

# Local Recovery Coordination Committee Newsletter

**Inside this issue:**

Industry & Investment	2
Animal Health Issues	2
Financial Support	2
Mosquitoes	3
Flood Services Information	3
Disaster Relief Grants	4
Mental Health Support	5
SES	5
Kamilaroi Highway Closure	6

Residents will be aware that Brewarrina Shire experienced torrential rainfall, particularly over the northern part of the Shire, on Christmas Day and Boxing Day that resulted in widespread flooding. Subsequent rainfall has also been received over much of the Shire. A natural disaster declaration was issued, by Government, on 30 December 2009.

In accordance with the State Disaster Plan, (DISPLAN) the State Emergency Services (SES), was appointed as the lead agency in charge of managing the flood response. The SES and its supporting team of volunteers subsequently swung into action and continues to maintain a visible presence in the Shire. Some of its tasks are and have been coordinating rescue activities, airlifting isolated residents, delivering supplies, livestock rescue and relocation and fodder drops.

The SES and its many volunteers – who have been

sourced both locally and from the central west, the north east and Broken Hill will continue with helicopter deliveries and support, as a large amount of country and road network remains under water. All unsealed roads throughout the Shire, with the exception of the Gongolgon - Byrock Road, are still closed.

The efforts of all involved in the response to date are very much appreciated.

### Recovery Phase

A local Recovery Committee has been established, comprising representatives from essential agencies to assist those affected by the floods.

The Recovery Coordinating Committee was formulated and held its first meeting on Monday 4 January 2010.

One of the Committee's key responsibilities is to keep our residents and other interested parties informed as to what is currently happening to the ongoing recovery

effort and provide strategic oversight of recovery activities.

This newsletter is an outcome of that meeting and is one of the tools to be used to communicate vital information, including summaries of the types of assistance available, agency help line contact details and web page addresses.

As the coordinating agency in this process, Council has commenced reconfiguring its web site to include links to agencies such as Industry and Investment, (DPI), Community Services (DoCS) and Health (GWAHS). Council will also include regular flood response and recovery updates on its website.

These and other agencies have placed key documents, that provide vital information on a range of health, financial and other issues, available on their websites that can be accessed either via the established Council web links or directly from agency websites.



This recovery is for affected residents. The Committee wants your input. If you need assistance, help is a phone call away. Please contact the help numbers included in this newsletter should you have any questions.

## Industry & Investment

Under the State Disaster Plan, Industry & Investment NSW (I&I NSW) is responsible for coordinating animal welfare relief services for livestock, wildlife and companion animals. Designated departmental staff are responsible for planning, implementing and coordinating relief programs at both the district and local levels.

Current emergencies I&I NSW staff have been involved in responding to the North-West and Central West floods, where a number of local government areas have been declared natural disaster areas. People enquiring about grants should check the **Natural Disaster Relief Scheme** at [www.raa.nsw.gov.au/assistance/natural-disaster-relief](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/assistance/natural-disaster-relief) or call the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.

## Animal Health issues after flooding

There are a number of diseases that we need to keep an eye out for with the flood conditions. One of our major concerns is Bovine Ephemeral Fever or Three Day Sickness. The three day sickness is spread by mosquitoes and causes cattle to go down, unable to stand for several days.

The worst affected animals are cows in calf, bulls and newly introduced cattle. Other animal health problems include foot abscesses and dermatitis, increased worm burdens. Other problems include insect borne diseases, mastitis, pulpy kidney and toxic plants. If you have any Veterinary concerns please contact **Kylie Greentree at Industry & Investment on 02 6872 2077.**

## Brewarrina Shire Council

The Council will be undertaking repairs to assets located on the road reserve, which includes road pavements, culverts, bridges and signage.

Emergency works will be carried out on roads to restore access to traffic where possible. Structural damage to bridges and culverts will also be assessed by Council Engineers. Council will lodge a damage claim to gain funding to repair the roads back to their original condition prior to the flooding. Once approval of this claim has been given, Council will start repairing roads fully where identified.

**For any further enquiries please contact Council on (02) 6830 5100 or visit Brewarrina Shire Council website at [www.breshire.com](http://www.breshire.com).**

## The Salvation Army Rural and Outback Support

The Salvation Army provides a network of support for people in regional and remote areas in need of practical assistance, or who would simply benefit from a listening ear of friendship.

Rural Chaplains offer ongoing unprejudiced relational, spiritual and financial support to help families withstand the hardships experienced in the outback and to maintain the legacy of Australia's rural heritage. They conduct regular visits to farmers and rural workers affected by ongoing drought—or flood—offering pastoral care, emotional support and practical assistance.

The practical assistance has included the payment of household expenses such as water, rates, electricity, groceries, education, child care, phone and travel related expenses for rural families.

### Telephone Counselling

If you need someone to talk to, our trained counselors at the Salvo Care Line are available 24 hrs/day, 365 days/year. Our counselors will offer a listening ear and help you work through a range of options. Call 1300 36 36 22 from anywhere in NSW, ACT and QLD for the cost of a local call.

### Emergency Situations - Flooding

The Rural Chaplains are available to help organisations or individuals as required over the weeks following a natural disaster. Our role for the recovery process is to provide ongoing support as outlined above, pastoral care, emotional support and practical assistance.

### Rural Chaplains for the Far West North NSW - Lloyd & Vicki Graham

Phone: 0437 965 587

Email:

[lloyd.graham@ae.salvationarmy.org](mailto:lloyd.graham@ae.salvationarmy.org)

## RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE NSW - BOURKE (SERVICING BOURKE, WANAARING AND BREWARRINA AREAS)

**Our Brewarrina office (next to RSL club) will be open: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.30am to 4.00pm**

### A Rural Financial Counsellor can:

- Help you to prepare for recovery from drought, floods and natural disaster.
- Assist with Natural Disaster Loan applications.
- Help clients negotiate with their lenders.
- Take enquiries and make referrals to other agencies as necessary.

### Primary Producers and Small Rural Businesses

Loans of up to \$130,000 are available (subject to certain eligibility criteria) at a concessional interest rate of 2.56%. These loans may be used to meet carry-on requirements and the replacement and repair of damage not covered by insurance.

Transport freight subsidies of up to 50% on the carriage of livestock and fodder are available to help primary producers. The maximum subsidy available is \$15,000 per annum.

For further information on any of the above please contact us:

Office - 02 6872 3255

Sharon Knight - 0427 473 433

John Beer - 0427 467 231

Sarah Goulden - 0408 973 723



# Mosquitoes are a Health Hazard

## What is the issue?

Mosquitoes spread human disease, such as Murray Valley Encephalitis and Ross River virus. During this summer holiday season around dusk each day, make sure you take special care to protect yourself, your family and your friends.

## Use a repellent

Most mosquitoes become active around dusk, although some species are also active during the day. The key time to take special care against mosquito bites is just prior to, and for two hours after dusk - the time of day when many of us go outside.

Your chances of being bitten by mosquitoes at this time are extremely high, particularly if you are unprotected and exposed.

## Cover up and take care

It only takes common sense to reduce your chances of picking up a serious mosquito-borne infection.

- Use an effective repellent on exposed skin areas. Reapply within a few hours, as protection wears off from perspiration, particularly on hot nights.
- The best mosquito repellents contain Diethyl Toluamide (DEET less than 20%), so check the label.
- Prolonged or excessive use of repellents can be dangerous, particularly on babies and young children. Avoid putting repellent near eyes and mouth, spread sparingly over the skin, and rinse off once you are indoors.
- Provide mosquito netting, where necessary - both indoors and outdoors.
- Cover up as much as possible with loose fitting clothing and sensible footwear. Avoid tight clothes.
- Cover your clothes with repellent as mosquitoes can bite through material, but be careful, some repellents stain clothes.
- Light mosquito coils or use vapourising mats. Devices that use light to attract and electrocute insects have not been proved to be effective in reducing mosquito numbers.

- Ensure you cover all windows, doors, chimneys, vents and other entrances with insect screens that are in good condition.

## Creating a low risk zone

Mosquitoes breed in stagnant ground water. Their breeding sites include swamps, ground pools and containers. It only takes two - three weeks to produce large numbers of mature mosquitoes. They then travel as far as 10 kilometres from their breeding place in search of food; resting and breeding along the way.

During the day, mosquitoes rest and hide in cool shady areas away from direct heat before emerging at dusk to feed.

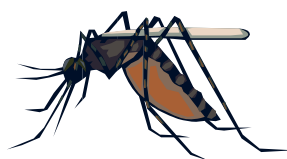
Your home could be a potential site for mosquitoes, so take steps to reduce mosquito numbers and your exposure to mosquito-borne disease. Keep your yard well-maintained, mow lawns regularly and clear vegetation areas of moist-tangled undergrowth.

Don't grow your own mosquitoes. Clean up your yard and remove all water-holding rubbish, regularly flush out pot plant bases, keep house guttering clear and make sure openings of septic tanks and water tanks are covered and screened securely.

## For the farmers

If you live on a farm, mosquitoes can breed in a number of places, so take the following precautions to reduce that likelihood:

- Keep dams and ground pools free of **vegetation**.
- Check dam walls and irrigation bays for **water leaks**.
- Be careful not to **over-irrigate**, to avoid water collecting in low lying areas for long periods of time.
- Do not let **irrigation water** flow into and lie undisturbed in roadside table drains.



# Brewarrina Flood Services Information

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

Disaster Recovery Centre:  
Phone number: 1800 018 444  
Brewarrina local office: 02 6839 2482  
Website: [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

## PRIMARY PRODUCERS

Inquiries should be directed to the Authority on 1800 678 593. Link to Scheme Documents:  
[www.raa.nsw.gov.au/assistance/natural-disaster-relief/loans](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/assistance/natural-disaster-relief/loans)  
Website: [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)

## DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY & INVESTMENT NSW

Public enquiries: 1800 814 593.  
Website: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## SALVATION ARMY

Website: [www.salvos.org.au](http://www.salvos.org.au)  
Contact the Rural Chaplains: Far West North NSW on 0437 965587.

## RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE

service on: 02 6872 3255  
Website: [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)  
Link to local information:  
[www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/rfcs/counsellors/nsw](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/rfcs/counsellors/nsw)

## GWASH- BREWARRINA HOSPITAL

Phone: 02 6830 5000  
All emergencies phone 000

## STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE (SES)

Phone: 132 500  
website: [www.ses.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/)

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NSW

Website: [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/home.html](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/home.html)

## DARLING LIVESTOCK AND PEST AUTHORITY

Collin Betts on 02 6839 2047  
Website: [www.lhpa.org.au/](http://www.lhpa.org.au/)

## CENTRELINK RURAL SERVICES

Drought Assistance Hotline: 132 316  
Rural Services Officer: Lisa Harrison on 0404 133 628  
Indigenous Services Officer: Darrell Brookson 0437 330 265  
Website: [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

**FOR ALL  
EMERGENCIES  
CALL 000**

# NSW Department of Community Services Disaster Relief Grants for Household Contents and Structural Repairs

DoCS can provide Financial assistance under the NSW Disaster Relief Scheme to people affected by a disaster who are experiencing financial hardship and who are unable to meet the cost of repairs for essential household contents and/or structural repairs to their homes.

To be eligible for assistance you must:

- be a low-income earner and meet a means and assets test;
- demonstrate that the home is your principal place of residence;
- not be covered by insurance.

Financial assistance is provided to contribute towards the cost of essential household items and restoring the home to a safe and habitable condition. Financial assistance under this grant does not replace insurance or act as compensation for losses. Assistance cannot be provided to cover insurance excesses.

## Grants toward replacing essential household contents

Essential household items are those required for normal daily life, such as bedding and essential electrical items (e.g. refrigerator, washing machine, stove).

## Grants toward essential structural repairs

Assistance may be provided to make essential structural repairs to your principal place of residence. Your principal place of residence is the home where you live most of the time. Assistance is not provided for repairs to other areas of your property, such as damage to fences, pools, sheds or garages.

## Eligibility criteria for financial assistance

To be eligible for a disaster relief grant you must meet an income and asset test.

We will assess your disposable income, which is the amount of money you have left each week after you pay your rent or home mortgage. As a guide, the weekly disposable income amount (after mortgage or rental payments) ranges from approximately \$353.90 for a single person, to \$595.90 for a couple and also takes into account the number of dependent children you may have. Please note that your eligibility will be assessed on the income that you were receiving at the time of the disaster.

## Applying for a disaster relief grant

To apply for financial assistance phone 1800 018 444. A disaster recovery officer will assist you and provide you with a disaster relief application form. Applications should be submitted as soon as

possible after the disaster and applications will be accepted up to four months after the date the disaster damaged your home. You must sign the declaration at the end of the form and provide all of the documentation requested. This information will help to determine your eligibility for financial assistance.

Information you provide will be checked and we will contact the agencies that you have nominated, such as Centrelink, financial institutions and insurance companies. When you sign the application form you are giving us permission to check that information.

There is a checklist at the end of this document to remind you which

documents are required. Some important information you will need to provide includes:

### Statement of income

If you are a wage earner you should provide evidence of the income you were receiving at the time of the disaster. You should attach the relevant pay slip to your application.

If you receive Centrelink payments or a superannuation pension you should attach your latest advice letter. If your income included pension payments from another country, an advice letter showing details should also be attached. If you are self-employed you should provide evidence of your taxable income (such as your tax returns).

### Rent or home loan repayments

You will need to provide us with information about your rental or mortgage commitments.

If you are paying off your home you should provide a statement from your lending authority which sets out the minimum rate of repayment and the balance owing on your mortgage.

If you are renting your home please attach your last normal weekly rent receipt. A copy of your lease agreement and the inventory of furniture and other contents included in the lease should also be provided.

### Assets

We also consider other financial resources you may have, assets such as savings in the bank, shares, or a second property. If you meet the income criteria but have assets above \$5,000 (single person) or \$10,000 (couple), these will be included in the assessment of your eligibility for assistance under this scheme. You will need to disclose all assets owned by you and your spouse or part-

ner. You will be required to supply documentary evidence such as current bank statements, or council rate notices for verification of property ownership.

### Home visits

If you apply for a disaster relief grant, a disaster recovery officer will need to visit your home to inspect the damage. All visits and contacts with you will be recorded by the disaster recovery officer. If you have had to leave your home because of the disaster, you need to provide your temporary address and contact number so we can follow up with you. We will still need to visit the home affected by the disaster.

### The appeal process

You will be advised in writing of the outcome of your application for financial assistance. If additional information which supports your application has arisen, you may lodge an appeal to have your application reviewed.

You must lodge your appeal within one month of the date on the letter that advised you of the outcome of your application.

Appeals can be sent to: Attention: Director, DoCS State Disaster Recovery Centre, PO Box 2645 North Parramatta NSW 1750.

### Information on repairs

Organising repairs to your home can be stressful and confusing. Information is available from the Master Builders Association to guide you through this process. Read *Repairs Guide* and *Master Builders Guide* for more.

### Disaster relief Grant - Checklist The following is needed when applying for a disaster relief grant:

Proof of income (one of the following):

- Centrelink advice letter
- Statement of income from employer
- Evidence of taxable income (e.g. taxation advice) for self employed.

Proof of assets:

- Bank statements
- Proof of investments
- Council rate notice

Verification of home loan repayments or rent:

- Your last normal rent receipt
- A statement of lending authority

Insurance details:

- Policy Numbers
- Insurance company correspondence

## Mental Health support available for flood-affected

The flooding rains in North Western NSW have brought with them a range of responses from individuals, families and communities. To some the flooding rains are a symbol that the years of relentless drought conditions are coming to an end, the environment will be left refreshed and the future will be bright. To others, the floods may pose significant additional pressure through, isolation, loss of stock, infrastructure and further disruption to family and community life.

“Providing appropriate information about assistance and support available to the flood affected communities was a priority,” Greater Western Area Health Service, Area Coordinator for Rural Mental Health and Emergency Response, Mr Brendan Hedger said.

Mr Hedger said that, immediately after a disaster a person may experience a range of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that can be intense, confusing and frightening. These are a common reactions to an extraordinary event and most people, by drawing on their own strengths and the support of others, will recover and achieve a sense of well being again.

For some people the distress may persist and they may be at risk of developing a mental health problem such as depression or an anxiety disorder. In this situation it is important that you get professional help early to avoid the situation getting worse. An appointment to discuss your situation with your regular G.P. can be a good starting point to getting help.

Mr Hedger said, that looking out for and supporting your family, friends and others in the community, who may require assistance, was also extremely important during in these challenging times.

Even though the community and individuals may be isolated by flood waters it is important to remember that you are not alone and that help is available from a range of different services. Below are some of the services available in the Greater Western area for those who may find themselves needing mental health information or support.

- **Mental Health Information and Support Service (MHISS) – 1800 011 511** number is a confidential mental health service operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is a central point of entry to Greater Western Area Mental Health Services for all agencies and consumers. The number is staffed by trained mental health professionals who, through a brief telephone assessment, establish the appropriate and available response to the needs of the caller. The service has established links to all mental health services across the greater western area health service.
- **Drug and Alcohol Helpline – 1300 887 000** If it is a drug and alcohol emergency requiring urgent medical care, present to your local hospital emergency department.
- **Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) - 1800 422 599**, 24 hour confidential advice, information and referral.
- **NSW Rural Mental Health Support Line – 1800 201 123** for 24 Hour, 7 Day support and referral.
- **Lifeline – 13 11 14**, Confidential 24 hour, 7 day telephone counselling.
- **Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800**, telephone counselling 24 hour, seven days a week
- **Mensline Australia – 1300 799 978** Confidential 24 hour, 7 day telephone counselling for men.

Media Release Contact: Brendan Hedger 0428436131 or Rebekah Rutherford 0407959781

## State Emergency Service

As part of its response activities, volunteers from the Brewarrina SES are continuing to support land holders and their local community and is focusing primarily on the provision of reconnaissance, transport and resupply services. The Unit is working closely with the Department of Industry & Investment, providing administrative and logistical support to assist with dealing with isolated stock on properties in the Brewarrina area. Persons needing to contact the SES can ring their local Unit on 132 500, or may access information related to flooding via the SES's home web-page at [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au).





## Kamilaroi Highway Closure

Brewarrina Council and the RTA are conducting further testing on the road today with the intention of opening the road to light traffic later on in the week.

The cavities found under the road around the pipes will be filled with concrete to allow the traffic to safely pass over the top.

The road is still closed to heavy vehicles at this stage. Parts of the road are down to one lane, due to road failure and extreme care should be taken when driving on these sections of road.

For further information please contact Siew Neale on 02 6830 5100.



### IMPORTANT REMINDER:

#### Septic tanks and treatment systems

- If tanks and systems are Inundated, they need to be serviced.
- Septic tanks should be pumped and desilted.
- Aerated systems should have the electronics Inspected and serviced.
- Contaminated ground should be treated by broadcasting lime to the infected area.

For more information go to: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

### BREWARRINA POLICE

The Brewarrina Police are playing a support and response role during the recovery efforts. Police will assist the main response units such as the State Emergency Service (SES) with issues as they arise.

### Do not Swim in Floodwater

Please do not swim in the flood water.

The water can be contaminated, the current is too strong and the water is too deep.

