



Reverend Michael Pailthorpe, assisted disaster affected persons in the Carwoola fires.



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# DISASTER RECOVERY

RESPONDING TO OUR COMMUNITY

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## JUNE 2017 NEWSLETTER

To discuss your specific training needs or for further information please contact Anglicare's Disaster Recovery team on the details below

## Carwoola Fire three months on

In February 2017 a fire ripped through Carwoola, about 40km south east of Canberra, destroying homes and property. Because of the dry conditions, the fire started and spread quickly with very little warning for residents. In total, 12 homes were completely destroyed and another 11 were heavily damaged. Forty-five additional buildings and 2531 hectares of land were also burnt out.

Anglicare Disaster Recovery volunteers were some of the first on the scene to provide care and assistance at the local evacuation centre and Anglicare continues to provide ongoing support. Some of the residents were also assisted by the team at Bungendore Anglican Church.

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 Charles and Robyn helping at the Pantry Appeal 2017

## DR volunteers go above and beyond!

Charles and Robyn Body are Anglicare Disaster Recovery (DR) volunteers and the Team Leaders for the Canberra North team. They are avid volunteers and also support Anglicare through the annual Pantry Appeal.

The Pantry Appeal is held every winter and seeks donations of non-perishable food and essential living items. The items collected throughout the appeal are distributed to families and individuals in the community who are in need of emergency assistance. Last year over 40,000 items were collected for people in need.

Charles and Robyn are just two of around 50 volunteers who donate their time for the appeal at a shopping centre collection stand.

"It's great to be part of the Pantry Appeal because it is such a simple way to help and gives us such a sense of satisfaction," says Charles.

"We really enjoy being DR volunteers because it gives us a real sense of helping people. We're not called upon as DR volunteers very often so the Pantry Appeal is great way to be involved more frequently in making a difference," says Robyn.

Some of the items collected through the Pantry Appeal can be used to support people in times of disaster such as the recent Carwoola bushfires.

"DR and the Pantry Appeal work together in a way because they both meet immediate needs. Emergency relief is ongoing while DR is a very occasional thing, but both meet a very immediate need," says Charles.

If you wish to find out more about the Pantry Appeal, Disaster Recovery, or other volunteering opportunities visit [anglicare.com.au](http://anglicare.com.au).

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## Carwoola Fire three months on.

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What has happened since?

In the days following the Carwoola fire, Anglicare assisted with outreach doorknocking and Anglicare's Bargain Hunter store in Queanbeyan provided access to its clothing bank and toiletries for those affected. Anglicare also launched an appeal to help provide medium to longer term assistance.

Three months on, over \$28,000 has been raised thanks to the generosity of local supporters and this money is being given directly to those affected by the Carwoola fire in the form of financial assistance and to fund ongoing counselling.

"We are so thankful for the hard work and generosity of our Disaster Recovery volunteers and supporters" says Rev'd Dr Ian Coutts, General Manager Mission & Community Engagement at Anglicare.

"We are committed to providing long-term support to those affected by the fire."

## Volunteering in action - A volunteer perspective of an Inter-Agency Evacuation Centre Exercise with Daph Sweeney (Bega team)

On Tuesday April 4, I attended an Inter-Agency Evacuation Centre Exercise in Batemans's Bay with a number of other Anglicare Disaster Recovery volunteers. The exercise focused on what it can be like to establish and work in an evacuation centre during an emergency and prepare participants to respond to a real activation.

As part of one the exercises, we had to play the role of a disaster-affected person. I had to act as a migrant from Malaysia; my visa was running out and my husband was looking for work. There was a flood between Moruya and Bega and we couldn't get to each other! It was a really eye opening experience stepping into someone else's shoes. I would absolutely encourage anyone who is thinking about attending one of the Inter-Agency Evacuation Centre Exercises to do it. It was so much fun and I now feel much more prepared to act if I'm called out to an activation.



## From the Regional Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Thank you to all those who completed the DR survey and returned it to Anglicare. The data is yet to be analysed but we hope to be able to share some preliminary results with those attending the Team Leader Forum in late June. We will also provide more information about trends in the next newsletter.

John Foord, a member of the Junee DR team won the \$100 Coles/Myer gift card made possible by a generous donation from a supporter of Disaster Recovery.

A gentle and final reminder to those who have not yet returned their updated Volunteer Application forms. We need these application forms before DR passports can be issued and to ensure you can be activated if necessary. Please contact us if you have mislaid the original paperwork or would like to complete an electronic copy. All volunteers who trained prior to June 2016 need to submit an updated form.

I have recently returned from a Regional Disaster Recovery Coordinator (RDRC) retreat. Held in the centre of Sydney, this two day gathering provided the opportunity for RDRCs to share experiences, problem solve challenges and learn from the insights of others. It was interesting that of the six NSW regions represented, five reported recent significant activations as a consequence of fire or flood (or both). Many of the same issues came up in the 'organised chaos' of Evacuation Centres and the realisation that however much we train and plan, that mother nature may have different ideas and what we *want* to do and what we *can* do will often be at variance.

Remaining good humoured, flexible and knowing that 'good enough' is sometimes the best we can achieve is the recognised reality of DR. That doesn't mean we don't try to do better and put things in place to improve future responses when we can but our role is not to solve *all* problems and meet *every* need but to respond and support as best we can and walk alongside evacuees in their time of stress/distress.

Great news for Heather Gwilliam, Anglicare's Western Sydney Disaster Recovery Coordinator Volunteer. Heather has been heavily involved in the DR responses to fires in the Blue Mountains and is also an active volunteer with a number of other organisations and committees. Heather recently gained 'unsung hero' recognition for her outstanding work over many years and was presented with her award and a cheque for \$10,000 on the *Today Show*. Isn't it nice to see volunteers work recognised! Heather did not know what was about to befall her when attending the RDRC retreat and I can only imagine her reaction at the surprise breakfast caught on film the following morning when the announcement was made. Well done Heather!

We can't recognise all of our volunteers in this way but please be assured that we do value you and that Anglicare just couldn't operate in the way we do without the contribution that you all make. Thank you.

**Helen Bennett**



## Getting to know... Maxine Mansill

*q. Tell us a bit about yourself.*

*a.* I was born in England but grew up in Canberra and I absolutely love it! During the week I work for Anglicare and the Canberra Visitor Information Centre. Both roles enable me to spread my love for Canberra and the community. I also have two young girls aged 2 and 5 and in my spare time I enjoy hiking and stand-up paddle boarding.

*q. What is your role at Anglicare?*

*a.* I am the Disaster Recovery Administration Assistant at Anglicare. I provide administrative support for the Disaster Recovery team and organise key events such as the upcoming Team Leader Forum. Currently, I am in the process of updating all of the records which will be used as part of the Disaster Recovery 'passport' project. I look forward to chatting to more of our volunteers as part of the process.

*q. What do you most enjoy about working in Disaster Recovery?*

*a.* I really enjoy working in such a unique volunteer program and working somewhere with a purpose. It was important to me to do something that clearly helps people in the community, where you know that every time you go to work it will make a difference. I just love coming into the office each week and being part of a friendly team. It's a nice break from being a mum!

**Welcome Max to the team!**

## What's happening in the ACT?

There have been further changes within the ACT Community Services Directorate, the body that activates Anglicare and other Partners if assistance is required during a disaster. Wendy Kipling has moved on from her role as Senior Manager and other changes are afoot. Carleigh Dallen remains as Assistant Manager of the Community Participation Group.

Within Anglicare, we say goodbye to our valued Disaster Recovery volunteer, Edna Mulumo, who helped with data entry in our office over a number of months. Edna has secured work at the Australian National University. Congratulations! Edna remains as a team member of our Canberra North DR team.

Joining the Anglicare DR team at Central Office is Maxine Mansill (see page 3). Also coming on board is Hannah McQuiggin as Mission and Community Engagement Coordinator. Welcome to DR Hannah and Maxine.

Four of our local DR volunteers recently participated in an ADRA workshop held in the ACT. See story in the next column. Thanks go to our ADRA colleagues for opening their training to Anglicare DR volunteers. In our capacity as a Support Agency, it is good to now be familiar with the processes needed to allocate accommodation to Disaster Affected Persons if we are requested to assist in this role.

**Les Bohm** has recently accepted the position of team leader for the Canberra South team. Les is a parishioner at St Pauls Manuka. He brings experiences both as a DR volunteer and a disaster affected person. Welcome Les to this leadership role.

## What's happening in NSW?

Anglicare was very well represented at the Inter-Agency Evacuation Centre exercises at Batemans Bay and Wagga Wagga in April. Feedback from those who attend these exercises is always positive so keep an eye out for future exercises in your area. Travel expenses can usually be reimbursed and other reasonable costs will be considered.

**Peter Dyke** has recently been appointed as team leader for the Queanbeyan DR team and **Erica Dawes** to the deputy team leader position. Congratulations Peter and Erica! Both Peter and Erica have had recent DR experience working at the Queanbeyan (Carwoola) Evacuation Centre.

Elizabeth Thompson is now working with Anglicare Sydney as Volunteer Coordinator (Disaster Recovery) and will be assisting Esther Singenstreu with the DR passport project and in mapping businesses for Material Aid assistance.

We acknowledge that this newsletter was made possible through a joint venture between Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT, the ACT Government and the Commonwealth Government under the Natural Disaster Resilience Program.

## Volunteers train to become better prepared in times of disaster

On Sunday April 30, four Disaster Recovery (DR) volunteers attended ADRA (The Adventist Development and Relief Agency) training in Canberra.

The day was designed to give participants the skills and tools to source accommodation for disaster affected persons in an emergency.

Wendy Morrissey, an Anglicare Disaster Recovery volunteer who attended the training, shares her experience below.

"The ADRA training was such a brilliant experience. I gained a much better understanding of what happens when an evacuation centre is established and how to go about organising accommodation for those who need it. I also learnt more about Anglicare's role at an evacuation centre and I feel more confident in the process of 'what to do' if I am activated.

The day was filled with different scenarios which were really interesting and it gave me a greater insight into how to deal with people who are in a highly emotive state. I really enjoyed hearing the experiences of those who had been involved in evacuation centres in the past.

I felt that this training was just the next step in my journey as a Disaster Recovery volunteer. If I can give back, even in a small way, then I feel quite good about that!"

