



Bushfire Recovery

NEWSLETTER



Cash Donations

We are delighted to advise that Bridgetown Lions have opened a Westpac Account to provide a Community Disaster Relief Fund to assist local residents who have been affected by the recent Bridgetown Bushfire and Hester Hazmat Fire.

Account Name: **Bridgetown Lions**

BSB: **036-121**

Account Number: **195013**

Comments & Questions

We now have a Comments and Questions portal online and in the Shire's Admin Building to receive your questions and comments in regards to the Bridgetown Bushfire and Hester Hazmat Fire.

You can visit the Shire Administration Building to put in written feedback during business hours, or visit our website for a direct feedback portal: www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/services/resources-faqs

Dangerous Trees

Calls regarding dangerous or fire damaged trees on public land can be taken by Tania Lockley at the Shire. Where the trees are on State owned land, Tania will contact the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for their attention.

Stock Feed - Hay

Rio Tinto has very generously donated 500 x 600kg square bales of export hay to fire affected stockholders. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development have kindly organised transport of the hay from the Pilbara and it is due to arrive in Bridgetown on Monday 21 February. For assistance with stock feed, contact Tania Lockley at the Shire.

Plants for Hester Gardens

Thank you to the Ashbil Community Garden and Claremont Mens Shed who have donated a generous amount of plants for impacted Hester gardens. A plan to distribute the plants is currently being made.

Bridgetown Waste Management Facility

We are pleased to confirm that the waste facility re-opened on Saturday 12 February 2022, it is back to it's regular business hours as listed below. As we get the waste facility back up and running please be mindful that the Tip Shop remains closed. We are back to being able to receive green waste, scrap timber, scrap metal, bulky furniture, white goods, and DrumMuster containers.

Materials showing visible signs of bushfire damage will be accepted free of charge.

Fencing wire and other scrap metal from the bushfire can potentially be recycled so please separate these from other materials as much as possible. The Hastie Waste, Containers for Change refund point is operational again. They are currently not able to provide cash refunds.

BWMF Opening Hours

Wednesday & Thursday 7:30am to 12:00pm

Friday 7:30am to 11:00am

Saturday & Sunday 9:00am to 4:00pm

Closed Monday, Tuesday, Good Friday, Christmas Day, and New Years Day

Shire Works & Services Update

The effects of the Bridgetown Bushfire is being felt by our whole community, including our Works and Services Crew at the Shire. Our ability to undergo works has been severely impacted by the loss of two vehicles, and two trucks that are requiring various levels of repair. In the blaze we lost our Depot Office and Workshop. Damage was caused to the structure of the building, along with the contents which included multiple chainsaws, small power tools, and other workshop tools and materials.

We're continuing construction on Winnejump Road, which is planned to be completed in the next couple of weeks. The Works Crew are aiming to be fully operational by the end of March. We appreciate your patience while we re-establish these services.

WA Government

The Government of Western Australia on 18 Feb 2022 released a Media Statement, "Financial relief for bushfire affected Western Australians".

Excerpts from this Statement have been included in this Newsletter. Key points from the Statement:

- Electricity and water customer assistance programs announced for those impacted by bushfires
- Water Corporation and Western Power crews working to reconnect all properties following fires

To read the full Statement, visit: www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/Default

There is also a link and downloadable version on our website: www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au

Blaze Aid

BlazeAid is a volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters such as fires and floods. Working alongside the rural families, our volunteers help to rebuild fences and other structures that have been damaged or destroyed.

Farmers can contact the coordinator, Judy or Ed, register for assistance and keep up to date by visiting: www.blazeaid.com.au/bridgetown-wa-2022/

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions

Wildlife welfare

When dealing with injured or displaced wildlife, they should be dealt with humanely and as soon as possible. This includes staying calm with the animal, where appropriate putting something dark over its head/eyes, and handling the animal as little as possible.

You should first ring the Parks and Wildlife Service's Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055 (this hotline is manned from 8:00am to 11:00pm 7 days a week). Pending the location of the animal, an Animal Control Agent will be contacted to provide assistance. In areas that have limited Animal Control Agents, local farmers or other qualified persons will be asked

to assist. Please note that this can include a range of solutions from wildlife carer attention, rehoming and if necessary, euthanasia. At the end of the day, the animals welfare is paramount, we need to delay the pain and suffering of injured animals and ensure best practice is met. For more information, call your local DBCA Parks and Wildlife Office.

Department of Communities

The Department of Communities coordinates responses to disaster emergency welfare situations and liaises with emergency service organisations and partnering welfare agencies to support the community and individuals affected. The Department can refer you to qualified people who can help you take charge of your recovery. For counselling and support contact the Disaster Response Hotline on 1800 032 965 (country free call) For more information go to: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Department of Health

Clean up of ash in and around your property

Professional cleaning services have been available for Hester residents. General precautions for cleaning ash covered items or areas are provided below.

- Practice good hygiene and wear gloves and a disposable dust mask (Class P2 mask) to minimise breathing in dust when cleaning or handling CCA-treated timber ash.
- Wash your hands after finishing clean-up work and before drinking, eating, smoking, preparing food.
- Clean items and surfaces using wet disposable cloths or wipes and place in a bag for disposal.
- Clean and wash down any outdoor equipment such as tables, chairs and play equipment that you may come into contact with. Make sure run-off water does not go onto areas where you grow vegetables or fruit.
- Kitchen and eating surfaces should be wiped clean before use. Any sealed containers of food can be cleaned, unsealed food contaminated with ash should be disposed.
- Carpets and soft furnishings may be vacuumed using a vacuum that has a HEPA filter installed and disposable bag. Use personal protective equipment to dispose of the vacuum bag and wipe down vacuum cleaner and wash hoses after use. You can also steam clean carpet and soft furnishings.
- Small amounts of waste can be placed in kerbside collection bins.

Reference Document: Public health information for properties in Hester affected by ash from copper chrome arsenate (CCA) treated timber. This document is available on our website: www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/services/resources-faqs

Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development

DPIRD is assisting Western Australian primary industries affected by the devastating bushfires in the Bridgetown area. They are providing support to assess animal welfare impacts as a result of the recent fires. DPIRD will coordinate the initial assessments of impacted properties with animals across all fires once there is access to the fire ground and will work with the Shire in respect of reporting animal losses and injuries.

Landholders who have stock and infrastructure affected by the fires are urged to contact DPIRD to inform an impact assessment to guide the State Government's response:
SWLDFiresComplex@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Pasture recovery after a fire

Most unplanned fires have a drastic effect on a pasture. Fire changes the plant composition and reduces growth and carrying capacity in the following season. The effects on pasture will vary with intensity of the fire, the pasture species, fertility of the soil, timing of the autumn break, and follow-up rains.

Wind erosion control after fire in Western Australia

Wind and water erosion risk is increased after fire removes groundcover and some seed reserves. In the recovery phase after fires, there are several options that will reduce the likelihood and impact of wind erosion. For more information, visit: www.agric.wa.gov.au/fire/wind-erosion-control-after-fire-western-australia

Lifeline

Lifeline exists to ensure that no person in Australia has to face their darkest moments alone. Our experience has shown us that it is through connection that we can find hope. We are available 24 hours a day to listen, without judgement to any person in Australia who is feeling overwhelmed, experiencing crisis or longs to be heard.

For 24/7 Crisis Support, call 13 11 14, text them on 0477 131 114 or chat with them online: www.lifeline.org.au

Rural Aid

Rural Aid provides a \$1,000.00 one-off payment to Primary Producers to assist with bills and living expenses. Farmers can register here: <https://faa.ruralaid.org.au/farmer-registration/>

RuralLink

RuralLink is an after-hours telephone service for people in rural and regional Western Australia experiencing a mental health crisis. Callers to RuralLink are connected to a trained mental health clinician who can provide them with: mental health assessment, crisis support, crisis planning and brief intervention. Call them on 1800 552 002.

Rural West

Rural West provide free financial counselling to farmers and regional small businesses in WA. Rural West are federally funded and supported by the National Recovery and Resilience Agency.

Support can be accessed via their website: www.ruralwest.com.au

Synergy & Western Power

The Synergy Case Management team is available to tailor individual solutions for any customers experiencing hardship as a result of the bushfires. To speak to the team, customers can contact Synergy and request case management support due to bushfire-related hardship.

Synergy can be contacted by calling 13 13 53 for residential accounts, 13 13 54 for business accounts or visit: www.synergy.net.au

[Excerpt from WA Government Media Statement]

Water Corporation

The relief package for those Water Corporation customers who lost their property includes:

- a water use allowance of up to 50,000 litres;
- interest-free payment arrangements and payment extension on existing bills;
- new and existing charges waived and no recovery action for 12 months;
- no-cost replacement or repair of damaged meters; and
- service charges waived for 12 months and waiving of building application fees and connection/disconnection fees.

..... IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes9761 0800	Energy Minister6552 6700
.....www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au	Lifeline13 11 14
.....www.facebook.com/bridgetowngreenbusheshirewww.lifeline.org.au
Australian Red Cross1800 733 276	Main Roads13 81 38
BlazeAidwww.blazeaid.com.au	Rural Aidwww.ruralaid.org.au
Crisis Care1800 199 008	RuralLink1800 552 002
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions, Blackwood District9752 5555	Rural Westwww.ruralwest.com.au
Department of Communities1800 032 965	Synergy (residential)13 13 53
Department of Health9222 2000	Synergy (business)13 13 54
Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development, Manjimup Office9777 0000	Water Minister6552 6100
Disaster Response Hotline1800 032 965	Water Corporation (water use allowance)13 13 85
Emergency Services Minister6552 5800	Water Corporation (water supply/quality)13 13 75
	Western Power13 13 51
www.westernpower.com.au

RECOVERY Resources

Water Corporation customers with property fire damage or those who housed evacuees will also be offered support including:

- a free water use allowance of up to 50,000 litres; and
- interest-free payment arrangements and payment extension on existing bills.

For Water Corporation customers in Hester, [a] 50,000L water allowance will be automatically applied without having to register and they will not be charged for additional water used fighting bushfires or during clean-up operations.

Despite considerable impacts to its assets, Water Corporation crews have maintained water supply to all bushfire-affected areas of the South-West.

Water carting is continuing in some areas while crews work to repair severely fire-damaged assets. Residents in affected communities are asked to please continue limiting water use to essential purposes only.

For details on how to apply for assistance, Water Corporation customers should call 13 13 85 or visit:

www.watercorporation.com.au/bushfireassistance

[Excerpt from WA Government Media Statement]

The Water Corporation have activated their emergency assistance packages for residents affected by the bushfire. Their Customer Contact team is available to help guide you through the financial support and assistance options available and can answer any questions or concerns.

Assistance available includes an allowance on your bill for extra water used:

- Defending your property from bushfire
- Cleaning up your property or assisting with repairs

To apply for a water use allowance or discuss other assistance options, please call the Water Corporation on: 13 13 85 (8am-5pm, Monday to Friday).

Western Power

Western Power administer the State Government's \$80 extended outage payment, which is a one-off payment of \$80 per any unplanned outage that lasts longer than 12 consecutive hours.

The payment is an acknowledgement of the inconvenience for customers who have experienced a long unplanned outage while waiting for repairs to be completed and restoration of power to occur. Payment of successful claims will be made to your nominated account within 30 days.

Visit their website for more information: www.westernpower.com.au