



Bushfire Recovery

NEWSLETTER



Community Meeting

An information session will be held on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at the Lesser Hall, at 6:30pm to 8:00pm.

The purpose of this session is to inform the community on the sampling results of tests undertaken in Hester outside of the Timber Treeters site. This report does not identify individual property results. Hester residents are being provided with a separate information session.

There will be representatives from the Departments of Fire and Emergency Services, Health, Water and Environmental Regulation, the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes and the Water Corporation.

This session will not be live-streamed.

Cash Donations

Bridgetown Lions have a Westpac Account to provide a Community Disaster Relief Fund. Our communities generosity and kindness has lead to the donation of \$8,966.64 (as at 25 February 2022, 12:00pm).

Account Name: **Bridgetown Lions**

BSB: **036-121**

Account Number: **195013**

Comments & Questions

You can visit the Shire Administration Building to put in written feedback in regards to the Bridgetown bushfire and Hester hazmat fire, or visit our website for a direct feedback portal: www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/services/resources-faqs

Dangerous Trees

Calls regarding dangerous or fire damaged trees on public land can be taken by Tania Lockley at the Shire. Where the trees are on State owned land, Tania will contact the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for their attention.

Stock Feed - Hay

On Sunday 20 February we received some much needed hay for farms affected by the bushfire. This was one third of the allocation so if you require assistance with stock feed, contact Tania Lockley at the Shire.

Thanks to Rio Tinto for donating the bales and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development for transporting them!

Plants for Hester Gardens

Thank you to the Ashbil Community Garden and Claremont Mens Shed who have donated a generous amount of plants for impacted Hester gardens. A plan to distribute the plants is currently being made with the plants from Claremont being delivered to Bridgetown over the March long weekend.

Recovery Committee Update

The inter-agency Recovery Committee is continuing to meet weekly and/or as needed to progress community recovery after the recent emergency incidents. Key focus areas of the Committee's discussions are reflected in this newsletter along with continuing to support the Hester residents.

The Committee will be convening a financial/economic recovery sub group (with representation from Lions and Rotary) to progress the awareness campaign and eventual distribution of local community fund raising. Donations totalling \$8,966.64 have been received as at 25 February 2022.

If you would like to contribute to this fundraising endeavour direct deposits either electronically or locally at the Westpac Bank can be made into the Bridgetown Lions Account, BSB 036-121 and Account Number 195013.

RECOVERY Resources

Public Information

An interagency communication's working group (with representatives from the Departments of Communities, Health, Fire and Emergency Services, Water and Environmental Regulations, and the Shire;) has identified the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes as the single source for public information for the Bridgetown bushfire and Hester hazmat fire.

Please visit our website for updates, www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au

Blaze Aid

BlazeAid works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters such as fires and floods. Working alongside the rural families, our volunteers help to rebuild fences and other structures that have been damaged or destroyed.

Farmers can contact the coordinator, Judy or Ed, register for assistance and keep up to date by visiting: www.blazeaid.com.au/bridgetown-wa-2022/

Department of Communities

Dealing with the effects of a traumatic event

There are many and varied responses to being exposed to trauma and these may range from none to extreme. These reactions depend on a variety of factors a few of which are proximity to the trauma, age, personality traits, personal resilience, experience of similar situations and threat to safety. Trauma is a personal experience. Two people may be exposed to the same situation and have completely different responses.

The main message about dealing with trauma is to notice any changes in your day to day life, allow yourself to have the feelings and monitor them.

After the event it is quite natural to try and make sense of the it by asking oneself: how, why, why me, why do I feel the way I do and spending time reflecting on your role in the event, anything you could have done differently as well what kind of person you are and how the experience has changed you and your view of the world.

To help resolve traumatic reactions there are several strategies that can be put in place, these include

understanding and accepting that you may not feel like your normal self for a period of time; try not to get angry or frustrated with yourself if you are not able to do things as well as you did before; avoid overuse of alcohol or drugs; and talking with others about what has happened to you when you are ready.

For counselling and support contact the Disaster Response Hotline on 1800 032 965 or for more information go to www.communities.wa.gov.au

Excerpt from "Bridgetown Community Response", available on the Shire's website: www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/services/resources-faqs

Department of Health

Rainwater tank contamination

Water in rainwater tanks on your property can be contaminated during or after a bushfire, either indirectly by ash, smoke, debris or directly by fire and firefighting activities. Ensure that all rainwater from the first good rainfall event after the fire is run to waste, as this may be contaminated by ash and other pollutants from the fire. Water testing is usually not necessary as contamination after a bushfire is usually obvious.

Can I treat rainwater to a drinking water standard if it has been contaminated?

No, it is usually very difficult and expensive to remove effectively any contamination caused by fire suppressants or any other potentially harmful by-products caused by ash from burnt bush, plastics and metals.

Refilling your rainwater tank

You may need to drain and refill your tank with water from a commercial water carting company. Before you do, make sure that:

- the tank or any associated pipework has not been damaged by fire;
- the tank has been desludged and cleaned, if contaminated, by a specialist contractor.

Do not reconnect your down pipes until your roof and gutters have been cleaned or rainwater from the first rains after the fire has been run to waste.

For more information, visit

www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/After-a-bushfire-hazards-on-your-property

Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development

Contaminated farm dams

Organic material washed into dams can lead to water becoming unattractive to livestock and possibly toxic.

The main carrier of contamination is rapid water flow from thunderstorms during the dry season, carrying loose organic material from the catchment.

There are several practical ways of preventing contamination, clearing organic material from dams before it causes a problem, and several ways of making contaminated water more drinkable and safe for livestock.

For more information, visit www.agric.wa.gov.au/water-management/contaminated-farm-dams-%E2%80%93-western-australia

Lifeline

Lifeline exists to ensure that no person in Australia has to face their darkest moments alone. Our experience has shown us that it is through connection that we can find hope. We are available 24 hours a day to listen, without judgement to any person in Australia who is feeling overwhelmed, experiencing crisis or longs to be heard.

For 24/7 Crisis Support, call 13 11 14, text them on 0477 131 114 or chat with them online: www.lifeline.org.au

Rural Aid

Rural Aid provides a \$1,000.00 one-off payment to Primary Producers to assist with bills and living expenses. Farmers can register here: <https://faa.ruralaid.org.au/farmer-registration/>

RuralLink

RuralLink is an after-hours telephone service for people in rural and regional Western Australia experiencing a mental health crisis. Callers to RuralLink are connected to a trained mental health clinician who can provide them with: mental health assessment, crisis support, crisis planning and brief intervention. Call them on 1800 552 002.

Rural West

Rural West provide free financial counselling to farmers and regional small businesses in WA. Rural West are federally funded and supported by the National Recovery and Resilience Agency.

Support can be accessed via their website: www.ruralwest.com.au

Synergy & Western Power

The Synergy Case Management team is available to tailor individual solutions for any customers experiencing hardship as a result of the bushfires. To

Speak to the team, customers can contact Synergy and request case management support due to bushfire-related hardship.

Synergy can be contacted by calling 13 13 53 for residential accounts, 13 13 54 for business accounts or visit: www.synergy.net.au

Water Corporation

Update #3: Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire bushfire - Hester Dam water source reinstated

Water Corporation is reinstating Hester Dam to supply water to Boyup Brook and Bridgetown following this month's Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire bushfire.

As a precautionary measure, Hester Dam had been taken offline following the fire, with water carted to supplement the local water supply scheme.

Comprehensive water quality testing has shown that the water in Hester Dam is completely safe, in line with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, enabling the dam to be brought back online from tomorrow (25 February 2022). Water quality monitoring of Hester Dam will be ongoing, in accordance with managing drinking water sources.

With water carting now ceasing, residents in Boyup Brook and Bridgetown are no longer required to restrict their water use to essential purposes, however, continued waterwise behaviour is encouraged to help save water.

Water Corporation extends its appreciation and thanks to the local communities for their patience and cooperation while the impacts of the bushfire were being managed.

Water supply faults and issues should be reported to Water Corporation's 24/7 Operations Centre on 13 13 75.

Western Power

Western Power administer the State Government's \$80 extended outage payment, which is a one-off payment of \$80 per any unplanned outage that lasts longer than 12 consecutive hours.

The payment is an acknowledgement of the inconvenience for customers who have experienced a long unplanned outage while waiting for repairs to be completed and restoration of power to occur. Payment of successful claims will be made to your nominated account within 30 days.

Visit their website for more information: www.westernpower.com.au

..... IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes9761 0800	Rural Aidwww.ruralaid.org.au
.....www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au	RuralLink1800 552 002
.....www.facebook.com/bridgetowngreenbushesshire	Rural Westwww.ruralwest.com.au
Australian Red Cross1800 733 276	Synergy (residential)13 13 53
BlazeAidwww.blazeaid.com.au	Synergy (business)13 13 54
Crisis Care1800 199 008	Water Corporation (water use allowance)13 13 85
Department of Communities1800 032 965	Water Corporation (water supply/quality)13 13 75
Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development, Manjimup Office9777 0000	Western Power13 13 51
Disaster Response Hotline1800 032 965www.westernpower.com.au
Lifeline13 11 14	Wildcare Helpline9474 9055
.....www.lifeline.org.au



Shire Works & Services Update

Thank you to those who have enquired about an update on how our Works and Services Crew have been since the bushfire. We appreciate your concern and patience while we “bounce-back” from the bushfire.

The fleet was affected but the Shire mechanic has gotten on top of the key issue with availability of machinery mostly back to normal, barring a number of small plant items lost.

Since the bushfire, the Works and Services Crew have been and continue to focus their time on tagging dangerous trees and limbs in Hester and the surrounding fire field, and engaging local contractors for the more difficult trees; assisting in getting the waste facility operational; beginning the process of re-establishing an operational workshop and re-

building the Depot admin building, which for the moment is finding a suitable premises during the rebuild period which could take more time than expected; and continuing with already-planned works: the re-construction of Winneup Road, road maintenance, streetscapes and planning for further capital drainage work and roadworks.

We applaud our Works and Services Crew for being adaptive and working hard to maintain service levels in this period of recovery and added workload but they are always willing to assist and are doing the best they can in this situation.

If you have any feedback on the Works and Services Crews efforts during this time, visit our website for a direct feedback portal: www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/services/resources-fags