



A home destroyed from the Tathra fires. Story below.



DISASTER RECOVERY
RESPONDING TO OUR COMMUNITY

- > Compassion
- > Integrity
- > Inclusiveness
- > Dignity

June 2018 NEWSLETTER

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

A Disaster Recovery volunteer's experience at Tathra

I was activated to assist with the Tathra recovery on 22 March 2018. I arrived at the Bega recovery centre on March 23, where I was greeted by two newly minted Anglicare volunteers and a Red Cross volunteer doing the meet and greet. The afternoon was spent assisting affected Tathra residents to register and access services in the centre.

On 24 March I went to Tathra surf club to assist with the door knocking and it was there I met the amazing Max and Loretta, who are surf club members. The volunteer teams from Anglicare, Red Cross and the Disaster Recovery Chaplains were formed and I was in the team to stay and assist at the Surf Club.

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A DR volunteers experience at Tathra

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The club had become a recovery centre with a pop-up grocery shop and had received donations from supermarkets and other businesses in Bega and further afar, including three pallets of fruit.

Between the door knocking and surf club teams, we saw up to 200 people a day, over the five days that I was there. We helped families with food, safety gear and tools for cleaning up and some pre-prepared meals made by "chef Geoff" who was also a surf club member.

Food hampers were made up at the surf club and delivered by locals to residents who hadn't accessed the pop-up shop. The community spirit in Tathra was amazing to see.

One evening I left Tathra, I noticed a sign by the road offering beds and a quiet space but also declaring that Angels fly in helicopters. I stopped to take a picture and was approached by a local who explained the sign. She said the owner of the property had stayed to protect her house and the neighbouring houses from the fires. She only had a couple of garden hoses but was managing to quench the embers as they came down.

Then the back fence of the property caught alight and as she rushed toward it with the hose, realised it wouldn't reach. She thought all was lost and called out to the heavens for help. Suddenly a helicopter appeared with a water bucket, but she knew

they wouldn't drop the water if there was a person standing underneath so she quickly took shelter under a shrub.

The pilots mustn't have seen her, and seconds later the water came down. She said it was like being dumped by a wave but the fire that was threatening to engulf her beautiful home and garden was immediately extinguished, and so she gave thanks for the Angels in the helicopter!

It was a privilege to meet the amazing residents of Tathra and hear their stories, but also the other volunteers. It is an experience I will never forget.

Sue F



 Pictures from Tathra

Collector Pumpkin Festival

Justine Slockee, Anglicare Mission & Community Engagement Administrator has ably coordinated Anglicare stalls at the 1WAY FM Picnic in the Park held on Canberra Day at Lennox Gardens and at the Pumpkin Festival at Collector.

Information about Disaster Recovery was available at both these events. Thank you Justine for your efforts.



 Anglicare stand at collector pumpkin festival

Volunteer Conference

Recent **June** and **Batemans Bay** team gatherings have been well received. Members of the **Batemans Bay** team are planning to support their northern neighbours by attending an exercise being organised by the **Ulladulla** team.

A **combined Coastal teams** gathering has been proposed to share experiences following the Tathra fire.

Canberra teams are planning a combined meeting at St Pauls Manuka on 23 June.

Perhaps other teams might consider a similar venture. Let us know so we can advertise it for you.

Message from Ian

Way back in November 2017, Helen and I briefed all the team leaders that there was a '50/50 chance' of rain between then and Christmas but without any more rain the forecasters were predicting a particularly dangerous fire season, akin to the one that preceded the Canberra bushfires in 2003. In the event, it did commence raining not long afterwards and the immediate threat reduced. There was one grass fire near Holt in the ACT, and a fire to the north of Goulburn, but no homes were threatened.

We were beginning to think that we had escaped a bullet this season, after the Carwoola fire last year, when the Tathra fire broke out without any warning. Only a month beforehand we had been requesting Bega church to consider holding Disaster Recovery training because there was a shortage of DR trained

volunteers in the area.

In all, 23 of you, from across the region, responded to the call for assistance. (Others became available towards the end of the activation but due to accommodation and travel costs were not called upon). DR trained volunteers, clergy and Anglicare staff all came together to help. We are so grateful for this extraordinary response. It enabled us to help person the evacuation centres at Bega and Bermagui, the Recovery Centre, the Surfing Club and go doorknocking.

You were later joined by Esther Singenstreu, the NSW Anglicare DR Coordinator from Sydney Anglicare, who greatly appreciated the efforts and care that all of you went to in a situation that was considerably larger than Carwoola in its impact, because of the number of homes destroyed or damaged. Your assistance at a time of

such intense need was invaluable, and your presence would have been very reassuring to those who were caught up in this devastating event.

Thank you for being Disaster Recovery volunteers and being willing to be activated and mobilised at such short notice.

Revd Dr Ian C



 Ian Coultts

DR Noticeboard

Anglicare had fifteen representatives (the largest number of any organisation) at the Inter-Agency Evacuation Centre Exercise at Cooma in April. **Sue F (Canberra North)** was team leader for the day and was ably supported by team members from **June, Batemans Bay, Bega, Tumut and Canberra.**

Unfortunately we didn't have any local representatives - an indication perhaps that a new recruit training in the area might be warranted.



Listening to needs at Cooma Evacuation Centre exercise

February saw a New Recruit Training in **Canberra** with another scheduled for May or June. See the Anglicare website for details; www.anglicare.com.au/disasterrecovery

Thanks go to Lifeline for a two-for-the-price-of-one offer in March which enabled six DR volunteers to attend the Dealing with People in Difficult Situations course. According to **Tim (Canberra South)** the course

"drew on the organisation's decades of immense experience in refining volunteer skills. I especially valued the lively presenter, Chrissy English's sharp differentiation between sympathy and empathy, and the brief practice exercises in such skills as not only reflecting back feelings (the familiar "reflective listening" technique) but periodically paraphrasing and summarising a conversation using some of the other's words while keeping it succinct.

Other skills included setting and defending boundaries ("I'm happy to help but need you to stop shouting...."), matching and then lowering tone to deescalate anger, challenging manipulative ploys, and self care. The excellent handbook had further material on dealing with mental health disorders-- a lot for one morning but there was nothing irrelevant to the kind of situations we could face. I'm very grateful to Anglicare for sponsoring this exceptional training opportunity. "

Changes

Peter Dyke has stepped down as Team Leader of the Queanbeyan team as he and his wife have moved interstate. Thank you Peter for your contribution to DR. Erica Dawes, Deputy TL has stepped up to take on the leadership of this team.

Volunteer Conference

This year's National Volunteers Conference is being held in Sydney in June. We hope to have some representatives from Anglicare DR attending and look forward to hearing about some of their thoughts and learnings after the event.

Upcoming Training

New Recruit Workshop:
Canberra and surrounds

Saturday 24 June 2018 @
St. Pauls, Manuka

Further Info: Contact
Les on 0421 030 954 or
Helen on 6245 7188

RSVP by Tuesday 4 June

Email:

disaster.recovery@anglicare.com.au

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