

HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL

# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



AUTUMN 2020

## Staying connected during COVID-19

We have been through a great deal over the last few months, bushfires, floods and extreme storms and now COVID-19 is having a significant impact on all of our lives.

The health and safety of our community is absolutely paramount and to protect our community, we have closed in-person access to many Council facilities. In the current environment, we all need to adapt how we communicate and interact with each other.

We have stepped up our online services to keep you connected with us and Council encourages you to make use of our many online services. For any enquiries, including bushfire recovery enquiries, please call Council's Customer Service on 4560 4444 or email Council via [council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

We haven't forgotten bushfire recovery, although some operations are being adapted to respond to the restrictions in place with COVID-19. This may unfortunately cause some delays in programs being rolled out in the community. While the COVID-19 virus brings new challenges to bushfire recovery, Council is working closely with the NSW Government and lead contractor Laing O'Rourke to maintain momentum on the clean up.

We are also working with Laing O'Rourke and community groups to identify other ways of communicating with our bushfire affected community members. We are looking at the possibility of online information sessions or webinars.

The NSW Bushfire clean-up program has been confirmed as an essential service by the NSW Government, which will ensure the project can continue despite the measures being implemented to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

Clean-up projects will still be completed as quickly as possible to help communities take the first step towards rebuilding and recovery.

Laing O'Rourke's dedicated project teams on the ground across the state are working closely with local sub-contractors to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place while clearance works are undertaken.

We are a strongly connected community, and over many years, Council has worked hard to build these connections. This strong foundation of caring for each other means that, more than ever, we need to do what is best for our community. Strange though it seems, we now need to practise social distancing, quarantine and isolation to look after each other. This is new territory for us all and we are sure that there will be times when it is hard to cope.

If you or someone else is distressed and needs wellbeing support, the Beyond Blue Support Service offers short term counselling and referrals by phone and webchat on 1300 22 4636 or please visit [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) for more information. Please also see the links about mental health on our back page of this newsletter.

HOPE.  
RECOVERY.  
RESILIENCE.

find out more at  
[beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)



# Bushfire Recovery

## Bushfire submissions extended

The deadline for submissions to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry and Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangement has been extended to 17 April, so act now to have your input included. Please call Council on 4560 4444 for phone assistance or for a hard copy form.

NSW Inquiry submissions can be made at [www.nsw.gov.au/improving](http://www.nsw.gov.au/improving) or Call 13 77 88.

Royal Commission submissions can be made at [naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au](http://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au) or call 1800 909 826.

## Waste, Environment and Planning

Council has allocated \$550,000 to waste, environment and planning projects as part of the clean up process.

Local contractors are removing damaged trees on private property near dwellings, associated fences, outbuildings and near other buildings.

Bushfire affected residents have access to a free planning consultant, complemented by waiving of fees and contributions.

## Free clean-up for bushfire affected orchards

The NSW Government has announced new funding for the clean-up of bushfire affected orchards in Bilpin.

The funding will cover the cost of removing dangerous trees and damaged protective netting and posts.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries will directly contact local orchardists to arrange for the clean-up.

The orchard clean-up is separate to the free clean-up program for eligible residential and commercial buildings destroyed by bushfires, which is being delivered by Laing O'Rourke on behalf of the State and Federal Governments.

Impacted property owners who would like their property cleared through that program must register with Service NSW as soon as possible. Call 13 77 88 or register at: [www.service.nsw.gov.au](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au)



## SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

### Bushfire Affected Small Business Grants

The Federal Government has announced a new \$10,000 grant for small businesses in bushfire affected areas in the Hawkesbury. This grant is to assist with costs associated with recovery following the fires, including salaries, wages, utilities, fuel and/or financial advice.

More information can be found at [www.bushfirerecovery.gov.au/small-business](http://www.bushfirerecovery.gov.au/small-business) or call the state hotline on 13 77 88 to find out what's available to you.

## Temporary accommodation for bushfire affected residents

The NSW Government has made an amendment to regulations to allow bushfire affected residents extended stays in portable buildings on their own property.

Residents whose homes have been badly damaged in the recent bushfires will be permitted to install a movable dwelling, such as a caravan or portable building on their land without council approval for up to two years. For more details, visit

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





## Health and Wellbeing

Council is facilitating community outreach, psychological and social support activities and services. Council has allocated \$215 000 for health and wellbeing.

The Office of Emergency Management and Council have funded Hawkesbury Step By Step, a free service available for any residents impacted by the recent bushfires or other emergency events. Hawkesbury Step by Step provides a flexible, customised service by phone, video call or other online tools, to support people to stay connected in ways that protect their health and wellbeing.

## Free plants after bushfires

The Hawkesbury Community Nursery is offering up to 10 free plants per household to bushfire affected communities until Saturday, 18 April 2020.

The Nursery is offering the local plants to Hawkesbury households to replace the native vegetation on properties that have been affected by the recent bushfires. If you are eligible to receive a mixed box of plants suitable for your property location, please follow the steps below.

1. Call Council's Customer Service on 4560 4444 to register your details.
2. Nominate either a Wednesday or Saturday to collect the plants from Hawkesbury Community Nursery, located at 10 Mulgrave Road, Mulgrave.
3. You will need to register your details by Saturday, 18th April 2020.
4. Customer Service will contact you after 18 April to confirm the collection date.



## Supporting you through hard times

Our community members and businesses continue to be disrupted with closures, a decrease in demand for services and a downturn in visitor numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stimulus packages have been announced by the Federal and NSW Governments as part of the economic response to COVID-19.

Council is reviewing its Hardship Policy and the various options in which it can assist ratepayers during this difficult time.

We have set up Our Hawkesbury Business News to support our business community with regular messaging. To see information about grants, training and assistance, visit [www.yourhawkesbury-yoursay.com.au/hbh](http://www.yourhawkesbury-yoursay.com.au/hbh)

A Government Business Hotline **13 28 46** can provide specialist advisers and support to small and medium businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or visit [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au)

## Business, Tourism and Industry

To help our business community, Council is utilising local businesses as part of the recovery, implementing buy local programs, as well as building on work and activities already underway within the community.

Council is also implementing local tourist initiatives, working with other Councils and State Government agencies to run business workshops. One on one support and business mentoring is being made available to businesses impacted (directly and indirectly) by the bushfires. Council has allocated \$210,000 to these initiatives.





## Have you been affected by the recent fires or floods and need a helping hand?

GIVIT is a not-for-profit organisation that matches real and urgent requests for goods and services with resources from the community. GIVIT's innovative online donation management platform acts as a referral pathway for individuals and organisations to pledge items and services, and then matches them with requests received via local government agencies, charities and frontline recovery services.

GIVIT has been in partnership with the Queensland Government since 2013 to manage all offers of goods and services in times of disaster. Their service is also now available to affected New South Wales Local Governments.

The service removes the chaos of donated goods and services following a disaster and the virtual warehouse eliminates the need to store, sort and dispose of unwanted, unsolicited and sometimes poor-quality items which can present a major administrative and financial burden. It also enables response agencies to focus on the physical, emotional, psychological and social support needed for those people directly affected by the bushfires.

GIVIT enables community-led recovery and builds resilience by working with all local Governments, charities, recovery agencies and support organisations by providing exactly what they need for the residents they support.

For more information visit [www.givit.org.au](http://www.givit.org.au)

## Are you OK?

As we continue to go through this evolving situation together, let's make sure we take the time to ask our family, friends, work colleagues and neighbours - are you OK?

Our Hawkesbury community has recently been through several extreme weather incidents, that have impacted many of us in different ways.

It's completely normal to experience a range of emotions after any crisis situation. Having someone to listen to and support you through this is very important.

Check in on your friends and neighbours, and if you or someone you know needs help, reach out. If you need help on how to ask, follow this link for some simple steps that could change a life:

[www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask](http://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask)

If you or someone else does need help, the following are free services available at all hours, every day:

- Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511
- Lifeline Bushfire Recovery Line - 13 43 57
- Mensline – 1300 789 978
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800
- Beyondblue – 1300 22 4636
- Call 000 if you or someone you know is in immediate danger.

## Good hygiene

Members of the public are advised to practice good hygiene guidelines, including correct handwashing and social distancing as promoted by the NSW and Federal Governments. To obtain accurate and official information about COVID-19.

Please go to the NSW Department of Health website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au) and Federal Government website [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).



## Contact us:



### Hawkesbury City Council

366 George Street  
(PO Box 146)  
Windsor NSW 2756

Phone: (02) 4560 4444  
Facsimile: (02) 4587 7740  
Email: [council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)  
Website: [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

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