



Wallaga Lake Heights community newsletter 9, 14 August 2020

Hullo neighbours and welcome to our eighth newsletter.

Grant submissions to WIRES/Landcare and BVSC

WIRES/Landcare grant

Disappointing news – we missed out on this one. We did receive nice words from WIRES.

BVSC sustainability grant

BVSC now says decisions will be made by the end of July. Feedback from Council staff so far has been positive.

Bermagui Rural Fire Brigade

During June Maggie McKinnie, President of the Bermagui Rural Fire Brigade (RFB), met with several of the Heights Care steering group and looked at the reserves to the east and north of Lake View Drive. Maggie, a firefighter with many decades of experience, discussed possible actions in the areas along the lake and the edge of the casuarina forest to the north of Wallaga Lake Heights. The need for asset protection zones near houses, and the likely areas of risk were addressed. The brigade considers that future fires are most likely to come from the north-west, and their response will take this into account.

Maggie and Bermagui RFB Captain Tim Holsworth have made a submission to the RFS Fire Control team in Bega recommending some hazard reduction activity in the area. They have told us that ours is one of many such requests following the New Year fires, and they will continue to follow up on our behalf.

Contact with Bega Valley Shire Council

The council has been given responsibility for almost all of the State land surrounding Wallaga Lake Heights, specifically the western shore of the lake and the casuarina forest to the north. Their responsibilities include determining just what can and cannot be done on their land, and by whom. They also have a responsibility for controlling invasive species on their land and the conditions under which they may be removed and disposed of. This affects what any of us can do to achieve our aim of caring for both the residents and environment of Wallaga Lake Heights.

In the last few weeks various council officers have visited the area and discussed with several local residents a range of matters, including:

- The weed clearing being done in consultation with Landcare Far South Coast, and specifically the method of disposing of the weeds;
- The need for anyone working on the reserve to receive induction from the council;
- Gardens– possibly a majority of them – east of Lake View Drive that encroach on the council reserve;
- Canoes, kayaks and tinnies that have taken up residence on the side of the lake.

It is not yet clear just how these matters will be resolved, but the steering group is pursuing councillors and officers to clarify just where we all stand.

Joining Landcare – an option for Heights Care members

Landcare is a community-based approach to managing and protecting our natural resources – creating more productive and sustainable farms, conserving our environment and building more cohesive and resilient communities. This iconic Australian institution, represented by the distinctive symbol of the 'caring hands', has transformed the landscape, enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together at a local level on local issues. The replication of Landcare in over 20 countries demonstrates how a voluntary, grassroots movement can have global impact.



Far South Coast
Landcare
Association

Landcare's mission is to raise awareness of the Landcare movement and build capacity for Landcare communities to better manage the land and water assets that sustain us. The aim of Heights Care - to care for the people and the environment of Wallaga Lake Heights – is entirely compatible.

In NSW there are over 3000 groups – ranging from small groups working on local reserves, beaches or farmland to larger district and regional scale Landcare groups and networks that support their members and member groups.

Since early this year Heights Care steering group has been working with Chris Post, coordinator of the Far South Coast Landcare Association – see <http://www.fscl.org.au/> - and his colleagues to:

- Identify and plan the removal of invasive species and encourage native plants along the western shore of Wallaga Lake;
- Plan the planting of native species to help rehabilitate the lake shore;
- Advise on other appropriate work to undertake.

Membership of Landcare gives us a platform for working alongside the council to meet our aims. A good number of our group have already joined we are encouraging any interested resident of (or regular visitor to) Wallaga Lake Heights to become a Landcare member. It's free, doesn't commit members, and means that anybody working in the area on Heights Care projects is covered by Landcare insurance. An application form is attached; if you would like to print it, fill it in and drop it in to 27 LVD we will send it on its way. If you don't have a printer please call or email and we'll drop in a blank form for you.

Bermagui Badja Fire Edge Community Connection at The Crossing

This new project sets out to assist people from around Bermagui who were on or near the edges of the Badja Fire to collaboratively share experiences, monitor wellbeing, identify concerns and develop joint actions and a collective future vision to increase the community's resilience. We are following up with The Crossing and will let the WLH community know how we can participate.

Information session on Council's plans for lake side path

The council is planning an information session, Covid-safe and weather-permitting from 11 am to 1 pm on Wednesday 19 August in the car park at the end of Wallaga St. Additional information is on https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-TUL-55-40-11

Best wishes, Heights Care steering group,

Roz, Libby, Peter, Ivana, Alison, Doug, Bill