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## Media Release – Community organisations get help to benefit from disaster support

A Community Development Worker has been funded in the Blue Mountains to assist community organisations with opportunities to build resilience and capacity to support their neighbourhoods face future disasters.

Following an EOI process Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, has funded Gateway Family Services to engage the Disaster Recovery Community Development Worker. Gateway was integral to supporting individuals after the bushfires in 2019 and 2020/21 through their Step by Step program and will use this experience to support existing and emerging community groups with training, support and guidance.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Ready said the Community Development Worker roles were developed in response to extensive stakeholder consultation that revealed while there has been a significant amount of funding provided to communities, there are few people available to assist with making the most of these opportunities.

“We have seen a huge amount of investment into our vulnerable communities that have been affected by drought, bushfires and floods which is fabulous, but it’s a lot of information for already stretched community organisations and members to navigate,” she said.

“The Community Development Worker role will develop strong links with community groups, supporting them to build sustainable networks that enhance resilience and capacity. The role will help to identify available funding opportunities, what’s involved in the application process and provide relevant skills training and guidance on what to do once they may receive the funding,” said Ms Reay.

A significant part of the Community Development Worker’s role involves collaborating with existing disaster recovery organisations to ensure all impacted communities and groups can access this support.

Karen Bartle, Community Development Worker for Gateway Family Services in the Blue Mountains, said that her role will help communities to be more self-supporting and assist their preparedness for future disasters.

“Community groups can really benefit from support with applying for and managing funding, setting up clear governance structures and creating effective communication pathways. It can be very overwhelming for volunteers and grass roots organisations to navigate the complex funding and recovery environment,” said Ms Bartle.

“Having access to community development support means that communities can realise their own vision for strengthening, recovery and preparedness. It provides scaffolding and support to establish healthy and sustainable committees, fundraising pathways and project management experience.”

“By supporting and empowering local communities, their initiatives can truly reflect what unique communities need,” she said.



We encourage you to connect with your local Community Development Worker to ensure your community group get the assistance they need in the next stage of your community's recovery journey. Karen Bartle can be contacted on **0491 140 190**. More information about the Disaster Recovery Community Development Workers can be found at <https://www.nbmphn.com.au/LocalHealthServices>

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