) and sundry other items have been gleaned from the ashes.

In the corner of the grounds, the bell still hangs in its little tower, ready to ring again.

Along with the building go the memories of the 112 years that it has served the people of Quaama. Nonetheless, worship is continuing in Quaama, even if under the open sky.

The church building rendered one last service at its destruction. Richard Parker, churchwarden and local fire brigade member, was alone defending his home, which is close next door. He witnessed the church absorbing the tremendous blast of heat and flame that was coming for him, enabling him to save his home.

Alan Burdon and Fiona Kotvojs  
Dignams Creek



Blessing of the local fire fleets at Quaama Anglican Church, 2019. The church was destroyed in the New Year's Eve fires but the RFS members came through uninjured.

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## In the line of fire

**1.30 am**, New Year's Eve. We're woken by the FiresNearMe text. I hear a vehicle down on the road, coming in from the forest. Then another, and soon it's constant.

**2 am**. We're backing down the driveway, in two cars. I have the dogs, food for them, water, my walker, and Hansa has my scooter, our documents bag and the go-bag, which has been sitting in a corner for weeks. Down at the Quaama fire shed an RFS guy stops us.

Do you know anyone out at Verona? he says.  
Plenty, why?  
Lots of homes are threatened. We can't get out there, not enough of us.  
Later, too late, I wonder if he wanted us to ring and warn them.  
I say to him, We want to go to Bega.  
Well, the fire's jumped the highway down at Israels Road.  
Then I suppose we're not going to Bega?  
No, you'll probably make it if you leave now. Go. If there are flames on the road, stop and come back.

So we go. Hansa passes me just out of town and I watch his tail lights and drive.

On top of McLeod Hill, hot, fragrant dust blows into the car. I close the window. Then we're down the hill and past Israels Road. A red glow to our right. Past the roadblock at the Snowy Mountains Highway, then we're in Bega.

**9 am**. We knew that our neighbours of twenty years, Jim and Cathy Blanchfield, were planning to stay home and defend. I ring their landline and to my relief Cathy answers. Jim's still out there, she says. They saved your house. Jim and Rachel. Here's Rachel now ... and then I hear Rachel Miller's voice. I'll just go over to your place, she says. And then she's walking around and describing what she sees. Woodpile, gone. Back gate, gone. Veggie garden, smouldering. Yep, she says, your house is untouched.

The fire, it went through like a bullet, Jim tells us later. Through the paddock behind us, along our back fence line. Like a bullet.

**1 January**. We try to get home, get turned back at the Cooma turn-off.

**2 January**. We try again and this time they wave us through. No obvious damage until the approach to Quaama, then blackened paddocks and scorched trees. Crossing the Dry River bridge, the riverbanks black and bare.

At the Quaama Store, people mill around,

looking shell-shocked. Long, tight hugs all around. The Store, the Hall and the school are intact. Our vital signs, our heartbeat. The church and thirteen homes are gone. Jim and Rachel saved four houses, it turns out, with Jim's underground water tank, fire pump and hoses. Norm Jamieson charged around the village on his quad bike, putting out spot fires with a tank of water and a weed-sprayer. Akshara saved his Gordon Street house then raced through to Bega Street where he saved two more, the second one by waving down a fire truck and pointing out a tree ablaze beside it—flat on his back on the roadside, physically spent. There will be more such stories.

**17 January**. So here we've been, ever since. After a couple of days there was mains water—with a boil notice, the disinfection unit had been damaged. After another ten days, power. But, every day, reminders that we're not alone. Trucks arrive full of food, drinking water, fodder and hardware. Cooks turn up at the Hall supper room to prepare community dinners. Three strapping young soldiers knock at our door one day, asking if we need help. BlazeAid were at the Hall on Wednesday. And an acupuncturist.

Smoke blows in, clears away, and blows back again, at the mercy of the winds.

*Jen Severn,  
Quaama*

## A message from The Honourable Mike Kelly AM MP

Thank you to The Triangle for affording me this opportunity to send a message of support to the local community.

During a recent visit to the Cobargo Showgrounds Relief Centre, the scale of the effort that has gone into supporting this community was brought home to me. The generosity of the donors, and the tireless and caring efforts of the local volunteers, is inspiring. While I was there, a convoy rolled in from Bathurst with a full load of farm equipment, a great example of Aussies looking after our own.

Another great story to emerge from this fire tragedy has been the tremendous efforts of Kelly Eastwood and her team at Eastwood Deli and Cooking School in Bermagui, supported by an army of volunteers and the incredible World Central Kitchen organisation. They have turned out many hundreds of prepared meals for evacuees and responders throughout this crisis.

During the crisis, I have been in constant contact with Councils, Telstra, the fire services, police, a Reference Group of local members and disaster authorities and many other agencies, businesses, NGOs and community groups.

I want to pass on my best wishes to everyone, if you require any Federal Government assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my Bega Electorate Office on 02 6492 0542 or email me at [mike.kelly.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:mike.kelly.mp@aph.gov.au).



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A message from the NSW VRA Commissioner Mark Gibson ESM

The NSW VRA have been involved with the bushfire event since 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019. It has been very challenging but rewarding to be able to assist all emergency services and communities during this fire event. The fire event we experienced and managed has never been seen in this magnitude before. People have lost homes, sheds, vehicles, toys, memorabilia and unfortunately lives.

We remember the people who have lost their lives trying to save their properties or who could not escape the inferno. We pay respect to all those fire fighters, regardless of what agency for their tireless efforts in saving what property and civilians they could. We need to also pay great respect for those employers who allowed our volunteers to assist in fighting the fires. It is with great respect that I acknowledge the contribution to those people who have donated goods, services & money to assist those emergency service workers on the fire ground and the people within these communities

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## Quaama Public School—open for Term One!

As the incoming principal of Quaama Public School, I am so sorry for the trauma and devastation that the community has experienced over the last few weeks. These events will have an ongoing impact on the school and community, but I'm confident that the amazing humanity already in evidence in Quaama and across many other small towns will ease the pain.

As for the school, information is coming through slowly from higher authorities. This is what we know so far:

The school is currently being assessed for damage. Once it's given the all clear,

an industrial cleaning crew will undertake a thorough clean, inside and out (your support in staying off school grounds until further notice would be greatly appreciated).

School will start as planned on Wednesday 29 January

Some parts of the school playground will be out of bounds to start the year

Many organisations have been offering us donations. Backpacks are being organised for students, to help them with their return to school. Children are likely to come home with a bag of goodies!

We are arranging counsellors for staff and students to support them as they return to school. We will confirm exact dates as soon as we know more.

Quaama PS staff will do everything we can to ensure that the children's social, emotional and educational needs are met during this challenging time.

I look forward to meeting and talking with all students and their families in the very near future.

*Daniel Roe  
Relieving Principal  
Quaama Public School*

### My family's story

Chris got evacuated from Quaama on the 31st and then we got evacuated to Bermagui. We stayed the night at Bermagui Country Club evacuation centre, and can't thank the Country Club staff enough. They were amazingly kind and helpful.

We then spent three nights in the Bega evacuation centre due to the risk at Bermagui. We were very lucky, our house was saved by the incredible Quaama RFS and our wonderful neighbour. Everyone at the Bega evacuation centre was amazing. We even had a circus show for the kids (other evacuees ran this to brighten the spirits of the kids). With three kids there were a few tricky days but the support was amazing.

After a few days with friends we are now at my parents' place in Bermagui until the asbestos from our next-door neighbour's

burnt house in Quaama is cleared. We are longing to go home but love my parents for their patience and kindness. To keep busy (and feel useful) I am making school bags for kids of Quaama who have lost everything.

*Coralie Pickering  
Quaama*

*(Eds: Coralie, we heard that sometime that night your wonderful neighbour noticed that your chook house was alight. He went over, released the birds and doused the fire. It seems that one grateful chook made the most of her freedom, scratched together a little nest outside said neighbour's back door and left fresh eggs there daily for the next week or so.)*

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As I sit down to write, many thoughts buzz around in my head about where we are now as a community and what has happened as one year finished and the next one started. While it has been an intense and stressful time, it has also been an exhilarating time with lots of amazing instances of generosity, compassion and humanity. One thing is certain – we are all changed.

In the lead-up to Christmas, the Tilba community had a very active time. The School of Arts had two successful community fundraising nights – a music trivia night and the annual Hairy Concert, the Central Tilba School had its Presentation Night where awards were given and the four Year Six boys were honoured and farewelled, the Tilba CWA hosted the Christmas carols, and the Yuin Nation had an amazing dance gathering at the Tilba Sportsground to heal country and bring rain. While all this was happening we were very aware of the situation in the north of the State and praying that we would miss out. To help the community prepare, the Central Tilba RFS held a community briefing where the situation was explained in detail and people could ask questions.

And then Tuesday, 31 December loomed, dark and foreboding.

Many people in the community had been preparing their properties in the days and weeks before. The speed with which the fire had spread gave us all an idea of what could be expected and many made the hard decision to leave and seek refuge in surrounding towns, especially Narooma. During that day we heard of the devastation to our neighbours in the Triangle area and with limited communications we were concerned about friends and loved ones.

Events since then have blurred together so their sequence is now unclear. However, what is clear is the ways in which our small community worked to support

and care for each other. Our local RFS held regular community meetings to make sure we were up to date – these were held initially in the street outside the Dromedary pub and then later at the Fire Shed. Jason Snell (Bruce Allen, Brigade Captain, has been working in Area Command) ran these valuable meetings surrounded by other brigade members, disseminating information competently, explaining RFS activities, giving useful advice and answering questions in a reassuring and supportive manner.

To be able to gather as a community in this way has proved invaluable – it has been a chance to get up-to-date information as a counter to misinformation; those who have been staying away from home were able to get an idea of what was happening by dropping in for the meetings; neighbours could check on each other; people new to the community got a chance to meet others and feel part of this special community; friendships have been strengthened or new ones made; and many much-needed hugs and expressions of support were exchanged. These meetings were critical, too, for communication, as power was out and mobile reception was very limited.

While it's not possible to know all the amazing things that happened, there are a few things worth noting. In the days between the critical times when weather patterns suggested increased fire activity, there was a lot of activity in both Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba as those whose properties were fire-ready helped others to prepare. This was suggested and ably coordinated by John McMahon, Central Tilba resident, whose previous service and expertise in the ADF was invaluable. Many gardens had a good summer prune and there are now many burn heaps on farms close to Central Tilba, thanks to Robyn (on Marshmead) and Grant (Tilba Farm). Ken and Linda Jamieson at Bates General Store opened their doors as soon as possible, when the power was back on—much-needed petrol and diesel were available in small amounts, in many cases enough to get by until supply returned, as well as a good coffee.

Others in the community have been volunteering in Narooma and Cobargo, where there is major support for those who have lost their homes and much more. The Tilba Market returned for a short time on Saturday, 11 January, with fresh produce



Community meeting at the Central Tilba Fire Shed on 5 January

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only, giving locals much-appreciated time together – at the same time, Peter Lonergan opened for coffee and was inundated!

Of major concern for the villages of Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba was the availability of water for firefighting. Our RFS Brigade worked hard with the community to establish the issues for each village and was able to secure a satisfactory solution for both villages.

Much has been learned in this time, about ourselves as individuals, about our communities and about our nation. We have a sense of our strengths and these will be tested as we recover and support those whose lives have been shattered by these fires. We better understand and value our amazing emergency services who work so

tirelessly to keep us safe. We also have a sense of where the gaps are – some of these things are within our means to change, such as our own practical preparedness. Others will require a lot of consideration and work as we better understand our future. Our small businesses, which rely so much on this time of year, will need our support.

Living in a small community like Tilba (and all small communities in the Triangle area) is special and often makes city folk yearn for that sense of community that is so evident. Belonging to community makes us strong and resilient with the capacity to respond to the kinds of situations that we have been experiencing. It also makes us vulnerable as we face threats to our chosen way of life and to our

community. Combining our community strength and our vulnerability enables us to support each other through the best times and to seek ways to recover and move forward through the worst times.

Here's such an opportunity. The Tilba community is invited to a 'Second Wind' gathering on Sunday 2 February at Tilba Tilba Sports Oval, from 5.30 pm onwards. BYO everything for a relaxing picnic with friends. In case of inclement weather, the venue will be the Central Tilba Hall.

This is a time to re-group and enjoy each other's company. For more information contact John McMahon 0488 221 113 or Annette Kennewell 0417 203 610.

## Tilba CWA Community News

It's hard to remember anything before this New Year's devastating bushfires. I'm trying to focus on a 'Hopeful New Year' but I'm struggling to manage my grief and anger at the tragic loss of life, both human and wild. Although Tilba CWA members did not lose property, everyone has been affected by the horror of this bushfire disaster.

It's important we show gratitude to those who helped, and although saying 'thank you' is not enough, it's a start. Thank you to our RFS volunteers for all the work you do to protect our community. Thank you to Robyn Lucas for her leadership in alerting Tilba community and CWA members to volunteer in Cobargo to support our neighbours. Thank you to Jody Vassallo for arranging a special CWA morning tea in Quaama. Thank you to Zoe Burke for coordinating our craft morning for members to sew wallaby pouches for injured wildlife over a cuppa and chat. Thank you to Helene Sharpe for sharing information on emotional recovery after a fire plus bushfire aid and grants. Thank you to Cas Mayfield for updating our Tilba

CWA Facebook page with a list of places to contact for emergency help. Thank you to all CWA members and everyone in our community for your continuing help and kindness.

### Humming the Songlines - Gulaga Mountain

Tilba CWA, in collaboration with local Yuin women Lynne Thomas and Lynette Goodwin, plus Gulaga Reconciliation and Open Sanctuary, are celebrating International Women's Day on Sunday 8 March at Tilba Tilba Oval. Humming in the bosom of Gulaga is a beautiful expression of reconciliation and acknowledgment of our past. We will harness the power of the local Indigenous connection to mother mountain Gulaga, and the power of women to heal. By reconnecting the songlines to country, it will help us heal our own spirit as well as the spirit of the land. This is an inclusive event and everyone is welcome.

Please join Tilba CWA for a cuppa and chat or come along to one of our meetings.

Annette Kennewell,  
President, Tilba CWA

## Tilba Halls

Our thoughts are with the Cobargo community especially and other communities throughout NSW and Victoria during this difficult time.

The Central Tilba School of Arts Trust committee will meet again in February after some downtime to plan for 2020.

Our halls will be available as usual for community and wider community functions and events.

Janine Halasz



Mike Roberts from BMO massage will be in the Tilba markets on Saturdays to give a free ten minute seated massage to anyone who could use one.

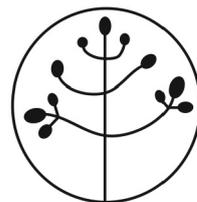
### CARERS "LOOK AFTER YOURSELF" (LAY) REMINDER

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## News from Kamalashila Buddhist Centre, Tilba

Our Centre, its buildings, wildlife and gardens remained safe during the bush fires. We are grateful for all the prayers and good wishes from our local community.

On Sunday 12 January we gathered for a special compassion meditation, including reciting soothing mantras and prayers. People came from as far away as Canberra. The group focused on all those sentient beings who have lost so much. We prayed for pain and suffering to be eased. We asked for equanimity, peace of mind and contentment to grow within all our lives. The group recognised the generosity, compassion and service that so many offered during this devastating period. We acknowledged our members who shared their homes with others.

We also noted with gratitude what has been saved from the fires in our local towns. We prayed for the people that have passed, those suffering injuries or illnesses. We also prayed for the pets, livestock and wildlife that have been injured or lost, or those that have died.

Our meeting was followed by a tasty lunch cooked by Karma. It had been challenging to focus on the meditation, as the wonderful aromas from the kitchen wafted through. As I left the Centre, Karma was busy cooking food to take to the Quaama community. I could see him adding his kindness to the meals. Karma mirrored the amazing energy and service we have experienced from so many volunteers from all beliefs.

Everyone is welcome at Kamalashila. We are open every Sunday and Tuesday at 10.00 am for guided meditation. This is followed by morning tea or a shared lunch. Volunteers work in the gardens on Tuesdays. Retreats will continue throughout the year. Accommodation is available, local day visitors are also welcome.



**Karma made dinner for the Quaama community at the Hall and the ADF got wind of it ...**

Our first 2020 evening program runs for seven weeks, beginning on 24 January. The teacher is Tony Agnew, a practitioner for more than 30 years. The focus is on an introduction to Buddhism and meditation. This is also an opportunity to re-establish your meditation practice. All are welcome, concessions are available. For information on programs, see our Facebook page (Drogmi Institute) or website ([www.drogmi.org](http://www.drogmi.org)). Or email us at [info@drogmi.org](mailto:info@drogmi.org), or phone 0403 779 099.

*Ann Kelly and Deborah Taylor*

## From Four Winds

Like many of you, I have powerful memories of the last few weeks. I remember all too well the experience of waking in our house at Tilba on New Year's Eve to a dark sky under-lit by a fiery red glow. Danger seemed all around us. Then followed our first evacuation with children, grandchildren and houseguests to Narooma, the kindness of strangers who offered us refuge in the lobby of some holiday flats, the good Samaritan appearing later with sandwiches and bottled water, the general atmosphere of calm co-operation covering deeper fears about what would happen next.

Our second evacuation two days later saw us on the road to Sydney—a journey of 21 hours because the road north of Milton was blocked by fire. Driving in groups of

100 cars through a live fire zone at 2.30 in the morning, escorted by police, had a dangerous beauty—red against black—but at least we were safe.

We were lucky. Returning ten days later we could see how many had suffered terrible losses and faced frightening situations. Despite this, there was great spirit in the way people were reaching out to each other, telling the stories of their experiences, of their neighbours and friends. The need for human contact was strong and the connections were real and supportive. The human spirit can be a wonderful thing.

Now comes the time for thinking about re-building lives and communities. I am struck by the optimism, the willingness to offer help and the level of activity. The

attitude seems to be, 'One way or another, we are going to make this happen'.

I was enormously heartened to hear that there were plans underway for the Cobargo Folk Festival to go ahead later in the year.

At Four Winds we are determined to make our 2020 Easter Festival a great event. Visitors need to know that our communities are alive and well and that by coming they are giving us all great encouragement and financial support. I am an optimist; we will survive and re-build and come to look back with some pride on how we rose to the challenge of these difficult times.

*Michael Darling  
Chair, Four Winds*

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## Let's reverse Climate Change

Humans were a successful species because they looked after each other—the kind of thinking behind all community service (and we're so grateful to the RFS).

Unfortunately, some people lack empathy, true morality and generosity, look after themselves and ignore the rest of us. They are narcissists. With settlement, hierarchies developed. Narcissists rushed to gain power and riches. Look at dictators throughout history and you'll see how narcissists behave.

In psychological terms, they have trust and control issues. They have lived their childish fear, and failed to mature into adults.

Climate Change has been driven by

the pursuit of wealth and power. In order to keep their assets, the rich and powerful deny climate change is happening. If they lived on the land they would know that without topsoil, trees, rain and oxygen, we cannot have a healthy country that can sustain us.

Our priorities need to change so that everyone has a job, a home, food and a healthy life, and no-one has millions of dollars at their disposal to the detriment of our country and us all.

We also need to address facts: narcissists cannot value others, let alone represent them. They hijack democracy and make it work for them (through lying, accepting bribes, pushing their own agenda

and ignoring the common good). They disregard scientific evidence, the people and our country.

Any true representative would resign once it became obvious that they are thinking and acting in a self-serving way. We need to ensure our representatives are capable of representing us. They need to be grown-ups – which narcissists cannot be.

Bring on new elections with no narcissists standing, so we have wise leadership – people who act with integrity and will reverse Climate Change.

*Maggie Camfield  
Bermagui*

### Colours of a Sky

Now I have seen the darkened sky,  
A red sun,  
Whirling black ash,  
Pelting in the wind.

Now I have seen  
Fear in my horses' eyes,  
Had to centre and calm myself to feed them,  
As the night plunged into a fire-strewn afternoon sky.

We left,  
Returned,  
Left,  
Returned.

Radio-soothed nerves,  
As we sat the night out -  
Watching horizons,  
Sleepless til the  
Soothe of dawn sky.

Days pass now in the eerie after-days,  
A straggle of agapanthus comforts,  
Burstingly turning purple faces to the sun,  
After replenishing rain.

Gentle jacaranda mauves fall with grace,  
And Illawarra flame drops its red cups  
For an army of bees near the ground.

Winds and colours,  
Scents and sounds,  
Vistas and elements,  
Despite our fear -  
Time's eternal seasons still spin.

We go on,  
Each transformed by what we have heard, seen,  
smelt.  
Breathing into a new world,  
Unknown, fragile, unclear.

Driving today through familiar forests  
I hoped the trees would not be made wrong,  
The forest would not be labelled dangerous,  
The winds would not be called hostile.

Nature is expressing herself, he told me, as the  
high winds tore up the coast.  
Nature does not need us.  
We need her.

*Virginia Sada York,  
Central Tilba*

Usually, in the first edition of the year, we would all be wishing everyone a very Happy New Year, with the hopes and dreams of a great year ahead. Well, honestly ... it can only get better from now on.

New Year 2020 will be one that Bermagui and our Triangle towns will never forget. Usually, my 'banter' for summer would be about all the holiday makers in town, how busy it is - the usual holiday stuff. But February 2020 is a totally different kettle of fish indeed. The town is virtually empty, the Lake is silent (except for the water-bombing planes), the restaurants are uncrowded, plenty of parking spots and you can have the surf all to yourself.

Our town is starting to get back to normal ... our *new* normal, unlike any other summer holiday season. This catastrophe will affect all our businesses for a long time to come. Not only business, but those individuals who rely on the summer casual jobs, having some spare cash on hand to get the kids back to school, pay a few bills or stocking up for the year ahead.

### Thank you to so many

Thank you. Those two words just seem inadequate when we think of the gratitude and appreciation every resident and every tourist in town feels towards so many people who were involved in our evacuations and safety. But we must just say it over and over again, and acknowledge the following:

To all our emergency service volunteers who went beyond the call of duty to protect our homes and our communities. To all the RFS volunteers, both local and those who came from far off areas ... we say Thank You.

To our SES, Marine Rescue and Surf Club Volunteers, who used their skills and training to pitch in and help when and where needed, we say Thank You.

To our one and only police officer ... who worked behind the scenes for the safety of this town, working an incredible 100 hours virtually non-stop in the week following NYE ... we say Thank You.

To our wonderful Surf Club and all its members, who once again swung into action as the evacuation centre for Bermagui, dispensing water, fruit, food, tea, coffee, dog food and water for pets, and giving a reassuring hug wherever possible ... we say Thank You.

To the local Red Cross members who took evacuee registrations to ensure everyone was recorded during the crisis of NYE ... and for dispensing food and hugs ... we say Thank You.

To every accommodation provider – motels, cabins, holiday flats – who offered free accommodation to locals who decided to stay, and to the many individuals who sheltered friends and strangers who were evacuated to town ... we say Thank You.

To all the food outlets, supermarkets, restaurants who donated thousands of dollars' worth of food to the evacuation centre. A lot of this food was bought prior

to the holiday period to keep the visitors fed – and would have been thrown out when the power failed. And to *Trapman* who gave away kilos of fresh fish for free ... we say Thank You.

To the Bermagui Country Club, who gave over the entire club to the RFS as its co-ordinating headquarters in Bermagui, then provided reliable power, food and a place to sleep for many RFS volunteers. And to the band of locals who stayed in Bermagui and helped feed the RFS personnel at the club ... we say Thank You.

To the Bega Valley Shire Council, particularly the Mayor, who kept every community in the Shire informed and updated constantly, and the wonderful local ABC whose continual broadcasts of information were a godsend... we say Thank You..

To the people who staffed the Relief Centre at the Sports Stadium, who dispensed food and water and, as one volunteer clearly stated in big letters on her apron ... FREE HUGS! ... We say Thank You.

To the World Central Kitchen



Some of the blokes from the Bermagui Men's Shed helping Cobargo resident Renee Dove clean up her property after the fire passed through. Luckily, her house was undamaged.

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organisation, who took over Eastwood's Deli as its headquarters and kitchen, and to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly, producing some 900 meals a day to be distributed from Batemans Bay to the border ... we say Thank You.

To every resident in Bermagui, who was quick with a hug for friends, who took people into their homes, comforted them, plied them with cups of tea and conversation, and who generally just cared about our community ... we say Thank You.

To the Bermagui Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, who are working hard to ensure that our businesses recover from the loss of income and find as much

assistance, both financial and emotional, to ensure they continue to serve this wonderful community ... we say Thank You.

To those individuals and groups who continue to pitch in to help people clean up the mess after the fires in Cobargo and Quaama. They turn up with chain saws, trailers, utes and tools to clean up gardens and properties... we say Thank You.

To whoever, or whatever organisation I have failed to mention ... we do Thank You.

The fires that ringed Bermagui on New Year's Eve brought out an amazing and generous community spirit. People would acknowledge strangers, a mere nod

of the head or smile to say we all went through this together, and have come out the other side a strong, resilient, caring community.

It's now up to us to get Bermagui back to normal. Our businesses are going to need us more than ever. Just a suggestion ... if you were able to claim an insurance payout for loss of food during the power blackout, consider spending it at our local butcher or at the Cobargo butcher when restocking your freezer. Big companies like Woolworths can withstand a loss from time to time, but our small local food outlets will appreciate your support.

## Bushfire resilience strategy

Thanks to the significant efforts of the fires, SES, police, BVSC, a couple of timely wind changes and the strength of so many people and organisations that have rallied to help, most of us in and around Bermagui have survived the bushfires to date relatively intact. Unfortunately others in nearby communities of Cobargo, Coolagolite and Quaama have lost lives, homes, businesses and livestock; our thoughts are with you.

While the bushfire experience is still raw with most of us and ongoing for the next three months with active fires present, the Bermagui Community Forum thinks it is important to seek input from the community on a bushfire resilience strategy that can be applied by the RFS and Council in future for Bermagui and surrounds. This bushfire resilience strategy should in part be incorporated into Council's Climate Resilience Strategy.

The strategy should address risks and practical issues faced by Bermagui and surrounds in a bushfire. Some items that could be included are:

- a highly visible and promoted community evacuation point;
- one go-to website for current bushfire information, eg BVSC;
- precautionary measures in and around your residence;
- list of priority items to take in an evacuation;
- regular reminders on bushfire readiness;
- identification of elderly and other residents at risk;
- identification of key people to organise the town.

At a strategic level, power outages, phone outages, fuel and other essential supplies, clearance of ground around towns, etc need to be addressed.

We would appreciate the community's feedback and input on this issue.

Please put your views forward at our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/bermaguiforum/](http://www.facebook.com/bermaguiforum/) or email [bermaguiforum@gmail.com](mailto:bermaguiforum@gmail.com).

*Management Committee,  
Bermagui Community Forum*

*A Bermagui resident*

## When the dust settles ... what then?

I was scared out of my wits during the fires. We evacuated from out of town to Bermagui on NYE and stayed for 12 days. I put on a pretend brave face and was one of those who stopped people I didn't know, asked if they were OK, gave out hugs and cried with those who lost family, friends, homes, animals, livelihoods. We were so lucky and suffered little consequence from the fires apart from a very smoky house covered in ash and some food spoilage.

Nearly three weeks on and I'm crumbling. I worry about hot days and wind direction. I cover my eyes if there's something on TV about the bushfires and I can't bring myself yet to do Facebook. Someone asked me a couple of days ago, 'How are you?' and I burst into tears. I thought I was a tough old bird but turns out I'm not. There have to be so many people who don't realise how this disaster has affected them. It's life-changing. Seek a professional who can help you through it—even if you think you're OK.



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## Is this the new normal?

What is going on? The clock says 7 am but must be wrong, the sky is still dark. No, the sky is dark red, the smoke is close and thick. What is happening? Is this it? Is this the end?

When the power stops, all communication is lost. No phone, no internet, no TV, no information about the progress of the fires, which roads are closed and which services are still operating. No power to recharge, cook or have hot showers – and the fridge is slowly but surely defrosting. The only way to know what is happening is to attend those community meetings. There are a lot of rumours too. It's hard to differentiate between the real and fake.

Community meetings provide up-to-date information—as much as the services know themselves—and an opportunity for locals to voice their concerns. But we are now divided into the leavers and the stayers. We can only do so much to prepare our house, and if it's as bad as they're saying it won't make any difference anyway. For us and our family it's better to get out and be safe.

Being an evacuee is a weird experience.

There's only a simple registration process. It all seems pretty organised – but such a lot of people, living so closely together. Food is available all day, hot drinks, bedding, hot showers, soap and shampoo. Pets are welcomed too with food and other necessities—dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, guinea pigs ... even a stick insect. People have brought their most precious things with them – a blanket, a pillow, favourite plants, instruments, a record player, computers. We finally have power to recharge phones and computers, and coverage, so we can contact loved ones and find out the true extent of the fire damage, and predictions for the coming days.

My heartfelt thanks go to the volunteers and organisers at the evacuation centres who always greet us with a smile. They're trying to provide a pleasant place to spend this uncertain time, and they must be tired too.

At the evacuation centre people are feeling a bit fragile and unsure but everyone is trying to get along. People are sleeping in their cars, caravans, trailers or the hall. Those who can't face the dormitory-style sleeping arrangements in the hall, sleep under trees, under a tarp,

under the stars.

After a few days, though, nerves are frayed ... the neighbours who constantly moan, the woman who reproaches me for washing my hair, the queueing, the constant smoke in the air, the worry, the people who don't pick up after their dogs ... little things become big things.

Then the weather changes – the heat and dusty, hot wind, then the drizzle. It's cooler, but instead of dust we now have mud – everywhere. But still the smoke, thick and gritty—you can taste it.

Is this going to be the new normal? So much destruction, so many fires. How can we fire-proof our land to prepare for this new future? Is it too late?

*Debbie Worgan  
Wallaga Lake*

A neighbour called around on the first extreme day after New Year's Eve.

Me: If your deck catches fire, you come straight around!

Him: My what?

Me: Your deck!

Him: Oh, I thought you were talking Kiwi...

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## A refugee in Canberra

I never thought I'd be a refugee, let alone in my own country. It's an eerie feeling, a lonely, desperate feeling. When we arrived in Canberra, everything seemed normal—apart from the appalling smoke. We were fortunate to stay with family in Weston Creek.

We drove to Cooleman Court to get some things we had forgotten to bring. The carpark was as normal, pretty full, with people going about their daily shopping. So why am I feeling like this? Because nothing is 'normal' anymore! Our eastern mountain range has just been decimated! The whole township of Bermagui has been evacuated! Climate change has come home to roost! And people are being 'normal'?

I asked the chemist about my medications. I said I was from Bermagui but had no prescriptions. He immediately made up new medications from the boxes I showed him. Bless him. My regular blood test was due and I went to my previous doctor in Chapman. He welcomed me, gave me a blood test, didn't charge me and gave me a hug. He had lost his house in the 2003 Canberra fires. People are kind to me.

But I was angry—actually furious. It took us eight hours to drive to Canberra, bumper to bumper through smog so thick we couldn't see beyond 50 metres. On either side were burnt paddocks and sticks of trees. Apocalyptic landscapes. Hours and hours of limited vision. While there were patches of steady driving, the highway speed from Cooma to Canberra did not exceed 30 kph. This gave me time for my anger to ferment. Where is the PM? Why isn't there an administrator for this horrific emergency? Where is the leadership? What about our wildlife? The fires are fabulous but where is the direction from those further up in government?

And the climate denial, oh so wrong!

So here we were in Canberra, and I need some counselling, assuming my feelings must be misplaced. The evacuation centre in Dickson had professionals on hand to talk to and relate my story. I was so relieved. They too were angry. I am not alone.

We spent nine days in Canberra, not able to return because roads were closed. Family and locals were lovely to us. Anger and rage still simmered. There was a climate protest on Friday 10 January in Garema Place. I had to be there. I bought a canvas from the Reject Shop and painted my fury. Sean Burke and one of my sons became our buddies. I finally felt my fury ease once I was among so many other angry people fed up with ignorance and arrogance in non-policies and cut-backs suffered by National Parks.

*Kerry Davies  
Bermagui*



Kerry Davies and Sean Burke at the climate protest in Canberra

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## Fire, flame and flight

Being with my partner and a 20-month-old daughter on New Year's Eve was the scariest thing that has ever happened to me. Years ago, I had an intense adventure where I severed an artery and the doctors said I lost as much blood as you can and survive. That was a walk in the park compared to the early hours of NYE yet I feel guilty of my emotions then as many others experienced much worse.

I feared what might happen. Many thought a firestorm might rip through the town and the sky was either dark orange or almost like night.

I wondered which building would be the best situation; the stadium? or Club Narooma? There were fewer trees (fuel) near the stadium. The brick walls of the Club were less flammable yet there were only two exits. We decided to relocate to Club Narooma as I heard it had air con, which it didn't. But in this fight or flight mode, having chairs, even though there were no lights, it felt somewhat normal. As people poured in, smoke seemed to be getting thicker and there was less oxygen.

The Club was further from the inlet's water. I thought there were more people than the water could fit depending on

the tide and the unknown depth. As the sky turned into almost night and my eyes stung from ash I struggled to see with my sunglasses on and I had no safety goggles. I worried that, if we got into the water and I put a wet blanket over Aida's head she might panic and scream and breathe in more smoke and, with the limited space and panic, people may knock me over and she could fall in the water and I may not be able to grab her.

The main intensity passed and we heard that other areas in this beloved region had been hit. We were told we could get to either Sydney or Canberra which were both threatened by fires. The decision was hard as my daughter's and partner's life could be on the line. The thought of flame on my daughter's skin, of thinking we may not survive, was real.

Trauma doesn't just heal itself in an instant. There are layers to it and it can also bring previous trauma to the surface even if we had previously processed it. It takes time to change the chemistry of this kind of trauma. A week later at friend's place, a water pump went on and I jumped from the noise. Recovery will take time and awareness to truly settle without the burden

of unresolved fear.

Having only been here since July, I have made new friends from meeting people in the markets, and by my having a toddler and a shiatsu/massage/reiki practice. It feels like a five-minute conversation in that emergency situation made friends that would otherwise take months. This place is amazing and together we will work through this tragedy and the economic disaster many of us suffer even if our homes remain.

*Raven,  
Akolele*

Everybody knows that the boat is leaking  
Everybody knows the captain lied  
Everybody got this broken feeling  
Like their father or their dog just died

Everybody talking to their pockets  
Everybody wants a box of chocolates  
And a long stem rose  
Everybody knows

*Written by Leonard Cohen and  
Sharon Robinson,  
sung by Leonard Cohen*

*Thank you for your  
patience and  
understanding as we  
work on the huge  
recovery effort to  
restore power following  
the devastating  
bushfires across  
South East NSW.*



The fires that tore through South East NSW caused extensive damage to our network, with some areas needing to be completely rebuilt.

As we continue to make repairs and restore power we want to say thanks for the warm hospitality, assistance and support your community has shown towards our teams every day.

We would like to thank the Rural Fire Service, volunteers, emergency services, Australian Defence Force,

Councils, our suppliers, State and Federal Members of Parliament and the thousands of people who came together in the most harrowing circumstances to save their communities.

We also want to thank our own crews and local team members, many of whom have travelled south, leaving behind their own homes to help rebuild the network to get the power back on. More than 520 of our team members are working on the recovery effort.

As the restoration efforts continue, please be aware that fallen powerlines can be life-threatening. Stay at least 8 metres away and report them or any other incidents to us on **13 20 80**.

Stay updated with our bushfire restoration efforts at [essentialenergy.com.au/bushfire-updates](https://essentialenergy.com.au/bushfire-updates)



## The fire, from the back stalls

The mobile phone rang at 5.20 am. There was a bushfire approaching. Evacuate now. Go to the nearest town, Bermagui, six kilometres away. Now.

Three days earlier Trish had prepared a list of what to take: laptop, passports, bank account numbers. Surprising how brief the list becomes when confronted with the choice between what you might want to keep and what you will need to live. We packed what we needed: water, comfortable pillows, warm clothing, food.

The sky was black. It was not just the absence of stars, it was the blackness of being inside blackness. The air was thick and smoky, the ground littered with black and burnt leaves and black dust. A few street lights were visible through the dusk, car lights were on. The ocean, a kilometre away, was very noisy. By now the sky should be blue, the gold of the sunrise faded. But the sky was still black, and stayed that way until five hours after sunrise.

We made our way to Bermagui and

the Surf Life Saving Club. There were hundreds of cars, some towing caravans and large boats, tradesmen's utes, 4WDs, local farmers in trucks and locals in smaller vehicles. This was New Year's Eve, absolute peak time for the local tourism industry. The population was several times its normal 2000 people, and then there were people who were holidaying both to the south and north who had headed this way to escape bushfires there. There were teams for the George Bass Surf Boat Marathon but now surfboats were hitched to the back of big trucks. There were horse floats from an equestrian event at an inland town.

Out to sea, the sky was black, the only light a thin sliver of bright orange right on the horizon. To the west, the sky was a bright orange. We didn't realise it, but that was probably Cobargo on fire.

There was a tension in the air and facial expressions were tight; there was no aggression but an intense awareness that this situation was dangerous. Children were well-behaved, no tantrums, only the

smallest of babies would cry and as their mums would put them on the breast, they would quieten. The mums would have that calm, pleased, breastfeeding look. Whatever was happening in the world, whatever tragedies were unfolding, in this tiny corner of the world, babies were feeding as they had for millennia. Fires were burning as they had for millennia, but never so fiercely. This is the new reality.

*Keith Bashford  
Wallaga Lake*

There may be trouble ahead,  
But while there's music and moonlight,  
And love and romance,  
Let's face the music and dance  
Before the fiddlers have fled,  
Before they ask us to pay the bill,  
And while we still have that chance,  
Let's face the music and dance.

*Written by Irving Berlin,  
sung by Fred Astaire in 1931*

## Those magnificent men in their flying machines!

Who are these guys? Where do they come from? Such a magnificent effort from the water bombing aircraft that were buzzing Wallaga Lake for days and days last month.

Residents in Fairhaven and Beauty Point had a front row seat to the precision flying of these pilots as they skimmed the lake, picking up water for the nearby fires at the back of Dignams Creek. Locals were timing the frequency of these aircraft, sometimes logging an 11 minute

turnaround. It was both comforting and scary at the same time. For those keeping an eye on the sky, it was fantastic to see the aircraft picking up water to quench the fires, but scary at the same time wondering how close the fire front actually was.

For those who like a few statistics: the aircraft are a Fire Boss, highly modified single engine Air Tractor AT-802 fitted with amphibious floats, which allow the aircraft to scoop water into the hopper while aquaplaning across a water source,

in this case Wallaga Lake. The floats have a capacity of 3104 litres of water and can be filled in 14 seconds at a rate of 400 litres per second, while travelling at over 100 kilometres per hour.

Pretty impressive stuff! It was an absolute joy to see these two aircraft doing their bit – hats off to the highly skilled pilots who fly them. Thank you.

*Carolyn Banados*

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Precision flying as water is scooped up from Wallaga Lake (photo: Helen Lumb)

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THE TRIANGLE

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<p><b>Building Services</b>  <b>Bermagui Bathrooms</b>            Complete bathroom renovations            Phone: <b>0411 017 677</b>  <b>Tietz Holdings P/L</b> Lic. No. 279917C</p>	<p><b>Electrical Services</b>  <b>Anthony Kelly Electrical</b>            For all your electrical needs. Reliable prompt            service. No job too small. Fully insured.            Guaranteed work. Lic No. 33922C            Also licensed for Data / Phone / TV Cabling            Phone: <b>0452 010 519</b></p>	<p><b>Gutter Cleaning</b>  <b>Narooma Gutter Vacuum</b>            Servicing the Triangle Area  <b>Call Tony 0417 426 379</b>  <a href="mailto:todwyer40@gmail.com">todwyer40@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Building Services</b>  <b>Carpentry &amp; Construction</b>            New homes/extensions/alterations/decks/roof            kitchens/ stairs/sheds or owner builder assist            Phone <b>Jake Smith 0409 991 929</b>            Lic. No. 205250c</p>	<p><b>Electrical Services</b>  <b>HRES Electrical Services</b>            * Electrical * Solar * Air-conditioning  <b>Harley Ray &amp; Elena Savchenko</b>  <b>0419 229 634</b>  <a href="mailto:hreselectrical@gmail.com">hreselectrical@gmail.com</a>  <small>Lic 259014C CEC: A8330620 ARC RTA: AU38859</small></p>	<p><b>Hair and Beauty</b>  <b>Miracles by the Sea</b>            Hair &amp; Beauty Studio            Barbering &amp; massage, safe, natural products            20 Lamont St, Bermagui.            Phone: <b>6493 4646</b></p>

Ads \$25. To book an ad, please call 6493 8369 or 0407 047 404. Then email your ad to [advertise@thetriangle.org.au](mailto:advertise@thetriangle.org.au)

<p><b>Handyman</b>  <b>Cobargo Handyman Service</b>            For all repairs &amp; maintenance in &amp; around the home &amp; garden            Phone <b>Michael Stephens</b>  <b>0413 353 665</b></p>	<p><b>Plumber</b>  <b>ANDZAC PLUMBING</b>            Licensed in all disciplines of plumbing            Domestic, Commercial, Industrial            Backflow and TMV Testing            35+ years experience, Licence No: 343736C  <b>Call Andrew Nicol on 0407 018 922</b></p>	<p><b>Solar Power Systems</b>            Quality solar for home, farm or business.            Saving you 50%-100% off your power bill.            Can you afford not to have solar power?            Find out now – call <b>0412 919 708</b>  <b>EKONOMIX SAPPHIRE COAST</b>            Lic. No. 322967C</p>
<p><b>House Re-Stumping</b>  <b>Stumps &amp; Flooring replaced</b>            Ant Capping, Reasonable Rates,            Free Quotes. Lic No 136977C            Phone: <b>6493 7341</b> Mob: <b>0417 543 526</b></p>	<p><b>Plumber &amp; Gasfitter</b>  <b>RNJ Plumbing</b>            No job too small, always on time.            Phone <b>Rick</b> on <b>0427 859 300</b> or <b>4473 7798</b>            ABN 98117271935 Lic.No. 255496C</p>	<p><b>Tai Chi</b>            Cobargo School of Arts Hall            Thursday evening during school term            6:00 pm - 7:30 pm  <b>Phone Rod 0417 409 788</b></p>
<p><b>Landscaping</b>  <b>Native Instinct</b>            Native garden specialist, design, maintenance,            retaining walls, ponds, watering systems,            plants &amp; paving.            Phone <b>Jo &amp; Ken Jacobs</b> on <b>6494 0191</b></p>	<p><b>Plumbing/Gasfitting</b>  <b>Jess Austin Plumbing</b>            For all your plumbing needs.            No job too small. Lic. No: 156218C            Phone: <b>Jess</b> on <b>0439 457 048</b> or <b>6493 4502</b></p>	<p><b>Tree Removal</b>  <b>Diverse Tree Services</b>            Tree Removal, Tree Trimming, Land Clearing            Fully Qualified &amp; Insured  <b>Riley: 0432 663 517</b>  <b>Ash: 0459 694 241</b></p>
<p><b>Massage</b>  <b>Neil Fox Remedial Massage</b>            Relieve tension, pain &amp; dysfunctions            Sports, Remedial, Deep Tissue, Relaxation            Health Fund Rebates – Mobile Massage Service  <b>Ph: 0405 215 055</b> <a href="mailto:neilfox@gmail.com">neilfox@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Plumbing/Gasfitting</b>  <b>Shane Gale Plumbing</b> Lic. No: L11592            Gas &amp; drainage – mini-excavator hire and            bobcat hire, 2 metre dig depth, 4 buckets            Phone/Fax: <b>6493 6009</b> or <b>0418 470 895</b></p>	<p><b>Tree Surgeon/Arborist</b>  <b>SOS Tree Management</b>            Fully Insured            Stump grinding - bobcat hire  <b>Stephen O'Sullivan</b>            Phone: <b>6493 6437</b> Mob: <b>0418 465 123</b></p>
<p><b>Massage Therapy &amp; Reiki</b>  <b>BMO Massage – Mike Roberts (AMT)</b>            Reiki, Swedish, Therapeutic &amp; Seated            Neck &amp; Back Massage            Headache Relief and RESETing            Downtown Mystery Bay, NSW  <b>0407 464 086</b></p>	<p><b>Plumbing/Gasfitting</b>  <b>RobSona Pty Ltd</b>            Maintenance, new houses, renovations, hot            water, gas fitting, blocked drains, septic tanks and            absorption areas Lic no.: 170065C  <b>Call Alistair Robson 0427 117 281</b></p>	<p><b>Veterinarian</b>  <b>Cobargo Veterinary Hospital</b>            Providing a 24 hr service for our clients            56 Princes Highway, Cobargo            Phone: <b>6493 6442</b> A/hours: <b>6492 1837</b></p>
<p><b>Massage/Shiatsu/Reiki</b>  <b>RENEWED SPIRIT</b>            Holistic Bodywork for Mind Body and Spirit.            13 years experience. 324 Bermagui Rd Akolele  <b>Raven 0437 529 212</b></p>	<p><b>Podiatrist</b>  <b>Foot, Ankle and Lower Limb Care</b>  <b>Christian de Brennan</b> M(Pod) MAPodA  <b>www.yourfeetpodiatry.com.au</b>            Cuttagee, Bermagui / Wed &amp; Thurs            Phone: <b>6493 5117</b> HICAPS available</p>	<p><b>Veterinarian</b>  <b>Cobargo Veterinary Services</b>  <b>Ben Tett</b> BvetBiol/BvetSc            Affordable, dedicated and            personalised, professional care.  <b>Phone Ben: 0448 634 465</b></p>
<p><b>Painting</b>  <b>John Gosch Painting</b>            Professional quality work            interior/exterior, roof spraying            renovation/restoration specialist.  <b>Phone: 0407 258 996</b> Lic No 120093C</p>	<p><b>Roofing/Carpentry</b>            Metal, slate and tile repairs plus copper &amp; zinc            roofs and gutters. Lic. No: 139428C            10% discount for pensioners            Phone: <b>Norman 0412 200 556</b> or <b>6494 0060</b></p>	<p><b>Water</b>  <b>Drinking Water Household Deliveries</b>            Brand new poly tank            Food quality stamped            Available in the triangle area            Contact <b>Mark 0408 167 172</b></p>
<p><b>Pest Control</b>  <b>DK Pest Control</b> Lic No: 1938            Ants, spiders, fleas, cockroaches, rodents, Termite            Specialist/Inspections. Seniors Card Discount.            Phone <b>David Ing</b>  <b>4473 7201</b> or <b>0407 337 937</b></p>	<p><b>Sawmill</b>  <b>Bermagui</b>            Timber, sleepers, all fencing, quality hardwood            tables, block clearing, slashing and firewood.  <b>Charlie McVeity</b>  <b>6493 4134</b> or <b>0428 489 501</b></p>	<p><b>Weed Spraying</b>  <b>Sapphire Coast Weed Spraying</b>            Our spray units and trained staff can            target your problem weed areas            Phone: <b>0412 756 291</b></p>
<p><b>Pet Minding Services</b>  <b>All Creatures Big and Small</b>            From domestic pets to farm animals. In home            personal care. Will manage farrier and vet            appointments. Garden &amp; property care.  <b>Lee: 0419 712 638</b> <a href="mailto:lmucic@bigpond.com">lmucic@bigpond.com</a></p>	<p><b>Security/TV/Data</b>            For all security camera, digital TV and data            Networking solutions, Satellite systems,            Tradesman with 40 years experience.            Domestic / Commercial / Industrial            Contact <b>Andrew: 6493 4773</b>            Master Cable Licence No: A040333</p>	<p><b>Welding &amp; Metalwork</b>  <b>Stephen Laszuk Hot Metal</b>            Chainsaw, mower and pump service and repair,            welding and all forms of metalwork            11572 Princes Hwy, Verona            Phone: <b>0438 850 573</b></p>
<p><b>Plasterer</b>  <b>Brian Desborough</b>            Lic.No R65254            Supply &amp; Fix Plasterboard            Phone: <b>6493 6246</b> or <b>0414 570 214</b></p>	<p><b>Self Storage</b>            New complex at            6-8 Pine Dr, Bermagui Industrial Estate.            Individual lock-up units, secure, owner on site            long or short term.            Phone <b>Mel</b> on <b>0488 143 324</b></p>	<p><b>Yoga</b>  <b>Bikram Yoga Sapphire Coast</b>            Cobargo venue now gone. Free temporary classes            4 times a week at the tennis club.            Free 2020 pass for those who lost their homes.            Ring <b>Amrei</b> for times on <b>0416 092 225</b>.  <b>www.bikramyogasapphirecoast.com.au</b></p>

## The day the sun forgot to shine

Everyone in Bermagui knows what it felt like to receive a 5 am call from the RFS. 'There is a bushfire in your area, leave now!'

What? .... Did I hear right - as we shook the sleep from our eyes. What should we do? A few quick calls to neighbours .... What are you doing? Where are you going? Should we go to Bermagui or Narooma?

Disbelief ... where is the fire? A quick look at the FiresNearMe app showed the Badja Forest fire was just behind us in Coolagolite. How could this happen? Yesterday it was way back in Wadbilliga. How could it be here so fast? The smell of smoke was strong, the air becoming thick and that ominous red glow to the west was worrying. So, like everyone else from Wallaga Lake, we joined the procession into Bermagui. Our thought was to find a nice safe spot and sit it out. Our choice ... the bottom of Wapengo Street where there is water on three sides and the breakwater for added safety. We met with a lovely little group of locals, and one evacuee from Cobargo who had his guitar and his ferret, and that's all. Everyone was talking, supporting, comforting. But our little safe haven was soon shattered when the RFS came along and said ... move from here, it's not safe!

The Evacuation Centre in Bermagui was the next port of call, with registrations, food, water and chats with friends and neighbours. Then the bright light of a friend's place took our eye, so we knocked on the door to ask if she would take some refugees in! We spent the day being well looked after before deciding to go home in the late afternoon.

Walking across the sports oval filled with people, cars, caravans, boats, dogs and other assorted animals, was a surreal experience. Everyone, including the dogs, was quiet. People were sitting around in groups, quietly chatting. The dogs, picking up tension from their owners, were subdued or cowering under vehicles.

The Surf Club was packed, a well-organised chaos prevailed. People were just shell shocked, confused, shattered. How can this happen in our beautiful town? What is going to happen? Are we safe? The burden of hundreds of holiday makers only added to the chaos.

The most terrifying and eerie experience was the sky—like night, even as morning wore on. The darkness that descended over Bermagui was diabolical – never before experienced. The word



Those wonderful volunteers from World Central Kitchen handing out meals at Bermagui Country Club to residents evacuated from the Wallaga Lake area

*Armageddon* popped into my mind. With black ash falling like rain, the thunder and dry lightning created by the storm, it was enough to scare even the most stoic amongst us.

But, Bermagui, you know the rest. We survived, we evacuated – many to Bega and Merimbula, many to Canberra. No power, phone, mobile coverage, internet, no sewerage and then the food ran out.

Bermagui certainly dodged a huge bullet on the day the sun forgot to shine. Soon stories of the devastation in Cobargo and Quaama began to filter through. We all realised that we had been extremely lucky. We grieve for those who have lost so much.

Bad things can bring out the best in people. Our community has pulled together, becoming more close-knit. We took care of our own—and the many frightened visitors who were caught up in the fires.

Bermagui folk, you are legends. What a place to live ... gotta love this place!

Postscript: Groundhog Day ...

Another rollercoaster ride for Bermagui on the afternoon of 24 January, when those horrid winds decided to blow the Badja Forest Fire directly towards Bermagui. The communities of Akolele, Wallaga Lake Heights, Beauty Point and Fairhaven were in the firing line, so residents heeded the warnings and joined a procession of cars into town for safety.

Full marks to the great staff of the

Country Club. They were welcoming and comforting, and even turned a blind eye to the assorted dogs brought in. Within an hour or so, those wonderful people from the World Central Kitchen, working from Eastwood's Deli, had hot meals, salads, sandwiches and rolls and fruit all laid out and dispensed with a friendly smile and a hug if needed.

This is the fourth evacuation for many residents living on the fringes. People are exhausted, confused, angry, frustrated and just plain fed up. Cars remain packed up. Lots of tension and uncertainty, but so much support from a fantastic community. We just want it to go away! Once again, a big thank you to our RFS and emergency services. Stay safe, Bermagui.

Carolyn Banados  
Fairhaven

"You are the keepers of an extraordinary section of the surface of this planet, including the Barrier Reef, and what you say, what you do, really, really matters."

"And then you suddenly say, 'No it doesn't matter ... it doesn't matter how much coal we burn ... we don't give a damn what it does to the rest of the world.'"

David Attenborough

# Bermagui Banter

## Above and beyond ...



Awesome. Kirsty Sunderland made sure all the Preschool staff got paid, just when they most needed it, from the Bega evacuation centre.

Kirsty Sunderland, our amazing admin person at Bermagui Preschool, had been worrying about how to process the pays for our staff, many of whom had lost homes, property and livestock and had been evacuated. This was in the middle of the bush fire emergency. Even though she and her four children had been at the Bega evacuation centre, while her husband stayed to protect their home just out of Bermagui, she found a way to process the pays. A truly compassionate, ingenious and resilient person.

*Narelle Myers*

## Loosen that cough



With all the smoke in the air I was coughing a lot, like many others. A friend recommended a natural remedy of chopped raw onion and honey. I didn't like the sound of it but I found the taste quite pleasant. I also found my cough loosened after a night's sleep.

I made up a jar for myself and have a spoonful twice a day and that cough has just about totally gone! A pleasant, affordable, natural remedy ... but of course if your cough is really bad and doesn't clear up you should probably go and seek medical advice.

*Sarah Breakey  
Cobargo*

*start again*

*an idea of selecting  
favourite possessions  
in my new refugee state did not appeal  
there is time and energy  
for a new program  
a more simple existence  
not quite monastic or monkish  
just a simplified me*

*so I had agreed with myself  
to take nothing . . .*

*do I need to laden life with a past  
when there are miles of future to enjoy*

*I decided what I needed was me  
it was time for change  
as much as I loved many of my own  
paintings and sculpted pieces  
there was nothing here  
that this person, this soul  
did not know how to do again  
if the urge took hold*

*these things, possessions  
examples of my skill and emotion  
all done, complete  
. . . life has been a series of fulfilling episodes  
time to move on  
. . . I look forward to that*

*if my home is converted to black ash  
and tangled detritus  
I would build something different  
something to suit my new state*

*the prospect enlivens my mind  
new creations, experiments, explorations*

*now whether wild fire  
takes my house  
and possessions or not  
a new start can be commenced*

*Peter Storey  
Bermagui*

Your life is your story. Write well. Edit often.  
Don't be afraid to start new chapters.

## Many hands make light work—meals for fire-affected communities



Some of the many volunteers with World Central Kitchen at Eastwood's Deli in Bermagui

### **'URGENT!! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Eastwood's is now a DISASTER RELIEF KITCHEN Usual business will be put on hold.'**

On 10 January this call for volunteers appeared on my Facebook feed. Eastwood's Deli and Cooking School in Bermagui had teamed up with World Central Kitchen (WCK) to provide meals to the fire-affected communities in our region.

We signed up to help and a day later found ourselves, along with an enthusiastic group of volunteers from the local community and beyond, peeling potatoes, chopping onions, grating carrots, making sandwiches and salads in a somewhat chaotic but self-organising group of enthusiastic professionals and volunteers. Each day saw rosters, drawn from more than 100 volunteers, preparing lunches and dinners to be distributed to fire-affected communities from Batemans Bay down to Eden. Local communities to benefit included Cobargo, Quaama, Mogo and the many fire stations across the area, with many volunteers also acting as drivers across the fire-affected areas.

Founded in 2010 by Spanish-American chef Jose Andres to provide meals in Haiti following its devastating earthquake, World Central Kitchen (WCK) is a not-for-profit, non-government international

organisation dedicated to providing meals in the wake of natural disasters. It has since worked in countries across the world, providing meals following earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions and also wildfires in California in 2017 and 2019. They can now add Australia to their list. The WCK team, many from the US and elsewhere, are all dedicated to making it easier for the recovery effort with delicious food.

The initial relief effort started in Sydney and Canberra and, through a mutual friend, WCK teamed up with Kelly and her team at Eastwood's. They have been operating here since 10 January and will continue to provide meals as long as they're required. The team tries to source ingredients locally where possible, in order to put some money back into the local economy. Up to 900 nutritious and beautifully presented meals a day have been produced from the kitchen and the demand continues to roll in from across the region. Being provided with a good meal means that the community can focus on the many other tasks that need to be done in the recovery process.

Eastwood's provides a very welcoming atmosphere for each shift of volunteers (coffee on tap!). Andy keeps the volunteers rolling in with his text messages every evening, the team from Eastwood's and WCK organise the menus, numbers, cooking and delivery of meals across the area, the volunteers do what they are instructed to do (mostly!). Everyone mucks in with enthusiasm and good cheer.

It was fantastic to see many familiar faces and meet new people all wanting to help in some small way – well done to everyone involved. If you want to volunteer I'm sure it would still be appreciated as those involved from the beginning may be running out of steam – just drop into Eastwood's and put your name on the roster.

And when things get back to normal, do drop into Eastwood's for a coffee and thank Kelly and her team for making such a wonderful contribution to the recovery effort. Check out Eastwood's Facebook page for more photos.

*Frances Shannon and Geoff Baker  
Fairhaven*

## What is happening to our wildlife?

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has ... Margaret Mead*

One spontaneous response from the bushfire emergency was the emergence of groups of residents concerned about the massive loss of native wildlife.

Annie Ray and Jenifer James organised an impromptu meeting at Next Level, Bermagui, on Saturday 18 January. Motria von Schreiber, wife of our local vet, Carl, was involved, helping to co-ordinate the group and to seek funding. Jenifer James advertised the meeting via Facebook and 25 people turned up to show their interest and support. Advice came from Potoroo Palace. Kerry Davies managed to get funding from Animals Australia and local cells were quickly formed to set up watering and feeding stations.

Why was this necessary?

Birds from the burnt hinterland have flown to the coastal strip but there is not enough food to go around. The animals have also moved eastwards, fleeing from fire, but the drought has played havoc—food and water is scarce. The best way to tackle this emerging crisis is to feed the native animals ourselves. This will be a long term requirement, needing training, expert advice and dedication.

Cells are now being set up around bushland from Coolagolite to Beauty Point, from Wallaga Lake to Mystery Bay, but more cells are welcome! One such cell is at Beauty Point, led by Rebecca Rudd. Last Sunday Rebecca taught a neighbourhood group how to set out the food and water stations in bushland and how to



Rebecca Rudd shows Beauty Point neighbours how to break a watermelon for feeding native animals.

manage the birdseed. In particular she explained what type of food the native animals would eat (watermelons and rockmelons are the all-round favourites). Because we are getting funding for bags of bird seed and roo food, we need to take before-and-after photos of food use and send them to Animals Australia. If you know of particular spots where native animals gather, or if you would like to be involved, please contact Jenifer James on [jeniferlowe@rocketmail.com](mailto:jeniferlowe@rocketmail.com).

*Kerry Davies  
Bermagui*

## U3A Bermagui & District Together in troubled times

No-one could possibly have predicted how U3A Bermagui & District's tenth anniversary year would begin. Our members have lost friends and homes and have seen their communities struggle and disperse as families and neighbours sought safe havens in evacuation centres and with friends and family far and wide. Others stayed throughout the horrors with anxieties heightened by the lack of power and communications. Sometimes their only companions were the thrum of low flying helicopters and the acrid smell of smoke haze.

Our program planning is continuing. We offer a diverse range of courses, presentations and activities for Term 1 which may be a welcome return to normal activity, a time to catch up and check on friends or simply a distraction from the slow and often painful recovery tasks. Our course offerings are in response to the interests of our members and they'll be supplemented during the term by activities that we hope will address the current needs of those in our damaged community. A friendly welcome to new members and a hug for our missed mates is assured.

Details of our program will be on our website, [www.bermagui.u3anet.org.au](http://www.bermagui.u3anet.org.au), from 29 January. Our Information and Registration Day will be at the Bermagui Country Club on Wednesday 5 February, 10 am – 12 noon, where you can join or renew memberships, talk to our presenters and enrol for Term 1 courses. Morning tea will be provided. If you are unable to come to Information and Registration Day please go to our website on 5 February, where you can also enrol in classes. General enquiries to me, Ruth Perrett, 0408 786 546.

*Ruth Perrett  
President*

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### Need for Feed trucks coming into the Cobargo Showgrounds

In the last few minutes of watching about 30 Need for Feed trucks rolling into Cobargo up Bermagui Road into the showgrounds, I was hugged by our Anglican minister Tim who was crying with tears of emotion, I was beeped by lots of truckies who responded to my enthusiastic smiling, waving and thumbs up, kids and dogs running up and down beside the cavalcade..... it's Sunday afternoon, Australia Day after a disaster.

Need for Feed disaster relief is a Lions Club initiative which is community based. For more information go to their Facebook page and register.

*Linda Sang*

## South East Local Land Services

We have been working as part of the Animal and Agriculture Services Functional Area during the response to the fires that have impacted the South East.

Bush fire-affected land managers are encouraged to call the Agriculture and Animal Services hotline on 1800 814 647.

We will be providing information to the community as we move through the recovery process.



You can reach the team at the Bega office for ongoing updates: 02 6491 7800

[www.ils.nsw.gov.au/southeast](http://www.ils.nsw.gov.au/southeast)

## Power and communications – how can we do better?

The New Year fires saw the heroism of our firies, the devotion of emergency services and solidarity between those who had suffered unimaginable losses and those more fortunate. They also showed up the severe and unacceptable shortcomings in two essential services. While the emergency services and Council workers laboured mightily to keep the roads open and the water running, electricity and telecommunications failed spectacularly.

No electricity, internet or telephone and almost no mobile communication for more than a week took its toll on residents and remote families desperate for news. It also placed firefighting itself at risk; one fire station on the far south coast (not in the Triangle area) lost mains power and then its diesel generator, making communication with crews on the fire ground difficult.

The reason for these failures is easily understood. If there is only a single path for anything, a break in that path and the service will fail. There was and it did.

Backing up the power and communications into the Triangle area is a campaign that we should start working on now. But it would be naïve to think this will happen anytime soon. In the meantime there are solutions.

For communities out of contact with wired or wireless communication, NBN satellite provides voice, internet, email and mobile service. For reliable un-interruptible power, solar panels supported by a suitably specified battery and inverter will literally keep the lights on. One such residential installation in our area meant that there was no loss of communications (internet and mobile phone) and a fully functional house, just as if connected to the grid.

While this may not be an option for many households, such an installation at a location in each of our communities would be an invaluable source of information to people, a way of advising the Council's web site and Facebook page of the situation in each community, and a resource for emergency services. CEFÉ Bermagui and Triangle area will be looking at the feasibility of providing this facility.

*Bill Caldicott and Bill Southwood,  
Clean Energy for Eternity  
Bermagui and Triangle*

### Photo: burnt trees 2020

burnt trees trapped by lens  
smoke still clouds our senses  
an inconvenient burning

eyes soon dim with other things  
this day forgotten  
we turn away  
wine in hand

small cake on plate

the miniscule intelligence of politicians  
our must-have gadgets  
other trivial pursuits of existence  
more palatable conversation

sirens are silences  
exhausted ghosts of yesterday  
drift home  
limping through the burning

seeds will wait for rain  
offspring from scorched mothers  
there may be moss, lichen  
even birds again

if it rains

this day forgotten

*Jaspa James  
Bermagui*



# COBARGO CO-OP

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52-54 PRINCES HIGHWAY COBARGO 02 6493 6401

Cobargo Co-op would like to send our love, thoughts and commiserations to everyone affected by the fires, we will try and help in any way we can.

We would also like to thank the RFS volunteers for the unbelievable work they have done and continue to do to keep us safe, you are legends!

A huge shoutout to the volunteers that have stepped up and kept the town running and congratulations to our community for the way it has handled this disaster, we rock!

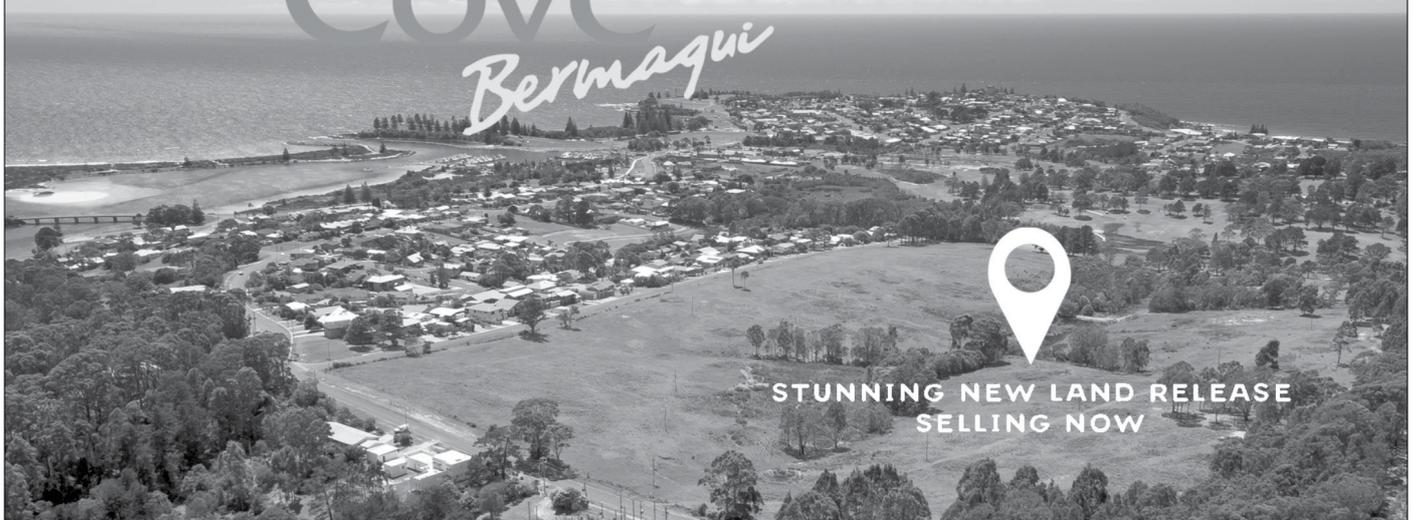
Fundraiser [chuffed.org/project/rebuild-the-cobargo-community](https://chuffed.org/project/rebuild-the-cobargo-community)

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full nursery, seedlings, ornamentals, pots, special orders

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[grant@sapphirecove.com.au](mailto:grant@sapphirecove.com.au)

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(next to the Pharmacy and Surf shop)

Pictures are only for marketing display purposes and full inclusions should be determined at time of purchase.

## Yowrie—a human face

Shortly after the fires my husband and I returned to the park near Bermagui where we each have a caravan. For much of the journey we were quite surprised to see that there wasn't as much damage as we'd thought there might be. There weren't any warnings about driving in the area, so we decided to make the turn from Cobargo towards Wandella and Yowrie.

We'd been hearing constant reports about loss of life, property and wildlife, but this experience was particularly poignant for us. As I'd lived and worked in that region for several years I'd become acquainted with people through church, local businesses and various activities. Soon we passed by the gnarled remains of Dorothy's former house, next to the Catholic church. The sky had turned grey, as well as the tangled rubble that still remained. Moments later a sign on the roadside warned of possible wandering livestock. At that moment I recalled the

time I nearly hit a cow on that same road, thinking to myself, 'Well, that's country life!'

We drove on and on, for what seemed to be a very long time. We were aiming to reach a large cattle holding which for many years was home to Judith. She had remained there, mainly out of loyalty to her late husband Stu. I could see her in my mind's eye, well into her eighties, racing around on a motorbike, checking livestock and tagging new calves. She had no apparent concerns about snakes, fearsome weather or vehicle breakdowns as she constantly entertained countless people in the region, and from afar.

Then there was Dave, who grew and sold lavender for a living as he cared for a seriously invalided relative. Glenn, another Yowrie stalwart, drove the school bus regularly, but was never too busy to come to the rescue if anyone was in difficulty. And Paul, a comparatively recent resident,

who laconically commented to a small group after the fires that he had lost his home and caravan. As we turned to go I recognised the drive that led to where Nola had lived. She was the community's self-appointed 'information centre'.

My husband and I didn't talk very much on the way back, as we noticed many signs of far-reaching damage: a mangled telephone pole, many murky puddles and countless charred and scrawny trees receding into the distance on both sides. I couldn't help but remember the time when committed demonstrators resisted the logging of these very same trees.

I'm grateful for having had this up-close experience. After the weeks of media reports across the nation I can feel, but only in a very small way, how it might be to lose not only loved ones, homes, occupations, but a definition of one's very identity.

Jeanne Klovdahl  
Bermagui



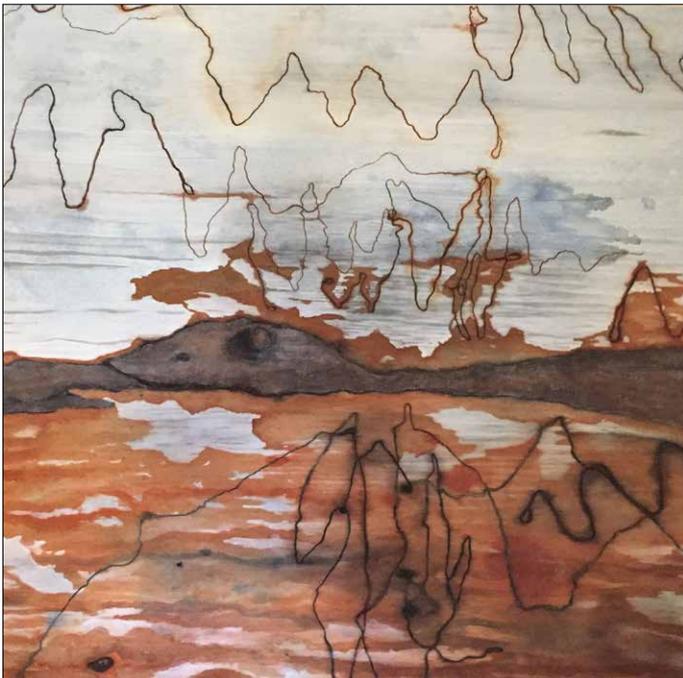
### Renewed Spirit, Akolele - *Shiatsu/Massage/Reiki*

I am operating a sliding payment scale at the moment. I need to try and make a living so if you can afford to pay full rate, great. If you want to pay it forward, even better. If you can only afford half, that's fine. If you have been heavily impacted and can't afford anything but need some healing, that's also ok, I don't want money to be an issue for people if they are in need. Firies get a free session regardless. Raven- 0437 529 212.

### Ivy Hill holds fundraiser for the fire-affected artistic community

In conjunction with Susan Curran from Milton, Carolyn Killen will host a fundraiser for the fire-affected artistic community with drinks at 6 pm on Saturday 22 February at Ivy Hill Gallery. The exhibition will continue to Sunday 15 March.

Artists Penny Lovelock and Karyn Thompson have generously agreed to share their exhibition with ceramics donated by well known potters, with proceeds to go directly to the recipient of the donor's choosing. Penny lost her house at Conjola Park, Karyn's house was threatened but saved at Quaama. There will be catalogues online, with purchases available, from 20 February.



Karyn Thompson, *Scribbly Gum*



Penny Lovelock, *When time stood still*

## 'You can't compete with free' – Local businesses talk about the fires

Ellie Newton from the Quaama Store evacuated with her granddaughter in the early hours of New Year's Eve. Her husband Andrew stayed to defend—and to make sure there was fuel for the fire trucks. 'We had no milk, no bread, no eggs, no meat,' said Ellie. 'So on the way home I stopped at Woolies in Narooma and stocked up on milk and a bit of frozen meat.' They sold those items for the price she'd paid in Woolies.

Ellie and Andrew heated all their meat pies in a gas oven and took them to the Fire Shed with five cases of water.

'The shop has really suffered because a lot of convenience items we sell are free at the Hall now,' said Ellie. Another local grocery retailer agreed—'You can't compete with free.'

'But now that we have fresh milk and bread, Tilba cheese, Baz's pies, people are starting to come back,' said Ellie. She remains positive. 'The people coming in to help restore our lives—the builders, the tradies—give us hope. We do pies, and fresh salad rolls, and cold drinks. We can capitalise on these opportunities ... and I think people know us better now. Whatever happens, we would never, ever, not open.'

'There was no trade at all for the ten days after New Year's Eve,' said Peter Lonergan, owner of Tilba Sweet Spot and Tilba Chamber of Commerce President. 'My takings now are about ten percent of what they should be at this time. In Tilba, businesses usually take 25 to 30% of their annual income in January.'

Like Peter, Tim Carson and Pip Sullivan from the Sundeck Café in Bermagui are reliant on tourists. The power was off and their café was closed for ten days.

'The whole season has failed for businesses who rely on this annual

influx of tourists,' said Tim. 'And employees' income was severely diminished.'

'We trashed several thousand dollars' worth of food. However, we managed to supply some to the Country Club before it spoiled, for the displaced people and tourists.'

Tim and Pip are grateful to those who helped them, either with

available,' said Jane. But they're very grateful that the Kitchenboys gave them some fridge space, and they reopened on 24 January.

Lena Kuppens and Harry Binnendijk recently launched their gourmet take-away food outlet, Via Luna, in a 'tiny house' next to their big, blue Whitehorse Inn in Cobargo. Thankfully, both structures survived the fire, although Lena and Harry's home in Wandella burned down.

Friends have given them accommodation for now. And, despite their loss, they've been volunteering at the Showground and they donated food for evacuees.

'We're hugely grateful to those who defended our properties in the main street,' said Harry. And they're very happy to be back in business. Locals are making a real effort, and customers have come from

as far away as Ulladulla, seemingly just to support Cobargo. 'And our suppliers, all local growers, are doing a stellar job despite what some of them have been through themselves,' said Lena.

A message for Triangle readers?

Peter says, 'We're heartbroken for those who have lost homes and businesses. But those businesses that can still open need the support of visitors and locals, spending money so that we can keep providing jobs and supporting our community in turn.'

Erica thanks the community for its ongoing support. 'We need to stick together and help each other where we can.'

Ellie's message is, 'Stay strong, stay focused, and embrace your community.'

Sounds like there's a clear message, more than ever: Spend locally. Our towns, our main streets, are depending on us.

*Jen Severn  
Quaama*



Lena and Harry are happy to be back in business with lots of support from locals and visitors alike. (photo: Mountain View - The Tomato Guys)

cleaning and restocking or the supply of a generator. 'There are many unsung heroes.'

Erica and Nic Dibden run Tilba Real Dairy. Their farm is at Tilba Tilba and they have a retail outlet and dairy processing plant in Central Tilba.

'Retail-wise, the two weeks after New Year should have been the busiest time of the year,' said Erica. 'But the shop was closed for a week and we had to cut back on casual staff. Down the line, local orders for our products dried up too.'

They weren't directly hit but the fires had an enormous effect on the farm too. 'The tankers couldn't get through so we had to dump a lot of milk. We had to plough up a whole paddock, about 150 acres, so we had somewhere safe to put our herd. So now we've lost that pasture.'

At Cobargo General Store, Jane and Alfred lost about 75% of their stock in the power cut. 'In the coolroom, milk cartons exploded and we had to wait until industrial cleaners were

## Crunch Time 1/20

As I listen to the ad man  
My thoughts do not contain prayers  
An evangelical tongue-talker  
Awaiting the rapture  
Who does not have the capacity  
To even lead us into temptation.

If I had the opportunity  
You know  
"to have a go"  
I'd make sure  
"you get to go"  
To hell on earth!

And correct me if I'm wrong  
Aren't we still attached to the Crown?  
So where's the Governor General?  
(another "captain's pick")  
Not a peep in this time of need  
The need being to dismiss  
This failed government  
Those corporate pay pals  
Of climate deniers, incarcerators,  
Disseminators, incinerators.

The tongue talker  
The Home Affairs puppet master  
The barnyard beetroot  
And the rest of this circus  
DO NOT  
HAVE NOT  
WILL NEVER  
Have any empathy for  
Or interest in  
The common wealth!

*Texgoffredo*

## NEED a CAR?

*Need a car for a day or two?*

The community car is  
available to borrow.

See one of the women  
at Well Thumbed Books  
or book it by phoning  
Louise on 0416 039 895  
or Linda on 0407 047 404

## Meditation course at Kamalashila Tibetan Buddhist Centre

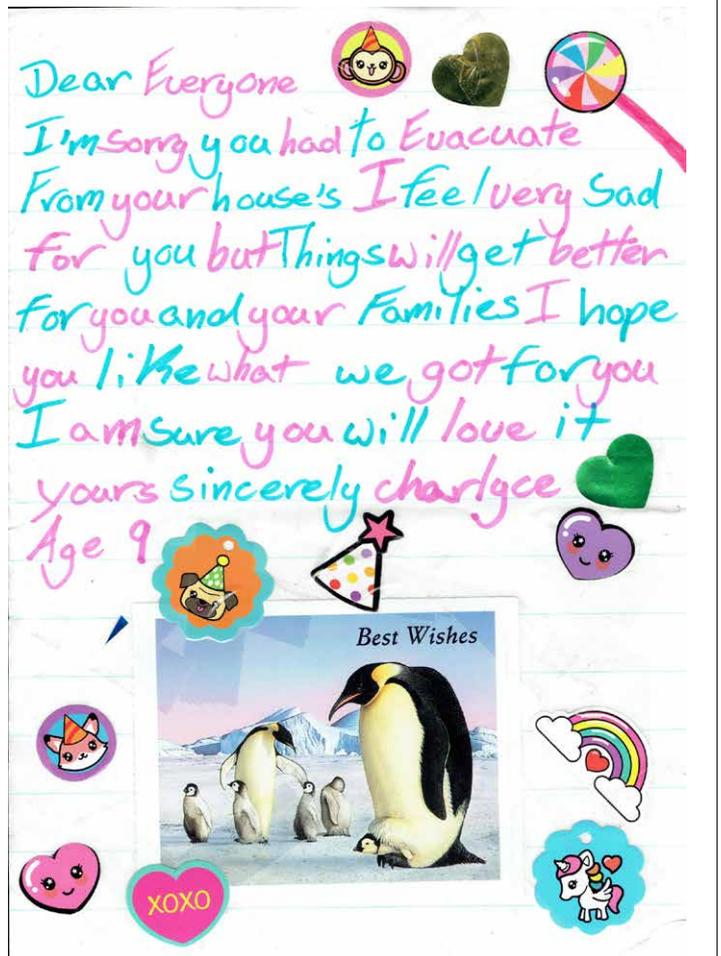
9000 Princes Highway, Tilba  
6:30 - 8 pm (Thursday Evenings)

*Suitable for those new to Buddhism, learning  
meditation with an experienced practitioner.*

**DATES:** 30 January - 12 March (welcome to attend the  
whole seven weeks or individual dates)

**COST:** Full course \$50/\$35 concession  
Per Session \$10/\$8 concession

**TO BOOK:** [www.drogmi.org](http://www.drogmi.org) or at the door



While Cobargo celebrated a belated New Year's Eve in a bulging Cobargo Hotel, semi-trailers from the Sunshine Coast escorted by police quietly rolled into the Cobargo Relief Centre. It was organised by Zemma Butler and a generous community—three semi-trailers and a five-tonne refrigerated truck full of fresh food. Feed, equipment and even a Winnebago. As she was leaving she thrust at me a sheaf of messages, too many to publish. Most touching were the ones from children sending pocket money, small packets of coins, with heartfelt pictures and notes.

*Linda Sang*

## Pet Minding



Pet Minding In-home  
Livestock/Horsecare On-farm

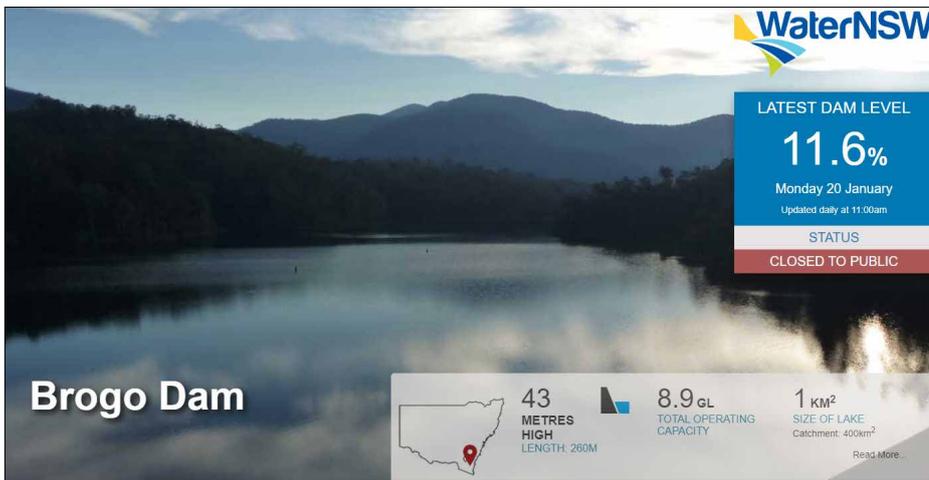
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[critter.sitter.eurobodalla@gmail.com](mailto:critter.sitter.eurobodalla@gmail.com)

ABN 56 335 491 967

## Update: the Brogo Dam, catchments and restrictions



There's been a lot of questions around our water supply. What's the level of the dam? Are the irrigators still drawing down a lot of water? Will we face water restrictions? What's the status with water quality after the fires?

The Bega Valley Shire website has a lot of information for you, as does the WaterNSW website, so, after some digging, here are the main points.

Despite the drought, in May 2019 the Brogo Dam was at 100% capacity. The dam level as of 20 January was 11.6% capacity.

In order to retain adequate supply to the towns serviced by the Brogo Dam (Quaama, Cobargo, Bermagui, Beauty Point, Fairhaven, Wallaga Lake, Wallaga Lake Heights, Wallaga Lake Koori Village and Akolele), as well as other local users, as of 8 January, Water NSW restricted access to water for general license holders, including irrigators. This is important since the release for all users is around 65 megalitres per day but town supply requires just 6 - 8 megalitres of that.

The Brogo Dam catchment is now under further threat due to the bushfires. Much of the Brogo Dam catchment and Brogo Swamp creek catchment have been burnt out. While we pray for rain to end the threat of fire and drought, Council states that it is inevitable that ash, charcoal, sediment, leaf litter, pathogens and vegetation debris from these catchments will wash towards the town water supply extraction point during rainfall events, with the potential to affect water quality. Council is monitoring the situation and planning across a number of possible scenarios. Council is also investigating water restrictions for the Brogo-Bermagui water supply system in line with its Drought Management Plan.

A boiled water notice was issued 31 December 2019 for Brogo dam users. That has since been lifted but there is every chance that it will be reinstated should the run-off into the dam present any danger to residents.

To keep up to date, check in with the BVSC and WaterNSW websites.

*Bhagya  
Quaama*

Instead of looking for hope, look for action.  
 Then, and only then, hope will come.

*Greta Thunberg*

## Fire affected trees and recovery

Most locals will not have been confronted by the immediate effects of bushfire as they are now, and viewing burnt trees can be intimidating.

There are a few rules that may be helpful in dealing with the aftermath of fire.

Trees showing obvious structural damage should be treated with caution as collapse can occur at any time. These include trees with hollow stems, with or without cavities at the base, and trees with multiple stems.

Species with a tendency to regrow from heavy pruning will often reshoot after defoliation from fire. These include native and exotic species and will do so due to their ability to activate latent growth points under the bark. The regrowth will take a month to become evident and up to six months to establish a sustainable photosynthesis source of food production for the tree.

Trees subjected to high heat intensity may not recover as the conductive cells of the cambial layer can be destroyed, thus starving any live canopy remaining.

Most coniferous trees like Cypress and Pines will not regrow from old wood and if defoliated will likely die.

Spreading mulch such as hay and chip around the root zone of valuable trees is helpful in reducing moisture loss and lowering stress.

Pruning dead wood should be only undertaken after the canopy has begun to re-establish, at least six to twelve months after the fire. This allows the tree's defence mechanisms, linked to the health of the entire system, to restore.

Andrew and Rebeccah Norman are here to help anyone with concerns regarding their gardens and trees. Contact ACG at [thetreedoctor5@bigpond.com](mailto:thetreedoctor5@bigpond.com) or 0409 530 832.

*Andrew and Rebeccah Norman  
Verona*

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## Flowers for South Coast recovery project

Figtree Food Company at Mystery Bay is organising cuttings to replenish gardens on the south coast.

‘We’re taking cuttings to restart gardens and give kids flowers to look at while their lives and their towns rebuild,’ Liz Walton says. ‘Many people are not ready to even think about replanting yet, but there are a lot of people who have luckily saved their homes, but their gardens are a black mess that is quickly going to be overgrown with weeds as the rains recover them.’

If you’d like to get involved please take cuttings from your garden and pot them up to distribute to families and schools on the south coast.

The call has gone out to people in other regions who have not been affected by the bush fire to help out, particularly in regions like Canberra where there is a strong connection to the coast—and lots of gardeners.

‘Think about things like salvias and dahlias that will get smashed by the frost in winter. Instead of waiting for that to happen we can encourage people to take cuttings that we can share around to give people a sense of hope,’ Liz says.

‘I’m especially thinking about the kids we work with who are doing it tough. If we get some cosmos and sunflower seeds into pots rights now we can give them something that will flower in autumn.’

‘Working bees for plant-out days are on the horizon, but in the meantime let’s get sunflower seeds into pots and give them to kids. Let’s get the dahlia tubers divided early. Let’s get rocket seeds into pots so people have some greenery and something to eat. If you’re not on the south coast, get striking anyway and we’ll work out how to get your precious plants shared around to bring our gardens, our hearts and our earth back to life.’



Figtree Food is initiating a drive to restock our gardens.

**Needed: quality potting mix and soil donations.** We have plenty of pots to get started, we just need some soil to fill them up. If you can help with that, please get in touch.

**Nurseries:** If you have excess stock please get in touch.  
Contact [FigtreeFoodCompany@gmail.com](mailto:FigtreeFoodCompany@gmail.com)

*Elizabeth Walton  
Mystery Bay*

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# Essential Energy remains committed to the task ahead

Every year, we prepare ourselves for the bushfire season knowing that, if our customers are affected and lose power, our teams need to be there working as quickly as safety allows to restore power to them.

But this time we couldn't predict the magnitude of what was to come.

On New Year's Eve, 37,500 Essential Energy customers in South East NSW lost power.

Local crews were able to patrol the lines and restore power quickly to more than 25,000 customers. However, with many fires continuing to burn throughout the area, we knew a greater operational response would be required—possibly for weeks to come.

Essential Energy teams were brought in from right across our network to South East NSW, with 435 vehicles deployed to the area.

More than 540 Essential Energy employees have been involved, over 470 of them as crew on the ground. Our leaders are in Emergency Operational Centres set up with the RFS, to assist and collaborate with the response.

Many of us have been affected personally by these fires, or know someone who has. A few of our colleagues from the region have suffered damage or destruction

to their own homes but have chosen to continue working to help restore power to their neighbours.

Some of our people stepped into their roles as volunteers with the RFS, while others returned early from annual leave to help.

Those who have come from other areas of the state have been away from their families for weeks, some missing time with their children during school holidays. We've had former employees put on barbecues to feed those who have been working out in the field.

Our response relies on the strength of our people to carry on in adverse conditions, and their commitment to our communities.

As of 20 January, we have entered week four of our response.

The damage to our network is as unprecedented as the fires themselves: over 1900 poles and 1450 crossarms had to be replaced, and we have had to remove more than 4000 hazardous trees for the safety of our people and the public – and we're only part way through.

While most of our customers have had their power restored, we have around 900 who will remain without power for a few more weeks. This is because sections of our

network have had such extensive damage that it needs to be rebuilt, not repaired.

We've been working directly with these customers, loaning generators to those who don't have one, and offering fuel vouchers to all who need them.

We know we still have work ahead of us, but we want to thank our customers for their continued patience, and reinforce our commitment to supporting them through this devastating time, and beyond.

Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing 855,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW

Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 kilometres of powerline. 163,417 kilometres of powerlines are in designated bushfire zones

The network services more than 855,000 customers with approximately 4.6 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW

Essential Energy's footprint also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer



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## Joeys take refuge at Horizon Bank

Who'd have thought a bank could be so wild! If you visit Horizon Bank at Bega you may catch a glimpse of two joeys that have taken refuge there.

They're being cared for by Felicity Mott, the Chairperson of WIRES Far South Coast branch. Felicity is also a Supervisor at Horizon Bank.

'The joeys were left in WIRES' care a couple of weeks ago after their mothers were killed fleeing the Cobargo bushfires. They need three or four feeds per day so they can't be left at home. Horizon have been so supportive in allowing me to bring them to work. I couldn't do it without their compassion,' said Felicity.

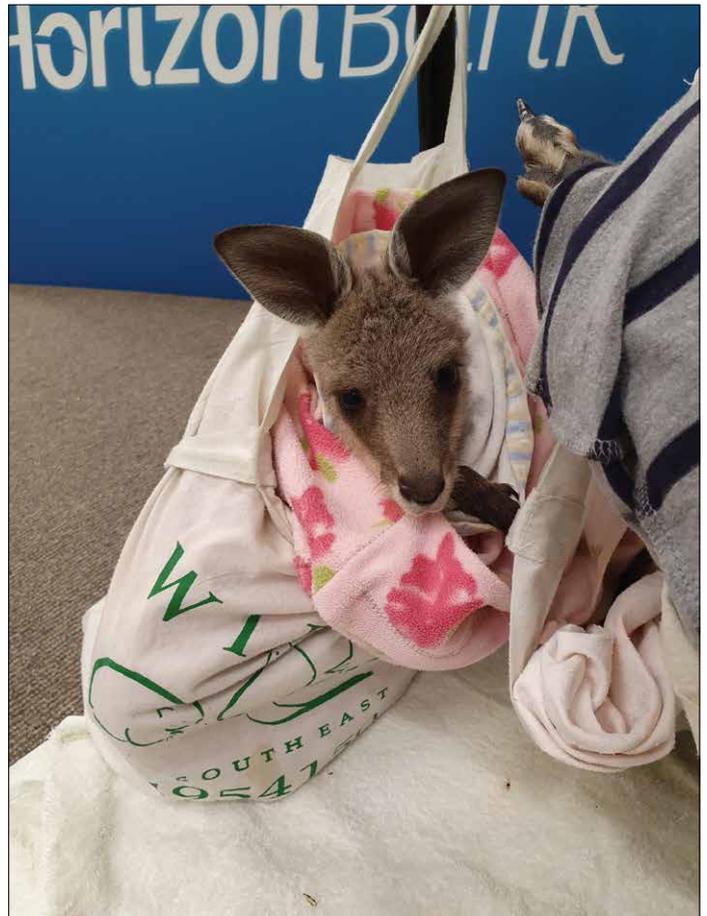
The joeys are so young they still require a simulated pouch, so they spend most of their time snuggled in a calico bag. Every once in a while they pop their heads out for a look and a feed. They're responding well to Felicity's care. They're very cute and, in a way, very lucky.

While the far South Coast was in the midst of bush fire crisis—evacuations, threats, alerts—our wildlife were also in immediate danger and still are. Felicity's joey story is just one of many. There are many WIRES volunteers who were evacuated from their homes and had to take the animals they were caring for at the time with them. Their load has also increased as a result of the bushfires.

'We're seeing an influx of animals like possums, kangaroos, wombats and birds requiring life-saving care. We're receiving assistance from WIRES headquarters in the form of medicine, food and funds for medical attention' said Felicity.

Without a voice, animals need our help. WIRES is providing that assistance. If you'd like to volunteer or make a donation, please go to [www.wires.org.au](http://www.wires.org.au).

*Cassandra Taglieri  
Horizon Bank*



Two bushfire-refugee joeys are in daycare at Horizon Bank in Bega

## Support for people affected by the bushfires

### Disaster payments

If you live in a bushfire-affected area, you may be eligible to claim a disaster payment. Depending on your situation you may be eligible for:

- Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment
- Disaster Recovery Allowance.

There are also payments for eligible New Zealanders.

The quickest way to claim is to call 180 22 66. For more information, including other claiming options go to [www.humanservices.gov.au/disaster](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/disaster).

### Additional Payment for Children

The Additional Payment for Children is a one-off payment of \$400 per child.

If you are the principal carer of a child under 16 and you got or will get the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment after 30 June 2019, you'll automatically get the Additional Payment for Children.

### Additional Child Care Subsidy

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) Temporary Financial Hardship is short-term help from the Australian Government for families experiencing significant financial hardship.

This subsidy is available to families who:

- are eligible for Child Care Subsidy (which can be applied for at the same time)
- have experienced temporary financial hardship due to an event that happened in the last six months
- have a substantially reduced ability to pay child care fees.

For more information, go to [www.humanservices.gov.au/accs](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/accs).

### How to access our services

We have special arrangements in place to help bushfire affected communities. This includes Mobile Service Teams and Mobile Service Centres. Find out where they'll be at [www.humanservices.gov.au/access](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/access)



On the Saturday after New Year's Eve, when the threat was greatest for Narooma, all the people who had evacuated to the edge of Wagonga Inlet (mostly campers) put their gas bottles in the water to keep them cool.



## International Women's Day

8<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 9:00 am, Tilba Tilba Oval

All are welcome to join us in strengthening the connection of songline to Country by 'humming the mountain'.

We will harness the power of the local indigenous connection to the mother of this country - Gulaga, by reconnecting the songline to country. All are welcome for this beautiful expression of reconciliation and acknowledgement of our past and the elders of this land. This is a joint initiative of the Tilba CWA, the Gulaga Reconciliation Group and Open Sanctuary Tilba Tilba under the cultural direction of Lynne Thomas.

**Please bring chairs, rug and a plate to share for morning tea. Tea and coffee will be provided.**

## Free Legal Advice

We understand that people may not want to be talking to lawyers right now (as if they ever want to) but there are many free legal services available if and when people are ready to use them. Shoalcoast Legal Centre can be contacted for advice, information and referrals to other services where appropriate and covers Bega Valley and Eurobodalla. We can provide telephone or face-to-face appointments throughout the area. Call us on 1800 229 529, email [info@shoalcoast.org.au](mailto:info@shoalcoast.org.au) or visit [www.shoalcoast.org.au](http://www.shoalcoast.org.au)

I'm in Tilba and we have another solicitor who lives in Broulee so can arrange face-to-face appointments in the region. As a community legal centre we can be flexible in how we deliver legal services and will respond to particular issues arising from the bushfires once we gauge the most pressing legal needs for the region.

There is the Disaster Response Legal Service, NSW on 1800 801 529 and for specialist assistance, we suggest:

- Insurance issues: Call the Financial Rights Legal Centre's insurance law service on 1300 663 464 or see [www.insurancelaw.org.au](http://www.insurancelaw.org.au)

- Housing issues: Apart from the bushfire housing assistance service 1800 018 444, there is also Illawarra Legal Centre's Tenants Advice Service 4274 3475 as well as their Welfare Rights Service 4276 1939, both of which cover Bega Valley and Eurobodalla.

*Linda Tucker, Solicitor,  
Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre Inc*

## Ten Essentials for Surviving After a Disaster

An alternative power source. My all-electric home did not work well. My neighbours lent me a butane gas burner which can be bought very inexpensively at Big W.

A radio. My battery-operated radio was a lifeline.

Torches and plenty of batteries, and candles and matches. Needed when day becomes night and night is completely dark.

Buckets and a spade. The buckets are useful for many purposes but especially when you can't use the sewer and a bucket becomes a toilet; the contents need burying away from pets so that's where the spade is essential.

Cash (lots). When there's no power a card is useless.

A full tank of petrol. Don't let it get low; you never know!

A mobile phone charger that doesn't need electricity. If you do get mobile reception you don't want to be constantly running the car to charge the phone.

Bottled water. If you need clean water and have no power to boil water, bottled water is the go.

A full cupboard of non-perishable food. Perishables won't last long so eat them first.

An esky or three for the perishables— if you can get ice.

And, as well, family and friends, and community (and a fair bit of alcohol on occasion).

*Pauline O'Carolan  
Cobargo*

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Carolyn Banados (Secretary)  
Bhagya (Treasurer)  
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Narooma: Information Centre, Library, BP station  
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Tilba Tilba: Tilba Nursery  
Wallaga Lake: Merrimans Land Council, Montreal Store

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*The Triangle* is a community newspaper. Its aim is to provide information and news to the people in the Triangle area - the area bounded by the three mountains (Gulaga, Mumbulla and Peak Alone). The committee comprises volunteers who donate their time and expertise for the benefit of our readers. *The Triangle* is financially self-sufficient through advertising income. This is a tight budget and prompt payment of accounts is appreciated. *The Triangle* is published every month except January and has a circulation of 1800, boosted during holiday seasons so there's enough for visitors.

## Fire storm

**And the heat of the storm was raging, before we even took a breath**

**It came upon them like a river burst its banks, overflowing.**

**And neither the fastest machines nor animals afoot could outrun its fury. It flooded up gullies and overran volunteers in its path.**

**It gobbled up landscapes, it gobbled up towns, it gobbled up lives.**

**And now it lingers, as it has for months, in flame and smoke. Arresting you as you try to breathe more slowly.**

**And those who live in stone houses, with city moats about their borders, argue about the origin of this story.**

**We cannot help but despair at the hollow men, when in our communities we are strong, resilient, and fuming.**

*Chloe Spear  
Wallaga Lake*

**Ekonomix Solar extends its sincere sympathies to all who have suffered loss as a result of the devastating bushfires which have struck our community.**

**Our thoughts are with everyone as the task of recovery and rebuilding begins.**

**If we can be of any assistance, or provide any advice regarding your existing solar system, or your future requirements - just call us on 0412 919 708.**



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## From the Volunteer Rescue Association, Narooma

### Narooma

The call went out to all NSW Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA) members across the state. Within two hours we had our rescue squad volunteers responding to both Bega and Narooma from Cessnock, Mendooran, Lithgow, Wagga Wagga, Central Coast and Tweed to assist Narooma VRA squad.

Our VRA members assisted people at the evacuation centre in Narooma, comforting and reassuring residents that they were safe and would be looked after.

Members of the NSW VRA stayed in the evacuation centre long into the night with evacuees, all watching the sky turn black, the smoke from the bushfires thick in our nostrils.

Many community members and evacuees thanked us for volunteering and travelling down to help them. Our reply: 'It's what we do'.

### Bega Valley

The Bega Rescue Squad affiliate

At some time during the coming weeks or even months, you may find yourself playing the role of an accidental counsellor. As our communities come to terms with the catastrophe that has struck our Triangle area, so many people around us are hurting.

You may find you have a friend who is traumatised and just wants to tell their story again and again; you may see an acquaintance on the streets who might just need a hug; or you may have a customer in your business who just wants to talk. And, of course, you may want to talk to someone yourself.

After a crisis, when the initial adrenalin surge has worn off, people will begin to reorder their lives but the memory of the trauma will remain. We all react to and deal with a crisis in different ways. Some people are able to shrug off everything and see it all as a big adventure, others will be deeply shell-shocked, some will need to talk, and others will withdraw.

of NSW Volunteer Rescue Association (NSW VRA) has had a large involvement in the devastating fires that have impacted the Bega Valley and surrounds in recent weeks. Commencing activations on 30 December, the NSW VRA Bega Rescue Squad provided support to the RFS and all other emergency service agencies and communities throughout Cobargo, Bermagui, Eden, Burragate and Bemboka just to name a few districts.

Members wanted to help their community when in need. Long nights and early mornings were the go, to complete many tasks to help ensure the safety of the communities, tasks such as setting up, opening and resourcing the Bega Evacuation Centre; clearing roads of debris and trees to ensure the safe passage for evacuations; logistical support of food and many other resources; driving patient transport vehicles during evacuation areas; community door-knocking with police and SES to inform the public of fire updates and potential risks of the fires; and assisting

### The 'Accidental Counsellor'

Some people will relive their experiences over and over, and some will just 'hold everything in' as they go about helping others.

If you unexpectedly find yourself needing to comfort or even counsel another person, here are some tips on how to deal with the situation.

Firstly, LISTEN. Often this is all a person may want; just to be heard...even if you have heard their story a dozen times over.

Try not to compete with them by implying that your trauma is worse than theirs. We all feel and cope with situations differently.

If you don't know what to say... say nothing. A gentle touch is often all a person may need.

Affirm that their feelings make sense and empathise. Tell them you understand, but remember, even though we all went through a similar crisis, we all experience it differently.

with evacuations of Cobargo and Eden.

With the large scale of the fires predicted, and weather conditions not being favourable for fire fighters, assistance from out-of-area NSW VRA squads was called on to provide support for Bega. NSW VRA squads travelled from Deniliquin, Wagga Wagga, Central Coast, Cessnock, Quirindi and Tweed Heads.

While working with the Bega Valley communities, the NSW VRA Bega Rescue Squad and supporting squads were overwhelmed by the hospitality extended in the uncertain and worrying times that a lot of people were enduring. This made us all proud and humble to be helping in these troublesome times.

The NSW VRA's motto is, 'A helping hand, anywhere, anytime'. You can always rely on us to assist you in any time of need. Feel free to pop into the Narooma Squad HQ and say hello, they train on Wednesday evenings from 5.30 pm. Everyone is welcome. Or look us up at [www.rescue.org](http://www.rescue.org). Or phone 1300 872 777.

Don't minimize their pain or try to cheer them up. Try not to compare a person's experience with others' by saying something like 'there are people worse off'. Also, comments like 'pull yourself together' do not help!

Offer physical affection if appropriate. We all need a great big hug from time to time. Be aware some people have 'personal space' issues, so go gently with the hugs if you feel the person is backing away. Ask them if they want a hug! You may be amazed at the reaction.

If you know of someone who is experiencing extreme stress, or you are feeling overwhelmed with everything, please seek immediate professional help. Your local GP will be able to help you find a professional counsellor, or you can self-refer to one.

*Carolyn Banados  
Fairhaven*

The Department of Health has announced that Australians affected by bushfires will have access to coordinated and tailored mental health support. This includes access to ten sessions under Better Access.

To access the new Medicare rebated items people do not need to have a diagnosed mental health condition, GP referral or mental health treatment plan. This aims to ensure people can quickly access these services. Under this measure, people affected by bushfires are able to self-refer to an eligible allied mental health provider. The new items are available to all people living in the community and there is no age restriction.

Individuals who currently access services under the Better Access initiative, and were directly affected by the bushfires, will be able to access the additional ten sessions under the Bushfire Recovery items.

## Straight-talking advice from the Insurance Council of Australia

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) declared a Catastrophe for the bushfires around Quaama, Cobargo, Bermagui, Tilba and surrounding communities. This means insurance companies will treat your claims as their priority and will provide support through the recovery and rebuild of your communities.

The ICA has set up a hotline – 1800 734 621 – with disaster experts standing by to answer claims-related queries. The hotline is an important service for those living and working in bushfire-affected areas. ICA experts can provide claims guidance, escalate concerns and help separate fact from fiction.

Natural disasters often brings out the best of communities. Neighbours help each other and look after those who are vulnerable. Unfortunately, unethical individuals seek to exploit those who are in shock and distress. The financial regulator ASIC and the Consumer Action Law Centre have warned about unscrupulous doorknockers who typically present themselves in disaster areas to offer their services. They take the form of so-called insurance claims managers who offer unnecessary services for high fees, and unlicensed or shonky tradespeople offering repairs for cash. Some have been known to claim they are there on behalf of your insurance company. This is a great link on how to avoid scammers: [www.disasters.org.au/news/2019/11/19/beware-storm-chasers](http://www.disasters.org.au/news/2019/11/19/beware-storm-chasers) (or google ‘beware the storm chaser’).

Insurers are seeking to use local tradespeople and builders where feasible in the rebuilding of your communities. Qualified and reputable builders and tradespeople may register for bushfire rebuilding work at [www.disasters.org.au](http://www.disasters.org.au). The register may be used by insurers and lead contractors, householders and businesses, as well as governments and agencies that are seeking building services.

The ICA’s [www.understandinsurance.com.au](http://www.understandinsurance.com.au) website has straight-talking advice on all things insurance. It can equally assist those that have already been affected with advice and practical tips on first steps to recovery, as well as people

wanting to check they have the right insurance policies to cover them in the future.

What should you do if your home and contents or other assets are damaged or destroyed by a bushfire?

- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible and seek advice about the claims process
- Do not be concerned if insurance documents are not readily at hand. Insurers keep records electronically and require only your name and address in order to find a policy
- If you are in urgent financial need you can ask your insurer to fast track your claim and make an advance payment within five business days of you demonstrating your urgent financial need. Note that an advance payment may be deducted from the total value of your claim
- Speak to your insurer before you attempt or authorise any building work, including emergency repairs, and ask for the insurer’s permission in writing. Unauthorised work may not be covered by your policy
- If your home is lost or unsafe, notify your local authorities and check with your insurance company whether you can claim temporary housing expenses
- If your property has been damaged you can remove and discard damaged goods that pose a health risk, such as carpets or soft furnishings, take photos and keep samples of materials and fabrics to show the assessor
- Keep any items that could be repaired and if in doubt speak to your insurer
- If your claim has been finalised within one month of the disaster, your insurer must give you six months from the finalisation date to ask for a review of your claim (for instance, if you think the insurer has not accurately assessed your loss), even if you have signed a release.

“When we meet real tragedy in life, we can react in two ways--either by losing hope and falling into self-destructive habits, or by using the challenge to find our inner strength.”

— Dalai Lama XIV



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## After the bushfires - Why is coal so bad?

Pyrophytic plants of Australia have evolved over the ages to require fire before they can germinate or reproduce. So that tells us that Australia has been a fire-prone land for many millennia! We have not done blizzards or snow storms very much! We are a sunburnt country indeed.

Eucalypts and banksias have serotinous cones or fruits that are completely sealed with resin and can only open when fire melts it.

Richard Francis, botanist, tells in *New Scientist* about his plant discoveries at Kinglake National Park, Victoria, ravaged by fire in 2009. The fires not only stimulated already known dormant seeds to grow but he also found more than 60 plant species that had never been recorded there before.

Wallaga Lake was created after the last big climate change around 10,000 years back when ice-sheet meltings raised water levels, cutting off Tasmania and Papua New Guinea.

Powerless to modify this climate change, the people moved inland as sea-levels rose. One thing that they could do however was to ensure hazard reduction of bush undergrowth to protect the environment and themselves.

Bill Gammage describes the different landscapes observed by early whitefellas

settlers in his book *The Biggest Estate On Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* and Captain Cook noted the smoke from many fires as he sailed up our east coast.

We all hated the suffocating smoke here, with our sore eyes, coughs and breathing problems. It made me think about the women of India and Bangladesh who breathe in cow-dung smoke every day as they bend over the smouldering fires to cook for their families ... and I couldn't help asking 'Do we have any right to stop Adani?', to stop them making electricity? Solar isn't powerful enough yet to manufacture solar panels. They need coal. Why is coal so bad?

Carbon dioxide is emitted from volcanoes, undersea gas vents, hot springs etc. It is a trace gas in the atmosphere and humans add traces only of this trace gas. Carbon dioxide is necessary for life on Earth. Vegetable growers pump it into their greenhouses to benefit plant growth.

Driving to Cobargo past the paddocks totally burnt and blackened 18 days back, it was great to see the filmy green of bright new grass beginning again. Renewal ... and ongoing assistance to all those who are grieving as they begin re-building.

*Frances Crawford  
Wallaga Lake*

## When technology fails in a crisis



The 21st century has brought about some wonderful technological changes to our lives. We are now bombarded with information from our mobile devices with the push of a button.

But what happens when the power goes out ... and the mobile networks shut down? Two old dinosaurs can prove invaluable during a crisis.

A battery-operated transistor radio will keep you in touch during a communications breakdown. Have a supply of batteries on hand and you will get a constant flow of information from our wonderful ABC stations.

An old Telstra landline telephone will still work during a power failure (provided the phone lines stay open). Sure, it has that annoying cable and cumbersome buttons and you can't walk around using it ... but, it plugs directly into your phone line, and it works when the power goes out!

*Carolyn Banados  
Fairhaven*

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# A Message from Anglicare

Anglicare would like to express our deepest sympathies to those who are struggling in the aftermath of the devastating fires that struck the NSW South Coast over the recent Christmas and New Year period. We acknowledge the pain of what has occurred and the long road to recovery that lies ahead.



**"Our property was impacted by the fires in December but we know that many families have lost even more than us. While rebuilding will take time and we are still coming to terms with the shock of what we experienced, we are encouraged by the support and resilience of the local community."**

– Matt and Helen Austin

## **Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT**

offer emergency relief and housing assistance through our offices at:

1/51 Vulcan Street, Moruya.  
Open: Mon – Fri 9am-5pm  
Phone: 02 4474 7900

**Anglicare Sydney** offers material aid and financial counselling through our offices at:

88 South Street, Ulladulla  
Open: Mon-Fri 9am-4:30pm  
Phone: 1300 651 728

Alternatively, visit us at the Ulladulla Recovery Centre at 81B Princes Highway, Ulladulla and we can refer you on to appropriate services from there.

In response to the community-wide impacts of the recent fires, we at Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT have employed a community development worker. This part-time staff member will provide direct Emergency Relief, in Bega and surrounds. This includes supporting residents of Quaama, Cobargo, Tilba and Bermagui.

We encourage those who need practical and emotional assistance to reach out to the various organisations providing support in your community. A comprehensive guide can be found on our website:

[https://www.anglicare.org.au/media/6046/bushfire-services-guide\\_anglicare.pdf](https://www.anglicare.org.au/media/6046/bushfire-services-guide_anglicare.pdf)



# Thank you from Anglicare!

Anglicare is very grateful to our Disaster Recovery (DR) volunteers and staff members who have been working around the clock in Evacuation Centres across the state - from the Far South Coast all the way up to Northern Inland and Mid North Coast, and many places in between. At the height of the disaster, we had volunteers working across 19 evacuation centres at the one time.

**"Volunteering with Anglicare gives me a practical way to support to people in our local communities. It's a privilege to serve as a Disaster Recovery volunteer, particularly during this time of such immense crisis. Working alongside people with a similar heart for their community inspires me, and I'm also greatly encouraged by the bravery and resilience of the families we are assisting. Even in a time of heartache, so much can be achieved as we all work together."**

– Sue, Anglicare DR Volunteer



Volunteers are on call 24/7 and are trained to provide material aid and personal support to evacuees. In Southern NSW some were activated at midnight and others at 2am. They turn up happy to provide the support for which they have been specially trained. This can include listening, providing psychological first aid, making beds, helping with meals and coordinating pets and animals.

Anglicare DR volunteer, Glenda, was in the heart of the crisis on the South Coast – helping to operate an emergency Evacuation Centre for locals and holiday makers in her community.

Despite the threat of fire to her own home, Glenda stayed to help, providing comfort and relief to people with nowhere else to go. Glenda says she hopes the community will surround those affected 'with love and care and help – whether it's physical or whether it's spiritual, or whether it's emotional. They'll need a new home. They'll need new clothes. They'll need new everything.'

For more information about becoming a Disaster Relief Volunteer, visit [www.anglicare.com.au](http://www.anglicare.com.au)



# Art in the Triangle

On 28 December, local artist Nicole Grimm-Hewitt opened her exhibition 'Right Place, Right Time' at the small shop opposite the Saltwater carpark. Her artworks celebrated her two years living in Bermagui, recording and interpreting her love of the ocean and of local birdlife. The sea creatures, the ocean, the pools, the luminous light, the quizzical birds: all came together in what was to be a two-week exhibition.

Locals and visitors attended the opening, and many called in the next day. 'There were so many people in town! It could have been an amazing season for everyone'.

Then it was the day we all remember – the day the sky went dark. The electricity went and Nicole's paintings, on their easels and around the walls, stayed in darkness.

She and her husband Trent live on 35 acres of partly cleared bushland close to Bermagui. Like so many others, it was under threat. When the second evacuation notice came, the little gallery became a safe space: 'a darkened little tiny house'. They brought eskies, a gas cooker, and tucked a bed in the corner. The artwork became screens around the windows, and they hunkered down with their dog and their cat. It may not have been the right place or time for an exhibition, but it certainly was for the situation that unfolded.

Since then, Nicole has begun a series of native animal works and donated funds from the sales to the local WIRES branch. The swamp wallaby, a koala and wombat

## Right place, right time?



*Swamp Wallaby*, by Nicole Grimm-Hewitt

sold within minutes of being posted on Instagram.

There is another exhibition planned in the same place for Easter this year. What to call it? Maybe 'Here we go again'.

*Jane Sandilands*



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## WATER Open Art Prize and Street Art

From a drop to an ocean, water is life. We cannot live without it.

The WATER Open Art Prize at Spiral Gallery will feature 47 works by 39 artists on the theme of water. Running concurrently is the Water Street Art Exhibition, on display in shop windows in Bega, where you can view contributions by artists aged 21 and under. Collect your map at Spiral for the Street Art locations.

Both exhibitions will be judged by well-known south coast artist Annie Franklin, and the first prize winners and runners-up will be announced at the opening on Friday 7 February at 5 pm. Runs to 3 March.

Spiral Gallery, 47 Church Street Bega.  
[www.spiralgallery.org.au](http://www.spiralgallery.org.au)

## Adroit at Ivy Hill Gallery until 16 February

Adroit combines the work of three artists: Nikki Main's blown, wheel-cut glass, Janine Scrivens' mixed media abstract paintings and Jon and Tanya Crothers' hand-coloured etchings. Unfortunately Heather Burness has had to cancel—she is in Melbourne with a broken ankle. Catalogues of each artist's work are at [www.ivyhill.com.au](http://www.ivyhill.com.au).

You will find Ivy Hill Gallery on the coast road between Bermagui and Tathra. Hours are Thursday to Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm.



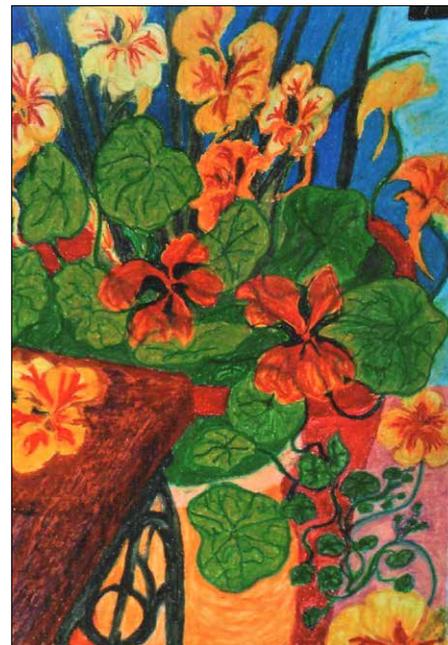
*Water on Moon* by Nikki Main

## 'A Celebration of Flowers' brings life back to the Lazy Lizard Gallery

Yes, the Lizards are back. For the last few weeks, members who were able have been opening the Gallery and trying to give Cobargo a little bit of inspiration and hope that life will return to the village and community we love so dearly. The Gallery itself was spared the night of the terrible fire storm, and we are not only grateful, but realise we share the responsibility to keep Cobargo going while other businesses struggle to recover. In the days that followed that terrible night, Shirleyanne valiantly sought out all the members of our Lizard family and kept us all in touch. Some of the Lizards lost everything, some were injured, others lost significant parts of their lives, but though we were all deeply affected in some way, we are so thankful that we all lived to tell the tale.

Our February Side Room exhibition, 'A Celebration of Flowers from my Garden' by Monaro artist, Dinah Coleman, is another story of survival. When fire threatened Dinah's property at Steeple Flat on the Monaro, she packed her car with her most treasured possessions—her paintings and her old blind dog—and headed for Canberra. Fortunately the wind kept the fire away from her property and her paintings are safe as well, so we can still enjoy them in the gallery this February.

And they are pictures well worth saving! They are optimistic and gorgeous



*Flowers from my garden*, still-life by Dinah Coleman  
still-life paintings with strong lines and vibrant colours—just what we need in Cobargo right now. So come along, enjoy the work and support the Gallery. The paintings will be up from the beginning of the month, but there will be an opening and a chance to meet Dinah from 11 am on Saturday 8 February.

*The Lizards,  
Cobargo*

## Sculpture Bermagui responds to bushfire impact with a 'Spirit' of its own

Our community has been handed a huge challenge after the decimation of the bushfires. However, now is the time to come together and events like Sculpture Bermagui are even more important than ever before. Not only will the event bring much needed visitors to our town, it will also provide inspiration, nurture the soul of our community and help us move forward.

Yes, from 6 to 15 March, our Indoor and Outdoor exhibitions will be on display in their beautiful settings. By the end of December we had received a record number of Expressions of Interest from artists and we are rallying our wonderful team of volunteers who help make this event happen every year.

Now, some artists and volunteers may have been impacted and may not be able to contribute, but the Sculpture Bermagui team is confident that it will be able to present quality, imaginative and beautiful sculptures for our local and more distant visitors to appreciate and purchase.

To further enhance our program, we are working on additional items of music and other activities to encourage our villagers and those from across far worse affected areas of our region. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and local news sources in the weeks ahead for further details.

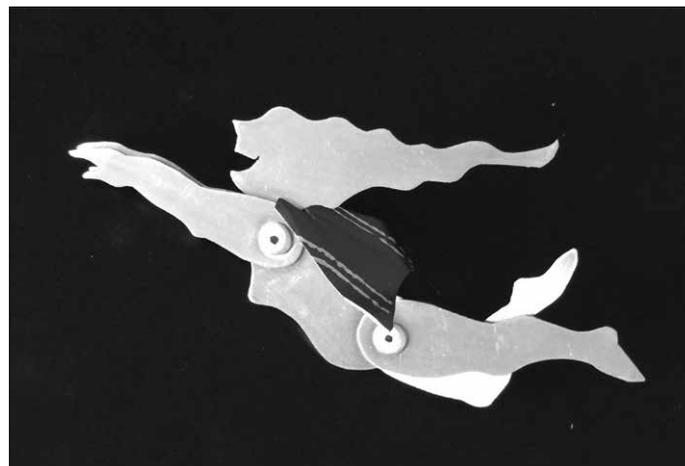
We also have our own mascot: Bermagui Spirit. This little soul will play an integral part during our Sculpture Bermagui

event. She encapsulates the energy, potential and beauty of the region.

Art has a fundamental role in uplifting and enhancing our life experience. We need this now more than ever. Come join us in our celebration of sculpture.

Enquiries to [social@sculpturebermagui.org.au](mailto:social@sculpturebermagui.org.au).

*The Sculpture Bermagui Committee*



*Bermagui Spirit will play an integral part this year*

## Garden recovery

With the recent bushfire heavily impacting our lives, our homes and our gardens, I have been asked by many of our friends and customers how to help their gardens recover.

Although some might think there are more important things to do, remember that our gardens are our retreat when we need some time out, and it is crucial that we put them back to somewhere as close as they were, prior to the fires.

There are several degrees of damage that plants will have experienced from just a scorching to a total burn to the ground. It is important to look at each plant on its own merits, to identify the type of plant and how it should be treated.

There are several categories of plants, including groundcovers, grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees. Depending on the ferocity of the fire and how your garden was designed, the effect will be different for each category.

Other than making larger plants safe, the best initial treatment is to give them all a water and a thorough wash down to remove any black ash to allow them to breath. With rain that is starting to come back slowly, plants may recover by themselves. The last thing they need is a hard cut-back which in turn will force new growth which will put them under further stress to try to recover.

Start to prune and fix the plant in early autumn when the days are cooling down. I suggest the following treatment:

Grasses, whether native or exotic: trim back by one third.

Perennials like Salvia, Lavenders: remove any dead wood and do an all-over reduction by a third.

Shrubs, whether introduced or Australian natives: remove any burnt or dead wood and again reduce the total foliage by one third. Larger shrubs like Callistemon, Grevillea, Melaleuca and Banksia should be cut back to where new regrowth is appearing. This can be quite severe. Many Australian natives will recover very well from fire as they always have.

A sad fact is that, if introduced trees like Oaks, Elms and Birches are severely burnt, they will not recover. If you have the patience, wait and see what happens next spring. Wattles will probably not come back; however, native Eucalypts should recover over time by epicormic growth.

A few other things to remember:

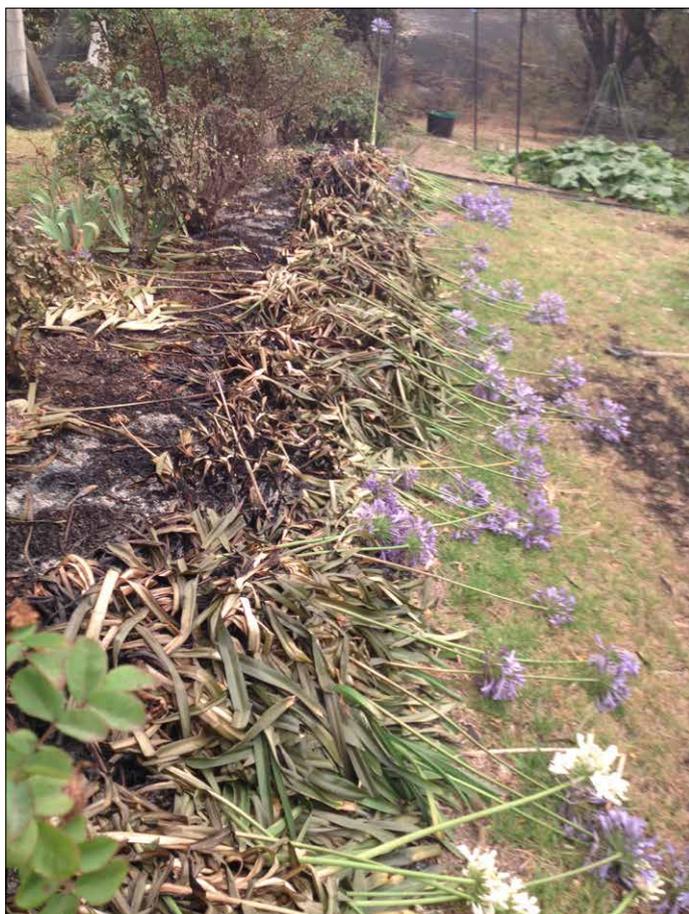
The ash that is formed from the burnt plants is of no great

benefit to the soil. It can cause the soil to become hydrophobic and not allow moisture in. Spreading a re-wetting agent will help.

Don't fertilise the garden until early autumn.

If replacing your mulch near the home, might I suggest the use of gravel. Although initially more expensive it will last longer than wood mulches and does not burn.

There is so much to know about this subject and this space does not allow me to cover everything. Talk to your local nursery person to help out in your situation.



### Subscribe to *The Triangle*

Do you live outside the Triangle? Be sure to receive your copy every month by subscribing. 12 months' subscription (11 issues) is \$32.00\*. Email treasurer@thetriangle.org.au or post your cheque and details to The Triangle, PO Box 293, Bermagui, NSW 2546.

Name .....

Address .....

..... P'code .....

Phone .....

# TILBA NURSERY

The Avenue, Tilba Tilba, NSW



Specialising in rare and unusual plants, herbs, organic fertilisers, mulches, Eden seeds and ECO friendly seedlings

Previously 'The Spires Nursery' - we've moved to the Avenue, Tilba Tilba (behind Pam's Store)!

Owners | Keith and Desiree  
Phone | (02) 4473 7196  
www.tilbanursery.com.au  
Facebook | @tilbanursery

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK  
Mon - Sun | 10.00am - 4.00pm  
Saturday | 9.00am - 4.00pm



## Cooking in a crisis

After the fires ravaged our native flora and fauna, the precious water and air of our landscapes and our biodiversity, may we all move towards a shared loving regard and consideration for the planet and each of the lives that depend on its health.

Whether you are vegetarian, vegan, piscatarian, a meat eater, gluten-free, sugar-free, etc—we stand in solidarity when a plate of food is offered to us, arranged with love and nourishment. So here are some recipes that use limited ingredients, tinned food or frozen foods (possibly donated) and don't require too much energy consumption. These recipe suggestions can be adapted to your cupboard supplies.

### Bean and Cucumber Salad

1 can cannellini beans (or borlotti beans, or chickpeas) rinsed  
 1 cucumber thickly sliced  
 1 onion (red or any type) finely diced  
 1 capsicum (any type) diced  
 green herbs (parsley, basil, mint, even kale, finely shredded)  
 2 tomatoes diced  
 olives  
 bread (preferably stale) sliced thinly and pan-fried in oil and garlic.

You could top with locally grown snowpea sprouts from Salad Direct to support our friends.

Assemble salad in a bowl and toss in a dressing of your choice: an Asian or Mediterranean taste

#### Asian dressing:

¼ cup oil (olive oil and sesame oil)  
 4 tablespoons lemon, lime or grapefruit juice  
 1 teaspoon grated ginger  
 pinch salt and sugar  
 dash of chilli (optional)

You could add crushed salted peanuts, tamari almonds or sunflower seeds. You may wish to add noodles, finely julienned carrot and cabbage to this and leave the olives out.

¼ cup lemon juice or vinegar,  
 2 tsp honey,  
 1 tsp Dijon mustard,  
 salt and pepper to taste.

Serve these recipes with rice, potatoes or bread.



### And don't forget a dessert!

*Let's look at canned fruit.*

#### Suggestion 1:

Can of pineapple pieces—drain and pan fry with butter or Nuttalex, add brown sugar till caramelised, add a dash of rum and cinnamon. Serve with creamed rice or yoghurt.

#### Suggestion 2:

Can of peaches, half drained and heated. Add a splash of whiskey and serve with whipped cream and toasted pecan nuts

#### Suggestion 3:

Packet of frozen berries simmered till syrupy. Add lemon or orange zest, serve with creamed rice or whipped cream and your favourite biscuits crumbled.

And if you are lucky enough to have access to fresh fruit, you can still use these ideas.

Be safe and enjoy!



### Lentil and Spinach Salad (served warm or cold)

1 can of brown lentils (rinsed)  
 1 onion chopped (sautéed in oil)  
 1 clove garlic  
 1 bunch or packet English spinach  
 2 tbsp walnuts (or roasted seeds)  
 1 tbsp lemon zest

#### Dressing:

1/3 cup olive oil,



# Pet of the Month

Deb Cox

Animal Welfare League New South Wales Far South Coast Branch has been heavily impacted by the recent fires that swept through our branch area.

Along with many other people, five of our carers were forced from their homes and properties in Verona, Wandella, Bermagui and Bemboka. The loss of homes, sheds, fences, machinery, vehicles, water pumps and livestock, as well as carriers and pens, has been heartbreaking. As a result, our Far South Coast Branch of AWL NSW is struggling to place dogs, in particular, with carers because we are now very short of carers.

Temporary fencing, pens and large carriers as well as kennels would be very much appreciated to replace items and to help the carers get back on their feet again. Many are still without electricity and a water supply as well as hay and fodder which is urgently needed for the livestock. We have plenty of bedding and would like to thank everyone who has donated bedding and food and other animal items.

Ralph is approximately one year old, a male Red Kelpie who was unclaimed from the BVSC Pound. He's a gentle and rather timid dog but very intelligent. He's

desperate to please his human but he's also very happy playing with other dogs and kids. He's a working breed so he will need plenty of activity and will benefit from further training. Ralph is happy to travel in the car and doesn't bark but he can jump fences if left home alone. He has a lovely nature. Enquiries 0400 372 609.

Chip #900 079 000 648 996  
Cost \$360 . Rehoming # 251 000 222.



Ralph is desperate to please but also loves to play with kids and other dogs.

## Guidelines for contributors

Thanks for your local stories and photos! We love them and they make the *Triangle* our very own. Just a few tips for submitting stories and photos...

1. Stories should be 300 words maximum except by prior arrangement.

2. Photos should be sent as **separate JPG attachments – not embedded into your story**. Please send the original digital photo, uncompressed, so we have as large an image as possible to work with. Please include a caption for your photo at the bottom of the article it accompanies.

3. Send all **articles** as WORD or other TEXT documents.

4. Please do not send posters or flyers! Instead, write a few paragraphs about your event and include the date, time and venue in that. And attach a photo if you have one.

5. Have a think about a headline for your story. Please don't leave it to us!

6. Deadline is midday on the **22nd of the month**.

Any questions at all, please email [contributions@thetriangle.org.au](mailto:contributions@thetriangle.org.au)

**Because of the bushfires, Galba Forge will not be open for blacksmithing demonstrations until further notice.**

## For the Fridge Door - events

FEBRUARY	WHAT	WHERE	TIME
Sun 2	Live music: Dust & Echoes	Tilba Valley Wines	12.30 pm
	Live music: TBA	Cobargo Hotel	5 -8 pm
Wed 5	U3A Information and Registration Day	Bermagui Country Club	10 am - noon
Fri 7	Live music and burger night on the deck	Tilba Valley Wines	5 pm
	Opening: WATER	Spiral Gallery, Bega	5 pm
Sat 8	Opening: <i>A Celebration of Flowers</i>	Lazy Lizard Gallery	11 am
Sun 9	Live music: Chris McGrath	Tilba Valley Wines	12.30 pm
	Live music: TBA	Cobargo Hotel	5 -8 pm
Fri 14	Ecstatic Freestyle Dance	Quaama Hall (or Brogo Hall if Quaama's not available)	6.15 - 8 pm
	Live music and burger night on the deck	Tilba Valley Wines	5 pm
Sun 16	Live music: Totum	Tilba Valley Wines	12.30 pm
	Live music: TBA	Cobargo Hotel	5 -8 pm
Thurs 20	Live music: Vendulka, \$10	River Rock Cafe	7.30 pm
Fri 21	Live music and burger night on the deck	Tilba Valley Wines	5 pm
Sat 22	Ivy Hill fundraiser exhibition	Ivy Hill Gallery	6 pm
Sun 23	Live music: Chloe Dadd	Tilba Valley Wines	12.30 pm
	Live music: TBA	Cobargo Hotel	5 -8 pm
Fri 28	Live music and burger night on the deck	Tilba Valley Wines	5 pm
	Ecstatic Freestyle Dance	Quaama Hall (or Brogo Hall if Quaama's not available)	6.15 - 8 pm



#### **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

Bermagui Saturday 2pm & Bermagui Monday 5pm  
Both at Anglican Church Hall,  
Ph Dave on 6493 5014

#### **AL-ANON**

Bega, Back Room 7th Day Adventist Church,  
31 Upper St (opp showground/pool)  
Tuesday 5-6 Thurs 1-2 Ph 6492 0314

#### **ALICE BAILEY GROUP**

Each Saturday from 12.00 to 3.00pm we gather to  
learn the Ageless Wisdom teachings. All welcome.  
Phone: Lorraine on 6493 3061

#### **ANGLICAN PARISH OF COBARGO**

Bermagui: All Saints- 1st, 2nd 3rd 4th Sundays 8.00am  
Cobargo: Christ Church-1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays 10.00am  
5th Sunday - One service in parish at 10  
am rotation. Contact Tim Narraway 6493 4416

#### **ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE**

Far South Coast Branch promotes the welfare of  
companion animals and responsible pet ownership.  
Call 0400 372 609

#### **BERMAGUI BADMINTON CLUB**

Bermagui Sports Stadium. Social Badminton -  
Tuesdays 2 to 4pm, Sundays 10am to 12noon.  
Contact Heather on 6493 6310.  
Competition Badminton - Wednesdays 7pm to 9pm

#### **BERMAGUI BAPTIST CHURCH**

West Street, Bermagui.  
Family Service 11.00 a.m. All Welcome.

#### **BERMAGUI COUNTRY CLUB ARTS SOCIETY**

Monday: Porcelain Art; Tuesday: Art, Needlework/  
Quilting; Thurs: Leadlighting/mosaics Fri: Pottery,  
mosaics. Visitors, new members welcome. 6493 4340

#### **BERMAGUI CROQUET CLUB**

Sunday Social Golf Croquet 9.45 until 12.00  
Monday Association Croquet 1.30 until 4.00  
Wednesday Golf Croquet 1.30 until 4.00  
Thursday Association Croquet 1.30 until 4.00  
Call Lynn Lawson 0411 432 533

#### **BERMAGUI CWA**

Meeting, first Friday of the Month at 1 pm.  
CWA Rooms, 10 Corunna St, Bermagui.  
Contact: Mrs Kathryn Preston, 6493 5887  
kfstreston@bigpond.com

#### **BERMAGUI DUNE CARE**

Meets on the third Sunday morning of each month  
Contact: bermaguidunecare@skymesh.com.au

#### **BERMAGUI GARDEN GROUP**

1st Tuesday every Month 10 am until 12 noon, venues  
vary, phone Heather Sobey on 0418 406 068

#### **BERMAGUI HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Meeting First Wednesday of Month, 2.00pm CWA  
rooms, Bermagui. Researchers & helpers welcome.  
Ph Allan Douch 0428 427 873 or  
Dave Cotton 6493 5014

#### **BERMAGUI INDOOR BOWLS CLUB**

Social games meets for Indoor Bowls at Bermagui  
Country Club every Monday afternoon. Names to be  
on list by 2:00pm, games start at 2.30pm.  
No experience necessary. Bob Whackett: 6493 3136

#### **BERMAGUI KNOW YOUR BIBLE**

A non-denominational ladies' Bible study group  
meets at the Union Church, West Street, at 9.45am  
every Tuesday. All ladies welcome. Ph Maree Selby  
6493 3057 or Lyn Gammage 6493 4960

#### **BERMAGUI & DISTRICT LIONS CLUB**

New members welcome. Meet 1st Thurs each month  
at Cobargo Hotel & 3rd Thurs at Bermagui Country  
Club at 6.30 for 7.00pm  
Enquiries: Ray Clements on 0477 017 443.

#### **THE BERMAGUI MARKET**

Last Sunday of the month. Coordinated by the  
Bermagui Red Cross. Gary Stevens, 6493 6581

#### **BERMAGUI MEN'S SHED**

Meets Tuesdays & Thursdays from 10am at Umbarra  
Cultural Centre, Akolele. All men welcome.  
Contact Ian Bailey 0409 691 458 or  
Phil Baldwin on 0421 114 882.

#### **BERMAGUI PROBUS**

Probus provides an opportunity to meet with fellow  
retirees on a regular basis, listen to interesting guest  
speakers and join in the company of new friends.  
Meets on the second Monday of each month at the  
Pavilion, Dickenson Oval. 10am-12.  
Contact Lorraine Courts  
email lcou6446@bigpond.net.au

#### **BERMAGUI & DISTRICT SENIORS' SOCIAL CLUB**

The 1st Wednesday of each month, General Meetings  
held alternately at CWA rooms, Bermagui and  
Bermagui Country Club, commencing 10.30 am. with  
social luncheons to follow. New members are most  
welcome. Enquiries contact  
President Hilda 0438864374

#### **BERMAGUI SES UNIT**

No. 1 Bermagui-Tathra Rd. Bermagui.  
Meetings every Tuesday 6pm. Ph. 6493 4199

#### **BERMAGUI TINY TEDDIES PLAYGROUP**

Fridays 10-12 during school term. Newborn, toddlers,  
all welcome! CWA Hall, Corunna St, Bermagui.

#### **BERMAGUI U3A**

(University of the Third Age)  
Lifelong Learning Opportunities  
For a full list of courses and timetable visit:  
www.bermagui.u3anet.org.au

#### **BERMAGUI URBAN FOOD FARMERS (BUFF)**

community gardening and growing activities -  
various times and sites.  
Contact Paul on 0466 013 153 or visit  
www.facebook.com/BermaguiUrbanFoodFarmers

#### **CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Weekend Mass times.  
Bermagui- Sunday 7:30 am Cobargo -Saturday 5pm

#### **COBARGO CWA**

Meeting 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:30 am  
CWA Cottage, 5 Cobargo-Bermagui Rd, Cobargo  
Contact: Ms Sally Halupka 6493 7356  
cwa.cobargo@gmail.com

#### **COBARGO DISTRICT MUSEUM**

Meeting 5 pm 2nd Thursday of the month at  
the Cobargo Museum: researchers, old photos,  
information and new members welcome. Contacts:  
Vicky Hoyer 0422 377 278 / Bev Holland 0408 280 024

#### **COBARGO PRE-SCHOOL**

Child centred, play based preschool education for 3-5  
year olds in a happy, creative & caring environment.  
Monday-Thursday. Ph 6493 6660

#### **COBARGO PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUP**

Families welcome every Thursday 9-10.30am.  
All ages welcome. Bring along a piece of fruit  
to share. A small donation would be greatly  
appreciated. 6493 6660

#### **COBARGO & DISTRICT RED CROSS**

For meeting dates or catering enquiries  
phone 0488 048 701, 6493 6948 or 6493 6435

#### **COBARGO SoA HALL COMMITTEE**

Hall bookings and inquiries: Linda 0407 047 404  
email: cobargohall@gmail.com

#### **1ST COBARGO SCOUT GROUP**

Children 6 - 15yrs. Meetings 6.30pm to 8pm in school  
term Cobargo Showground dining hall. Contact  
Graham Parr on 6493 6795

#### **COBARGO SHOW MEETING**

2nd Wednesday every month, 7.30 pm - CWA  
Rooms. Contact Naomi Rolfe 0417 456 354

#### **COBARGO TOURIST & BUSINESS ASSOC**

Monthly meetings 2nd Tuesdays at Well Thumbed  
Books, 6pm. Contact: David Wilson on 0401 398 141

#### **COBARGO CWA**

CWA Rooms, 2nd Tues of the month, 10.30am.  
cwa.cobargo@gmail.com Cottage Hire 6493 6428

#### **DIGNAMS CREEK COMMUNITY GROUP**

Meets randomly. For info phone Shannon Russack,  
Pres. 6493 6512 or Merryn Carey, Sec. 6493 6747.

#### **MOBILE TOY LIBRARY**

& Parenting Resource Service. All parents of children  
0-6 welcome to join. Enquiries: 0428 667 924

#### **LIFE DRAWING SESSIONS**

Cobargo SoFA Hall every second Sunday. Set up,  
1.45pm. Drawing, 2-4pm. Naomi 6493 7307.

#### **MT DROMEDARY UNITING CHURCH**

Bermagui: Sundays 9am at the Union Church, West  
St. Bermagui, Cobargo: 1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays  
at 11am; 4th Sausage sizzle at 7pm  
& praise night at 6pm, Cobargo Bermagui Rd.  
For information ring Robyn 64938324

#### **OPEN SANCTUARY AT TILBA TILBA**

Meets regularly on 2nd Saturday 4.30pm - 6pm,  
and 4th Friday 10am to 2pm.  
Plus, meditations, discussions, guest speakers  
& special events.  
website: opensanctuarytilba.org and facebook.  
Inq: Linda Chapman 0422 273 021

#### **TILBA CWA**

Meeting 2nd Friday of the month at 10 am  
Tilba small hall, Bate Street, Central Tilba  
Contact: Ms Helene Sharpe 0438 257 189  
cwasecretary@gmail.com

#### **TILBA MARKET**

Home grown, Hand made, Grow it, Make it, Sew it,  
Bake it every Saturday 8am to 12, Central Tilba Hall  
Stall booking essential, phone 0490 130 478.

#### **QUAAMA MEN'S SHED**

Meets Wednesdays from 10am at the old fire shed,  
20 Bermagui Street, Quaama. All men are welcome.  
For information contact John Preston (President) on  
6493 5887 or Ron Higgins on 0408 788 528.

#### **QUAAMA / COBARGO QUILTERS**

Meets Mondays 10am - 3.30pm in the CWA Cottage,  
Bermagui Road, Cobargo, and welcomes anyone who  
does patchwork, quilting, or any other needlework.  
Lorraine James 6493 7175 or Mary Cooke 6493 7320.

#### **SCHOOL OF ARTS PLAYERS INC (SOAPI)**

Enquiries: Robyn Freedman 0410 525 968

#### **THE YUIN FOLK CLUB**

The Yuin Folk Club organises the annual Cobargo  
Folk Festival and hosts folk music concerts through-  
out the year. Details at www.cobargofolkfestival.com.  
For info ph. Secretary Carolyn Griffin 0400 391 324,  
Treasurer Zena Armstrong 0402 067 615 or  
email info@cobargofolkfestival.com

**Community Notices** are advertised in *The Triangle* for non-profit groups free of charge.  
If details change, please advise us at [contributions@thetriangle.org.au](mailto:contributions@thetriangle.org.au)

# For the Fridge Door

<b>PERSONAL HELP</b>	
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Free mental health care	1800 051 511
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Lifeline	13 11 14
Mensline	1300 789 978
<b>PRACTICAL AND FINANCIAL HELP</b>	
ANU Bushfire Support Bursary	<a href="http://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news">www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news</a>
Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment	180 22 66
Australian Tax Office Support	<a href="http://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals">www.ato.gov.au/Individuals</a>
Baptist Church Bushfire Relief Fund Request	<a href="http://www.nswactbaptists.org.au">www.nswactbaptists.org.au</a>
BlazeAid for fencing help	<a href="http://www.blazeaid.com.au">www.blazeaid.com.au</a> or Facebook
Bushfire Information Line	1800 679 737 or 1800 NSW RFS
Charles Sturt Uni Bushfire Scholarship	<a href="http://study.csu.edu.au/get-support">study.csu.edu.au/get-support</a>
Church and non-profit organisations assistance	1800 678 593
CommBank Bushfire Recovery Grant	<a href="http://www.commbank.com.au">www.commbank.com.au</a>
Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants	<a href="http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants">www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants</a>
Disaster Recovery Allowance	<a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals</a>
Disaster Recovery Payment (includes smoke damage)	180 22 66
Disaster Welfare Assistance	1800 422 322
Disaster Welfare Assistance (for uninsured)	1800 018 444
Dispute Resolution Service (between business and gov't)	1300 134 359
Emergency Fodder, stock water and animal assessment	1800 814 647
Indigenous Bushfire Emergency Grant	1800 818 490
Legal help for bushfire-affected communities	1800 801 529
NSW Rural Assistance Authority	1300 795 299
NSW Bushfire Clean-Up	<a href="http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/services">www.service.nsw.gov.au/services</a>
Pro Bono architect design services	<a href="http://www.architectsassist.com.au/directory/">www.architectsassist.com.au/directory/</a>
Primary producer assistance	1800 678 593
Red Cross - for those who have lost their homes	<a href="http://redcross.org.au/grants">redcross.org.au/grants</a>
Reece Bushfire Rebuild Projects Grant	<a href="http://www.reecegrant.com.au/bushfires">www.reecegrant.com.au/bushfires</a>
Rural Assist's Disaster Recovery Grants for business and Sporting club assistance	1800 678 593 or <a href="mailto:rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au">rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au</a>
Tradies for Fire Affected Communities (TFFAC)	<a href="http://tradiesforfireaffectedcommunities.com">tradiesforfireaffectedcommunities.com</a>
Volunteer Firefighters' Financial Support	<a href="http://www.service.nsw.gov.au">www.service.nsw.gov.au</a>
Wildlife Heroes Bushfire Emergency Fund	<a href="http://www.fnpw.org.au/Grants">www.fnpw.org.au/Grants</a>
<b>COUNCILS' KEY INFORMATION SOURCES</b>	
BVSC Bushfire Recovery Hotline	6499 2345
BVSC Website	<a href="http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au">www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au</a>
BVSC Bushfire Recovery Support	<a href="http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Recovery_Support">www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Recovery_Support</a>
BVSC Facebook page	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/begavalleyshirecouncil">www.facebook.com/begavalleyshirecouncil</a>
Eurobodalla Shire Council	4474 1000 or <a href="http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au">www.esc.nsw.gov.au</a>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Lost musical instruments	<a href="http://www.simplyforstrings.com.au">www.simplyforstrings.com.au</a>
Rainwater tank cleaning - Jono Glover	0408 840 165
Replacing Personal Documents (NSW Service)	13 77 88