

newsletter

DECEMBER 2020

Welcome!

FROM RECOVERY
COORDINATOR

The weekend of the 7th and 8th November 2020 made a stark contrast to the same time last year.

Many residents from across the Valley visited Willawarrin to attend a range of events to commemorate the 2019 Bushfires. This included the Willawarrin RFS Picnic Day, a morning tea hosted by the Willawarrin Hall Committee and the Black Summer and Beyond Exhibition. It was a time of reflection and, on occasions, a few tears. However, for those that were there, I think you would agree there was also an overwhelming sense of calm and strength felt throughout the community.

All this is a reminder that while we continue our recovery efforts, together,

we have come so far in the past 12 months.

The formation and increased membership of new and existing community groups is another example of increased community connectedness over the past year. Many of these groups are holding their own Christmas celebrations in December with everyone welcome. It may be a good time to consider getting together with your local Progress Association, RFS Brigade or sporting group. Details of what is happening throughout the Upper Macleay can be found in this edition of the newsletter.

Finally, Council is pleased to report an overwhelming response to the



\$300,000 Bushfire Recovery Community Grants Program. Applications have been received from across the Shire for a broad range of proposed projects. The total pool of funding has been oversubscribed so the Community Advisory Panel will be meeting over the next few weeks to carefully assess all eligible applications and make recommendations prior to Christmas.

I hope this Christmas and New Year period is full of laughter, happiness and peace for everyone across our beautiful Valley!

All the best,

Jo McGoldrick

DONDINGALONG RFS TEAM CELEBRATES NEW STATION & AWARD RECIPIENTS

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Lower North Coast Zone celebrated the official opening of the new Dondingalong Rural Fire Brigade Station on Tuesday 27 October.

The station features three truck bays, an office, training area,

storage space and toilet and shower facilities. Power was upgraded at the site and the carpark was resealed, while the building has CCTV installed for additional security. Water tanks will also service the building and serve as a

back-up when fighting fires. Council assisted the RFS in the project by contributing funding, the land and undertaking the project management for the design and construction of the new building. Council also engaged Osborne and Dowling Pty Ltd to construct the new station.

At the opening ceremony, 10 members of the Dondingalong Brigade were presented with their Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citations for their efforts during the Black Summer bush fires. In all 23 members were awarded a citation.



BLACK SUMMER & BEYOND PHOTO EXHIBITION ATTRACTS A HUGE CROWD



BLACK SUMMER & beyond

The Black Summer and Beyond exhibition has been declared a tremendous success and a fitting tribute to the community.

Black Summer and Beyond - an exhibition of images from the Macleay was officially opened by Kempsey Shire Mayor Liz Campbell at Willawarrin Hall on Saturday 7 November on a weekend that also marked the anniversary of some of the worst days of the Black Summer bushfires impact on the region.



More than 1,000 people visited the exhibition across November to see photos taken by the community of the fires, their impact, the immediate response and the recovery by the community and nature over the last 12 months.

Cr Campbell commended Council and the community for such a successful exhibition and recalled her own memories of the days immediately after the fires swept through Willawarrin and Bellbrook.

"What we went through sometimes seems like a blur, but I do remember the

bravery, the courage and the kindness of our community."

Council received more than 300 submissions from members of the community, including many extraordinary, previously unpublished, photos of the fires, the aftermath and the 12 months of recovery since that time.

While the first three Upper Macleay locations of the Black Summer and Beyond tour have concluded, the exhibition will now move to other venues across the shire and beyond. Please head to the Recovery website for details.



FILM CAPTURES OPENING OF BLACK SUMMER & BEYOND

A fantastic video has been created that records the official opening of the exhibition with interviews from some of the

residents who had their photos featured. Go to the Recovery website to watch the video.



EXHIBITION TO HEAD TO COASTAL AREAS

Black Summer & Beyond is heading down the mountain and across to the coast for Summer.

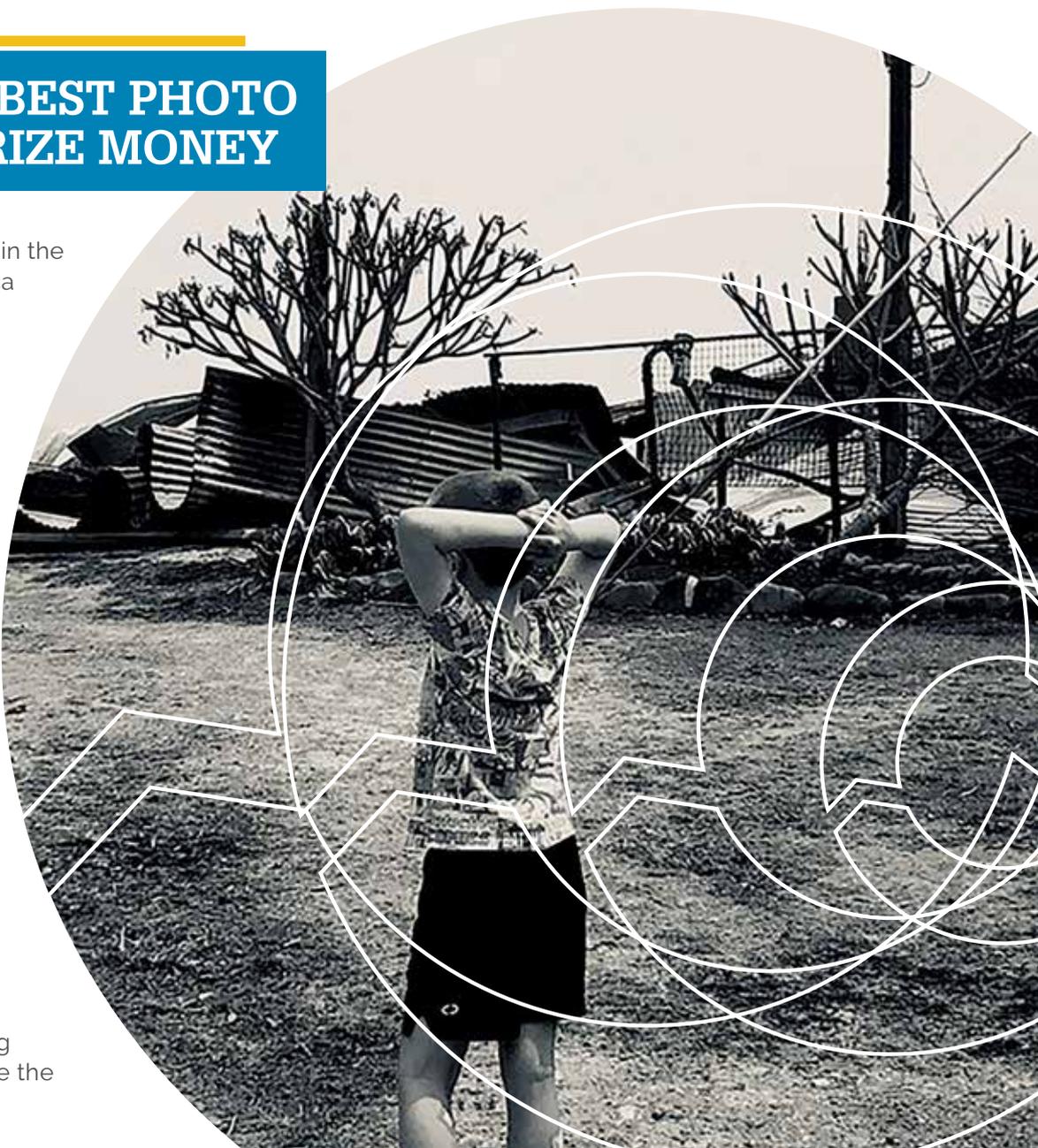
Check the Recovery website for more details on where you can see the exhibition.

WINNER OF BEST PHOTO DONATES PRIZE MONEY

The award for Best Photo in the exhibition went to Rebecca Gale for her striking black and white image of her son looking at their fire ravaged home entitled Strength and Resilience

The award carried a prize of \$500 and an Akubra hat however Ms Gale, who lost her home in the fires, declined the \$500 prize money choosing instead to donate it to volunteers from Disaster Relief Australia, formerly known as Team Rubicon.

The volunteers, who worked in the area in the days and weeks after the fires, returned for the first time to attend the opening of the exhibition and judge the winner of Best Photo.



CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN TEMAGOG

The Temagog RFS will host a Community Christmas Party on Saturday 5 December from Midday at the Temagog River Park. There will be a barbecue

lunch provided as well as a jumping castle and a visit from Santa.

WILLAWARRIN CHRISTMAS MARKET

A Christmas Market will be held at the Willawarrin Hall on Sunday 6 December from 9am to 1pm.

There will be more than 30 stalls, tea and coffee available and a barbecue with funds raised going towards the Rural Fire Service.



WITTITRIN COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

A community Christmas barbecue will be held at the Wittittrin RFS Shed on Davis Road on Sunday 13 December from midday.

There will be a barbecue lunch, a monster raffle and games for the kids.

Prior to the Christmas barbecue, there will be a general meeting for the Wittittrin Progress Association from 11am. Everyone welcome.

CHRISTMAS IN BELLBROOK

The Bellbrook Community Christmas Party will be held on Wednesday 16 December from 6pm at the Bellbrook Park. There will be a barbecue dinner and a visit from Santa.

SUPPORT STILL AVAILABLE OVER FESTIVE SEASON

Christmas time is a difficult time for many. If the added stresses of Christmas is getting on top of you,

we are here to listen, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week right through the season.

Phone Lifeline on 13 11 14
TEXT 0477 13 11 14

MACLEAY VALLEY RECOVERY HUB SHUTDOWN

Over the Christmas break, the Macleay Valley Recovery Hub will be closed from 4pm Wednesday

23 December 2020. The hub will reopen and operate as normal from 9:30am on Monday 4 January 2021.

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