



Helicopters and Heroes, 2017 -  
Image from inside the Helicopter.



MISSION +  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

# DISASTER RECOVERY

RESPONDING TO OUR COMMUNITY



- › Compassion
- › Integrity
- › Inclusiveness
- › Dignity

## January 2018 NEWSLETTER

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

## Emergency Services Australia Open Day 2017

On Sunday 29 October Emergency Services Australia (ESA) held an open day at Emergency Services headquarters, next to Canberra Airport to allow the general public to meet the people who keep their communities safe. The action packed Open Day which also included a visit from a Squirrel helicopter, was a way to connect with the community in an inspiring and positive light providing an opportunity to learn about the services which come together in times of need.

Anglicare Disaster Recovery volunteers participated in the 'Evacuation Centre' zone of the event, sharing with visitors the role in which Anglicare plays during a disaster.

Alongside Red Cross, Salvation Army, Pastoral Care and ADRA, members of our dedicated DR volunteer team chatted with locals about the services available during and after a disaster.

*continued on page 4*

## Helicopters and Heroes

Helen Bennett, Regional Disaster Recovery Coordinator (Anglicare)

It was a typical spring morning as I arrived at the Emergency Services Australia (ESA) Open Day. There was excitement in the air as I followed a family toward the friendly ESA staff member handing out blue 'show bags' to hold all the goodies I would collect throughout the day.

I reported to the 'evacuation centre' tent and met up with the other Anglicare volunteers for the morning. I saw some other familiar faces amongst the Chaplains and Red Cross volunteers. It felt like a bit of a reunion, because after chatting with some families who came through the evacuation centre, I headed off to see some firemen cut a car to pieces using the Jaws of Life. It was incredible to see how quickly a tonne of metal could be reduced to multiple pieces of scrap, like scissors cutting paper.

I visited fellow volunteers at the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and SES stalls and we chatted about what role we all play in a disaster. It was great to share what draws us as volunteers to want to help under extreme circumstances. It was interesting how some of us want to battle the elements, such as fires and storms, while others are moved to assist the people who have been impacted by these elements. We shared our mutual admiration for the skills we each bring to these situations.

I toured the ESA headquarters and saw how incidents were monitored by a variety of 'super heroes', with each team member having a codename such as Batman, Spiderman or Wonder Woman. Very appropriate since they protect the ACT from impending disasters!

The highlight of the day came when I went for a spin over Canberra City

in a Squirrel helicopter. This was my first time in one of these amazing machines and I could barely contain my excitement, though managed not to squeal as we ascended over the airport. The sky was clear and the lake looked amazing from the air. It was over all too soon and I consoled myself with some fairy floss provided by ACT Community Services.

When I volunteered for the ESA Open Day, I had no idea how much I would get out of the day myself. I left with a full show bag and several items ticked off my bucket list!



Emergency Services Australia Open Day, 2018 - Pictures from the Open Day.



## From the Regional Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Happy New Year to all our Disaster Recovery (DR) volunteers! So far we have reached the end of the season with no activations and hopefully this will continue. However, given we always need to be ready, a new recruit training session has been scheduled for Canberra on Saturday 24 February. See information on page 4. Please pass on workshop details to anyone you know who may be interested.

Early in January, several keen Anglicare volunteers participated in a mini-exercise hosted by ADRA at Jindabyne. Thank you to these people who gave up a Sunday of their holidays. It was good to be able to support a fellow Community Partner.

Disaster Recovery 'Passports' are on route for all accredited volunteers. Anglicare Sydney are producing these and our region will be the first

outside Sydney to receive these documents.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Maxine, DR administrative assistant, for drawing all this material together and for all the work she and Dylane, Anglicare's Informatics Project Manager have put in behind the scenes over many months to update the DR Database. Their work is giving us a far more reliable and responsive system, which we will all benefit from as we progress into 2018.

Maxine is soon to leave us to give birth to a third child. We wish her and the family all the very best.

I would also like to thank all those people who have in the past been part of our Disaster Recovery teams but for whatever reason have decided not to continue on in this capacity. There are others who no longer meet

the current accreditation criteria and are no longer listed as active volunteers. If you would like to be reaccredited, please let our team know.

Let's all have a great year and remember to put eighteen rather than a seventeen as we date documents from here on in.

Thank you.

Helen



### Getting to Know...

Gail Commens, Junee Team Leader

My husband and I grow fat lambs and grain between Gundagai and Junee. We have two children and five grandchildren. I am very active in the Country Women's Association (CWA), two Museums and St Luke's, Junee and the Junee Show Society. I enjoy reading and playing tennis.

I am currently the South Pacific Area President of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). This takes me all around the S. Pacific

helping women and children through grants for sustainable projects that enable them to raise funds to help their societies, villages and communities. Also education on health, nutrition, aids, violence etc..

I have been volunteering as Junee's DR Team Leader for seven years. I initially attended a training day in Junee. Everyone was interested and signed up. However, nobody would take on the leadership role so I decided to take on the job.

We were called out within 12 months to assist with doorknocking following the floods at The Rock, Wagga Wagga and Lockhart. Three of us also assisted in the Recovery Centre following the Wagga floods. It was a good feeling knowing you were assisting those in need in some small way.

I have attended training in Canberra, Tumut, Wagga & Sydney with Anglicare, Red Cross, Police and Mt. Macedon, who came to Albury. This training was a fabulous 4 days involving rescue organisations from all over Australia.

To anyone thinking of joining a Disaster Recovery team (or getting more involved in DR in whatever way) I say "do it". What you learn through training helps you with everyday living as well as disaster attendance. I pray every day that we will not be called out because, if we are not, then it means that people are not in trouble. It is no load to carry and getting to know others in your team is also a 'plus' in life.

Gail Commens,

Junee Team Leader

## Emergency Services Australia Open Day 2017

*continued from page 1*

These informal chats and exchanges of information gave visitors a sense of reassurance and hopefulness that there is help at hand when it is required and informed them of ways that others can become involved as well. Enjoying the event themselves our volunteers were able to gain from the experience too. One was even lucky enough to experience their first helicopter ride!

Firefighting demonstrations, tours of the Emergency Services Headquarters, fire season safety tips and emergency service vehicle inspections were just some of the other interactive opportunities for the public to get involved. With activities and demonstrations suitable for all ages, even the youngest visitors to the lively event left with a greater understanding of our local heroes and their importance.



Helicopters and Heroes, 2017 - Helicopter ready for takeoff!

## Team Update

Eight members of the Anglicare DR South Canberra Team met on Thursday evening, 16 November, at St Paul's Church in Manuka, convened by the Team Leader, Les Böhm. It was an opportunity to meet fellow team members and share some of our DR experience and interests. Helen Bennett, a Canberra South Team Member as well as our Regional DR Coordinator, was able to update us on a number of current developments and concerns.

Helen also encouraged us to seek out additional training opportunities and advise her of them. She might be able to assist you to attend activities or pass on the details to others who would like to broaden their skills and knowledge via such opportunities. The Canberra South Team will now work up a program of meetings and training for 2018 and all are keen to be ready and able to meet the challenge should we be activated.

Les Böhm

Team Leader, Canberra South

## Upcoming Event

**New Recruit Workshop** - Canberra and surrounds

Saturday 24 February 2018 – Canberra

RSVP by Tuesday February 13

Email: [disaster.recovery@anglicare.com.au](mailto:disaster.recovery@anglicare.com.au)

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