Living in our area guide



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play.

We pay our respects to Darkinjung country, and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection to these lands and waterways and extend this acknowledgement to the homelands and stories of those who also call this place home.

We recognise our future leaders and the shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people.



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Pouches

Map and planning chart Emergency info magnet

How to use this guide

Whether you are a long-term resident or just visiting, this guide will help you to get to know our area better, and also what to do in a time of emergency.

Each section of this guide covers a different aspect of our community (sections are easy to find using the tabs and are also listed in the contents at left).

Some pages are colour-coded:



Action pages: things you should know or can do



Resource pages: useful information and service contact numbers

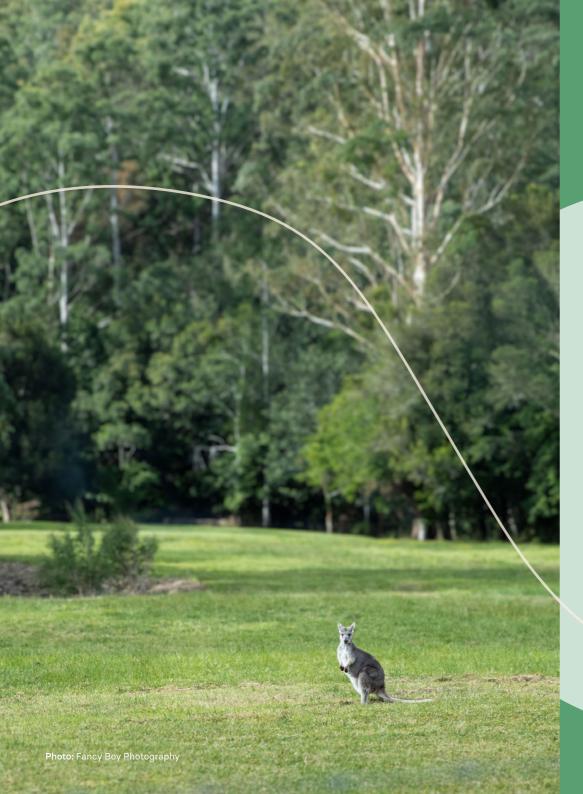
Some pages are blank:

The two 'hello neighbour' cards are for you to tear out, fill in and give to neighbours.

The local business numbers page is for you to record details of relevant services such as plumbers, food deliveries etc, and copy as needed.

There are also pouches in the back of this folder containing a fold-out map and planning chart, as well as a magnet with emergency info.

Now it's up to you to make the most of this guide so you can be prepared, respond and recover.



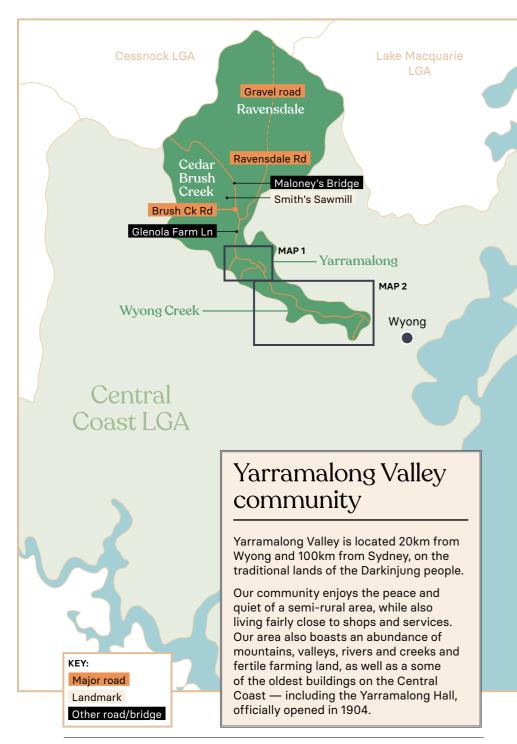
Our community: Yarramalong Valley

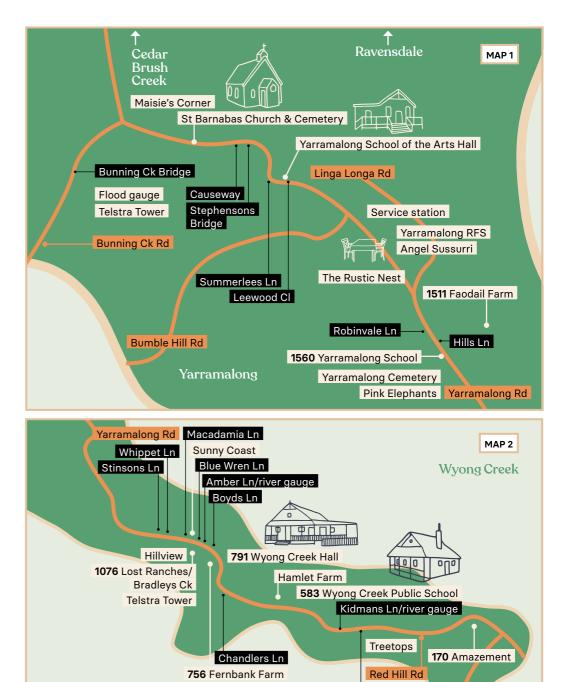
The Yarramalong Valley community is a resilient, connected and capable community with a lot of experience in responding to and bouncing back after disasters.

Our dedicated community services such as Yarramalong RFS lead us in emergency preparedness and response, whilst our local community groups including youth groups, yarn groups, exercise groups and social groups provide us with the opportunity to connect, learn new skills and be active.

We enjoy public events such as markets, live music and dance events, and we are part of the annual Harvest Festival event trail which brings visitors to local farms to sample our produce.

The following pages give a snapshot of where we are, who we are and what's important to us.





Old Maitland Rd

Lauffs Ln

Local knowledge

Three locals share some of the colour of the Yarramalong Valley community as well as emergency tips that everyone — visitors and residents alike — should know.

As a small business owner, being prepared for the unexpected is essential.

Situations can change rapidly, so maintaining a calm and focused mindset starts with preparation.

One key action is having essential items packed and ready. This includes a bag with valuables and important documents, as well as a drawer of clothes that can quickly be thrown into another bag if we need to evacuate. I also make sure we have sandbags on hand for flood events, which have helped protect us from water entering the building.

We keep the generator fuel topped up and powerbanks charged to maintain operations in case of power outages. Staying stocked with bottled water and dry store food ensures we are self-sufficient for extended periods if needed.

Having these measures in place ensures the safety and well-being of our guests, staff, family and property. The peace of mind that comes from being ready allows us to stay focused and calm when challenges arise, providing reliable hospitality no matter the situation.

Aurora Klimowicz, resident and director of Angel Sussurri restaurant and manor house





Whenever we've needed entertainment in our beautiful valley, we have a history of creating our own unique attractions.

Over the years major events have included rodeos, raft races, cricket matches, eel fishing competitions, a hilarious bush sports carnival and, probably most famous of all, the Yarramalong Country Music Festival.

From an initial idea to hold a country music concert at Yarramalong Hall, the first festival quickly expanded to a nearby paddock owned by Valley icons Dot and Denny Lee. It was just as well because hundreds of people turned up!

An old farmer's truck was the first stage, powered by a neighbouring property. Country icons John Williamson, Jimmy Little and Rod McCormick were the star attractions and the event quickly expanded to feature wood chopping, trick horses and a much-contested billy boiling competition.

More recently the Yarramalong Spring Show attracted thousands over its duration (the Scarecrow Competition is now more popular than ever!) not to mention countless other clever community innovations.

As with the early settlers, nothing is impossible with enough imagination and determination. There's no doubt about it: DIY Yarramalong style has created many champions!

Libby Keating, resident

Our values

Our vision for a connected community involves ongoing development in a few key areas:



We want to be a warm and caring community that pulls together in times of disaster.



We will better use existing facilities and introduce new places for social connection.



We want safer roads and infrastructure that is resilient to floods, fires and heat.



We want strong communication networks – both digitally and in person.



We want deeper links with nature through safer walking and cycling infrastructure.



We will support local businesses and creatives while building up new economies.



We want more engagement with our community and volunteering groups.



We want our rich heritage and culture to remain at the heart of our community.



Good neighbours make great neighbourhoods

Did you know? People who know their neighbours are more likely to cope better in emergencies. So give this card to a neighbour and help build a stronger community for all.

My name is/our names are	
I live Next door at no. Over the road at no. Up the street at no. You can contact me/us at Phone Email	Feeding a pet A friendly chat Something else
Good neighbours make great neighbourhoods	Did you know? People who know their neighbours are more likely to cope better in emergencies. So give this card to a neighbour and help build a stronger community for all.
I live Next door at no. Over the road at no. Up the street at no. You can contact me/us at Phone	— ☐ Feeding a pet — ☐ A friendly chat ☐ Something else

Our challenges

The following pages contain important information about how to keep safe during bushfires, floods and storms, and how to care for your mental health.

Local resident Annabel Giles also has some advice for living in the Yarramalong Valley:

"Life in our stunning valley can be idyllic, but with the potential for flood and fire. Simple preparation (like keeping your gutters clean and your yard tidy) is key.

For many, when an emergency arises the best option is to leave. It's important to have a plan which your family knows about. Don't forget to include your pets! If you decide to stay, you should plan for isolation. Electricity and phone services could be unavailable for several days.

Get to know your neighbours — they are a valuable resource during times of adversity, and in good times they can help you learn about the area and catch over a cup of tea (or something a little stronger!).

Local emergency services including the RFS and SES are always on hand and can also help you develop plans.

Whether you're a resident or just visiting, I hope you come to love our community as much as I do."

Bushfires

In 2001, the Black Christmas fires burnt over 73,000 hectares of land and destroyed 109 homes, including some in our community. Almost 20 years later we experienced the 2019-2020 NSW bushfires — some of the worst Australia has ever seen.

But you don't have to live in the bush to be threatened by bushfire, just close enough to be affected by burning materials, embers and smoke. In severe, extreme or catastrophic conditions, bushfires can quickly move long distances, jump containment lines and spot far in front of the main fire line.

It is important to prepare your home and property well before the fire season starts and to have a Bushfire Survival Plan developed and ready to enact should the worst happen.

People who plan and prepare for a bushfire are more likely survive than those who do not.



Prepare

Preparing for bushfire is essential for survival and property protection. For a step-by-step guide to understanding risk levels and how to develop a Bushfire Survival Plan go to rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/bushfire-survival-plan

Act

During a bushfire, stay informed to all emergency warning information and enact your Bushfire Survival Plan according to the current Bushfire Warning Level. If your plan is to leave, leave early. If you plan is to stay, ensure you and your property are properly equipped. Ensure all family members know the plan and are prepared for it.

Survive

Follow your plans to stay alive. If your plan is to leave, leave early.



Things you should know: Bushfires

Bushfire warning levels



Advice A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



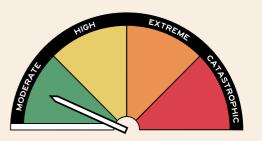
Watch and Act
There is a heightened level of
threat. Conditions are changing
and you need to start taking
action now to protect you and
your family.



Emergency Warning
An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bush Fire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

Fire danger ratings

The Fire Danger Ratings give you an indication of the consequences of a fire, if a fire was to start. The higher the rating, the more dangerous the conditions will be. Knowing what these ratings mean could save your life.



Australian Fire Danger Ratings (AFDRS) levels



Moderate
Plan and prepare



High Be ready to act



ExtremeTake action now to protect life and property



Catastrophic
For your survival, leave
bushfire risk areas

If you are at risk of bushfire go to <u>rfs.nsw.gov.au</u> for instructions on how to prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan.

Floods and storms

During flooding events, our community experiences many challenges, including road closures, lack of telecommunications coverage and power outages. This impacts our ability to access emergency information or evacuate to safer spaces, and often leaves community members isolated for days or weeks.

With increasing unpredictable and extreme weather patterns it's important to be flood aware and, if close to areas that are prone to flooding, have a flood plan. Make sure you understand your risks for flood, severe storm or tsunami and prepare and plan for them.

Floods

Know your risk — Central Coast Council have online flood mapping tools to help you determine your property flood risk. You can see these at maps.centralcoast.nsw. gov.au/public/

To learn more about preparing for floods and to develop your own flood plan visit SES FloodSafe at ses.nsw.gov.au

And remember — NEVER drive or walk through floodwaters, even if they are low-level.

Storms

The Central Coast is prone to both summer tropical storms and east coast lows. Both of these events can endanger lives and cause extreme wind and rain damage to property. If storm or extreme weather events are forecast, ensure your property is well prepared and you and your family have a plan to ensure safety.



The State Emergency Service (SES) can be contacted on 132 500 for assistance in non-life threatening emergency situations, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Things you should know: Floods and storms

General flood advice

- Listen to local radio: ABC 92.5FM / 702AM
- · Check Bureau of Meteorology updates
- Prepare property and home
- Be prepared to evacuate
- Identify you safest route to safety
- · Act early before roads are closed by floodwater
- Never drive or walk through floodwaters
- Have supplies of food and drinking water
- Prepare for power outages especially for communication, lighting and cooking



Refore the storm

- Clean out gutters and downpipes
- Secure or put away loose items in your yard or on your balcony
- Check your roof is in good repair
- Cut back overhanging trees and branches
- Prepare and place protective sandbags
- · Stay informed of the situation
- · Have supplies of food, drinking water
- Prepare for power outages especially for communication, lighting and cooking

After the storm has passed

- · Watch for dangerous trees and live powerlines — Report to Ausgrid on 13 13 88
- Check on neighbours and vulnerable community members

Useful numbers

Life-threatening emergencies

Police/fire/ambulance

emergency assistance NSW SES

Non life-threatening

Power outages and damaged powerlines

Ausgrid

132,500 (triple zero)

13 13 88

Following a disaster or traumatic event, it's normal not to feel like your usual self, but it's important to be aware of the signs to seek further support if needed.

Common reactions to stress, grief and emotional upheaval will often resolve over the weeks and months following the event, as you come to terms with your experience. Reactions can include:

- sadness, fear and anger
- sleep disturbance
- increased anxiety
- change in appetite
- feelings of guilt.

During this time remember to take care of yourself physically, mentally and emotionally. Some ways you can do this include:

- taking some time out (but try not to isolate yourself)
- spending time with loved ones
- journaling and meditation
- maintaining a health routine including exercise and eating well
- be gentle on yourself it's OK if you need time to readjust!



If you experience any of the following you may need to seek professional help:

- recurrent dreams or nightmares
- flashbacks/intrusive memories
- persistent low mood
- avoiding people, places, activities or objects
- increased emotional distress
- feeling on edge and alert to danger (hypervigilance)
- irritability and/or aggression
- exacerbation of a pre-existing mental illness
- increased substance use
- insomnia or sleep disturbance
- problems concentrating
- distress if reminded of the event
- suicidal thoughts or thoughts of self-harm
- feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.

If these signs persist or impact your day-to-day ability to function you should speak with a health care provider or mental health support service (you can find some numbers on the mental health services directory and useful numbers pages in this quide).

It can be challenging to prioritise connection, yet research hows that maintaining stable relationships boosts our resilience.

Social pressure is often exerted on people (especially men) to 'soldier on' alone through difficult times. But emotionally isolating ourselves is counterproductive, often leading to more distress in the long term.

The courage to reach out

Drawing on existing networks such as family, friends, colleagues and medical professionals can help us navigate hard times. Being honest about who we are and what we need is not always easy. But being vulnerable with other people brings us closer together.

Here on the Central Coast, there are plenty of opportunities to meet new people with shared interests through sport and hobby-related clubs and other social groups.

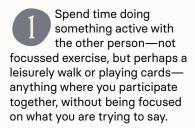
Community is also within

Even if you don't have a lot of close social contacts, you can generate a sense of connection within yourself. Research shows that self-care activities like meditation, yoga and journaling yield some of the same health benefits as social interaction.

The same goes for chatting with neighbours, staff in shops and other people who cross your path every day. Simply sharing a smile can help you feel happy and connected to the people in your life. It costs nothing, but the rewards can be tremendous.

How to communicate what you need

Never assume that people who know you well will know how you feel—you need to tell them! If you're unsure how to, try these:



Spend some time alone reflecting on what you'd like to speak to the other person about beforehand.

Talk to a third party—someone neutral who can just listen without necessarily giving advice. This might be a helpline.



A phone tree is a simple system used to help spread a message quickly to a large number of people—for instance to warn of bushfire threat. Here's how to set one up (a template is on the next page).

Gather contact details
Make a list of people who
want to be included. From
that list, ask reliable people
to be coordinators, who will be
responsible for calling the other
people on the list or making sure
group calls take place as agreed.

2 Create call groups
Divide the list into smaller groups (between 3–8 people) and allocate each group to a coordinator.

Create a structure

Draw up an organisation chart. The key is to ensure that everyone is contacted by at least one person regularly, and there is a way to check in on this. In general—the simpler the better!

Create some ground rules
Consider if you need
any points for guidance,
for example: what
happens when you can't get hold
of someone? What do you do if
someone needs help? Or what are
the key questions you might want
to ask and be asked when talking to
each other?

Communicate
Make sure all coordinators have copies of the organisational chart and the master contact list, and are clear on how it works. You could also circulate the organisation chart and/or contact list amongst the entire tree if appropriate.

Collaborate

Whilst the idea of a phone tree might be one person's, the way it's structured works should ideally be a collaborative effort between the organiser, coordinators and others in the community. Every community is different, see what works for you.

Sample call structures

Linear: The organiser calls each coordinator, who in turn each call a small group of people.

Circular: Coordinators start a chain where people take turns calling the next person in their group, until the call is returned to the coordinator (there may or may not also be a central organiser).

Phone tree template

For coordinator: your group	Group number:
Name:	Name:
Tel 1:	Tel 1:
Tel 2:	Tel 2:
Name:	Name:
Tel 1:	Tel 1:
Tel 2:	Tel 2:
Name:	Name:
Tel 1:	Tel 1:
Tel 2:	Tel 2:

Mental health services directory

Produced by the CCLHD Mental Health Disaster and Adversity Response Team

Tear out this page to stick on the fridge, or download an extra copy at www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/resilience

Face-to-face counselling and psychological service

Lifeline Central Coast:

Access free face-to-face counselling and support. For more information phone 4320 7400 or visit www.lifelinedirect.org.au

Telephone support services

NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511 (24/7)

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7)

LifeLine: 13 11 14 (24/7)

LifeLine Bushfire Recovery:

13 43 57 (24/7)

Suicide Callback Service: 1300 659 467 (24/7)

Health Direct: 1800 022 222 (24/7)

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36 (24/7)

If an emergency response is required, call 000 or go to your nearest emergency department.

Your General Practitioner

Speak to your GP about accessing a psychologist or counsellor via the Better Access to Mental Health program (up to 10 sessions per year with a qualified mental health specialist subsidised via Medicare). Your GP can also refer you to other specialist mental health practitioners and services including a psychiatrist if needed.

Online counselling and information

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Digital tools & Apps, fact sheets and an online clinic.

www.headtohealth.gov.au

A range of support options and information.

www.beyondblue.org.au

Support information, online forums and online chat support.

www.lifeline.org.au

You are not alone, we're here to listen.

Be prepared: Being emergency-ready

Don't wait for a disaster to happen before you think about how you and your family are going to survive, and then cope with the aftermath — both physically and mentally. Here are six simple steps you can take to be prepared.

Understand your risks
Think about the
area you live in, your
circumstances and the types of
disasters that could affect you.

Be aware and Informed
Know in advance where
to find critical information
in the lead up to, or during an
emergency event, and download
key emergency apps.

Make your family an Emergency Plan Plan NOW for what you will do before bushfires, flooding and other emergencies that affect your area. You can start doing this over the page.



Scan the QR code for more detailed tips and tricks.

Prepare your home
Finding out what you can
do to prepare your home
in advance can reduce the impact
of a flood or fire — it will reduce
worry if you are asked to evacuate.

Pack an emergency kit
An emergency kit
including important
documents should be put together
before a disaster happens. An
emergency kit should provide
you with provision to sustain you
through a period of isolation, no
power or prolonged evacuation.

Connect with people around you Don't wait for an emergency to build community networks with neighbours. Chat to neighbours about previous emergencies and talk about how you are planning. See if they need help to plan.

Connected communities are resilient communities.

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Emergency plan template

Tear these pages out and put them somewhere prominent, like on the fridge. For more detailed plans visit <u>myfireplan.com.au</u> or <u>ses.nsw.gov.au</u> or see the planning chart on the fold-out map for more suggestions.

About our property	What we will take	
Y N Risks	Y N Emergency kits (see page 27)	
 We have prepared our property for fire or flood We have a backup power supply We have independent access to safe drinking water 	☐ ☐ We have an Emergency GO kit☐ ☐ We have an evacuation/isolation kit Our kit/s is stored:	
People who live at our property We have kids or other dependents Someone needs care or has a health condition	Documents and belongings Important documents are in a waterproof folder (eg passports, medicare card, insurance, photos)	
Animals we own or care for	Our documents are stored:	
☐ ☐ We have adequate animal transport in case of emergency ☐ ☐ Our animals are vaccinated	We have packed our essential personal items	
In case of emergency we will take our	Health and medications	
animals to:	☐ ☐ We (or our pets) have prescription medications or medical apparatus	
	Medications/apparatus are stored:	
	☐ ☐ We have a current first aid kit☐ ☐ We have support service phone numbers handy	

Staying or leaving

Y N When do we leave?	
☐ If there is a bushfire risk	
☐ ☐ If there is a flood or storm risk	
If we leave we will go to (eg friend's place, shopping centre):	
If we stay or leave we will notify:	
on:	
Transport	
If we leave, the road we will take is:	
Our alternative route in case the road we want to take is blocked:	
☐ ☐ We need someone to drive us:	
☐☐☐ We need to give a lift to:	
Communication	
Our nearest neighbour is:	
Their phone number is:	
Our emergency kit contains a	
battery-operated radio	
Our emergency kit contains a charger, powerbank and cables	

Alternative plan

possible safe pla	iginal leaving plan is not e, our nearest community ce is (find current locations sw.gov.au):
The road	d we will take:
,	ive route in case the road to take is blocked:
	CANNOT LEAVE est location to shelter is:
If we see	nnot leave we will contact:

Tip:
Give a copy
of your plan
to your
neighbour

Emergency kits

In preparation for disasters you should have the following emergency kits packed and ready to go.

Emergency GO kit
Contains essentials for immediate evacuation.
The page at right is a suggested example of what to pack — you may find you need to add some items, or cross some items off depending on your individual circumstances.

Evacuation/isolation kit
Contains provision to
sustain you through a
period of isolation, no power or
prolonged evacuation. Items in
this kit are additional to your
emergency GO kit. Details of
what to include in this kit are
over the page.

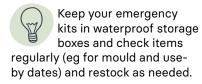
Animals kit
If you have animals you
will also need to pack a
separate kit for them. Details of
this are over the page.

Once you have your final lists, make copies of them and keep one in a prominent place (like on the fridge) and another in your emergency kit box.



Top tips

As well as having your emergency kits packed, checked and ready to go there are a few things you can do any time to make sure you're better prepared for emergencies:



Make sure your letterbox is in a good condition and the position is a good spot for the postie to reach.



Load up your caravan to take with you as extra storage (or shelter!).



Go 'flood shopping' every week get a couple of extra food items to

stock in case of isolation.



If you do become isolated, use it as an opportunity to switch off from the

stresses of everyday life. You can even organise get-togethers with your near neighbours.

Emergency GO kit

The need to evacuate may occur with little notice. Preparing this kit beforehand can help save precious time in a emergency situation, which could in turn save your life.

Essential supplies	Health
Cash Waterproof matches Candles/lantern Torch with spare batteries	Medications and apparatus, prescriptions and spare glasses First aid kit and hand sanitiser Personal hygiene and toiletries
Sealed snack food items	Documents
Bottled water	Copy of Emergency Plans
Babies and children Baby formula and food Nappies	Important documents in waterproof pouch eg passport, birth certificate, will, insurance
	Personal belongings
Special items eg teddy, blanket Books or games	Valuables such as small items of jewellery
Clothing	Mementos such as family
Single change of clothes including warm jumper or jacket	photos (in waterproof bag) A book to read or write in
Wet weather gear	Communication
Sandals or thongs for wearing in communal amenities	Mobile phone, charger, power bank and cables
	Battery or wind up radio
Tip: Pack like you're going camping	Hard copy of important contact numbers eg family, friends emergency services, mental health support Notepad and pen

Evacuation/isolation kit These items are in addition to your emergency GO kit Water for 3 days (measured at 3 litres per person per day) Non-perishable food supplies Lantern Blankets/sleeping bag/pillow Animal kit	Camp cooker/stove Utensils including can opener Camp bowl/cup/cutlery Garbage bags Antibacterial handwash/soap Additional clothes Spare batteries for everything
Animals need to go with you if you have to evacuate. It is safer for them and for you. You should pack enough to last your animals for 3–7 days. For more information go to getreadyanimals.nsw.gov.au Essentials Lead, collar and name tag Food, water and bowl Medications Toys and bedding Vaccination/registration papers Photo (in case animal gets lost) Microchipping your animal and registering them with the NSW Pet Registry at petregistry.nsw.gov.au will help reunite them with you if separated during an emergency.	Transport Check you have enough crates, carriers, cages and leads. Also work out with your transport how many trips you will need to take. Remember to secure/contain your animals asap, so they are safe while you get ready and close at hand so you can leave quickly. Crate/carrier/cage or other container Car/float Arrangements to use a friend's vehicle if you can't fit everyone and everything into yours Arrangements to use a friend's vehicle if you can't fit everyone and everything into yours
Where to take animals Family/friend's property Private kennel/farm/facility Other:	Location address: Phone number:

Important numbers

Emergencies

000

Triple Zero (Police/Fire/Ambulance) for life threatening emergencies

Floods, storms and fires

132 500

State Emergency Service (SES) for non-life threatening emergencies

ses.nsw.gov.au

SES website

1800 679 737 (1800 NSW RFS) RFS Bush Fire Information Line

rfs.nsw.gov.au

RFS website (where you can download the Hazards Near Me app)

bom.gov.au

Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) weather information and warnings

bom.gov.au/nsw/flood/ rain_river.shtml

BOM river gauges

australianwarningsystem.com.au

Information on national warning levels for hazards

Property and transport

13 13 88

Ausgrid

foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Food safety information

facebook.com/CentralCoastCouncil

Local updates during emergencies

livetraffic.com

Live Traffic app for updates on hazards and road closures

24/7 telephone support services

Mental health

1800 011 511

NSW Mental Health Line

1800 55 1800

Kids Helpline

13 11 14

LifeLine

13 43 57

LifeLine Bushfire Recovery

1300 659 467

Suicide Callback Service

1800 022 222

Health Direct

1300 22 46 36

Beyond Blue

Family and domestic violence

1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)

Family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault counselling, support and information

1800 385 578

Full Stop Australia: Trauma specialist counselling for people impacted by violence and abuse

Face-to-face mental health support service

4320 7400

LifeLine direct

Local business numbers

Copy and use as needed

Enter the details of local businesses such as handyman, plumber, electrician, water delivery, cleaner, arborist or any other service you regularly use.

Business:	
Name:	
Tel 1:	_ Email:
Rusiness:	
	_ Email:
Ter I:	_ Email:
Business:	
Name:	
Tel 1:	Email:
Business:	
Name:	
Tel 1:	Email:
Business:	
Name:	
	Email:
Business:	
Name:	
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The Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) is jointly funded by the Australian and New South Wales Governments

