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

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

Following an EOI process Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, has funded Lithgow City Council to engage the Disaster Recovery Community Development Worker. Lithgow City Council has played an integral role in assisting disaster affected and impacted individuals 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 leveraging 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.”

“The Community Development Worker roles will develop strong links with communities, support community groups with building sustainable networks to enhance resilience and capacity, assist with skills training, and help them to identify what opportunities are available, which ones address their needs, what’s involved in the application process, and what they need to do once they actually get the funding.”

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

Jennifer Quealy, Community Development Worker for Lithgow City Council, said that recent years have meant droughts, local economic downturns, followed by catastrophic emergencies and natural disasters of fires, storms and COVID-19 has meant that volunteers are stretched and need support just to organise and continue.

“Getting access to great ideas and ways of working is key to how communities can re-purpose in the face of the way climate change is impacting our communities. Volunteer networks are vital to a resilient Lithgow,” she said.

“For some groups already, in just 3 months, it has meant new grant applications in, development of partnerships with funding charities and supporters resulting in delivering more activities that engage new members, and a renewed sense of purpose.”

“I’m both encouraged and impressed by the compassion, ideas, willingness and personal commitment from the range of community associations and groups, that I have had the privilege to work with already,” she said.



We encourage you to connect with your local Community Development Worker to ensure all community groups get the assistance they need in the next stage of their recovery journey.

Jennifer Quealy can be contacted on **6354 9999**.

More information about the Disaster Recovery Community Development Workers can be found at <https://www.nbmphn.com.au/LocalHealthServices>

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