

CO1 – Activate Wollondilly Project Update

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249738

TRIM 9563

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Activate Wollondilly Community Resilience Innovation Project and to advise of outcomes achieved.
- It is recommended that Council endorse the report outcomes and recommendations and acknowledge the efforts of the newly formed Wollondilly Community Resilience Committee.

REPORT

Activate Wollondilly has been funded and approved by the Department of Justice Office of Emergency Management through the Community Resilience Innovation Program on 24 January 2017.

Activate Wollondilly is a strengths based approach to disaster preparedness aimed at building a resilient community in the Wollondilly Local Government Area.

The project focuses on deliberative dialogue between residents, stakeholders, Council and emergency agencies with the intent to build capacity and cohesion.

Activate Wollondilly has the following key priorities:

- Engage a consultant to conduct Community Consultation Forums, undertake a Mock Emergency Management Exercise and provide Council with a final report and recommendations
- Conduct four (4) Community Forums with Residents, Businesses, Community Groups/Charities/Schools and the Emergency Service Combat Agencies
- Examine the social, health and well-being of affected residents and the business community
- Collate feedback from the forums to guide the development of key recommendations by Nemesis
- Review the Wollondilly Local Disaster Recovery Plan and align actions and strategies with Council's Community Strategic Plan
- Establish a Community Reference Group that will focus on areas of Resilience and Preparedness, Well-Being and Recovery.

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ACTIONS

Nemesis Consultancy was appointed to conduct the four (4) Community Forums which were held in February and March 2017. The forums were held at the Picton Bowling Club and were well attended by the nominated target groups. Feedback from each of the forums was collated and guided the development of an Investigation Report with key recommendations for Council.

The social, health and welfare needs of the residential and business communities were identified through the community forums and individual meetings. Wollondilly Health Alliance has assisted in the referral process for affected individuals to access Community and Allied Health Services including Mental Health and Suicide Prevention whilst Housing NSW and Community Links Wollondilly have assisted with housing issues and homelessness services. Ongoing financial support and household assistance is available through Centrelink and other charitable organisations including St Vincent de Paul Society.

Thirty two (32) Key Recommendations have been identified by Nemesis Consultancy in the Investigation Report for Council to action. To date Council have reviewed each recommendation and noted the actioning officer and timeframe for completion. A summary table has been developed for each recommendation with key strategies listed. Once the Investigation Report is endorsed an email will be sent to all participants that attended the forums with a link to access the report.

A mock Emergency Management Desktop Exercise was conducted on 30 October 2017 with SES, NSW Police, Water NSW and Council Staff in attendance. The mock exercise responded to events that occurred during the Picton Storm Event.

As part of the Activate Wollondilly project an Emergency Management Guide in booklet form was developed through the oversight of the Wollondilly Community Resilience Committee. The booklet will be available to residents and businesses across the Wollondilly Region. The guide draws from recommendations and priority actions of the SES, RFS and NSW Office of Emergency Management and will be available for distribution in December 2017.

The Wollondilly Community Resilience Committee was established following an Expression of Interest process and direct invitation to previous members of the Wollondilly Social Welfare Sub-committee, which was established by the Wollondilly Local Recovery Committee in response to the 5 June 2016 Wollondilly Storm Event. The Committee has 6 Community Members and is facilitated by Council staff. The Committee has developed Terms of Reference and meets on a quarterly basis at Council with secretariat support provided by Council.

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The Community Resilience Committee has recommended Council seek further funding to support the annual undertaking of a mock Emergency Management Desk Top Exercise with key community representation to maintain awareness of emergency response and recovery and to support the networking of key stakeholders.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding of \$64,300 was provided by the Office of Emergency Management to Wollondilly Shire Council for the Activate Wollondilly Project.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE BOOKLET

1. Investigation Report and Recommendations from Nemesis Consultants
2. Recommendation Summary Table
3. Community Resilience Committee Terms of Reference
4. DRAFT Emergency Management Guide

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the report outcomes and recommendations and acknowledge the efforts of the Community Resilience Committee.