

Lockyer Valley Regional Council

Bushfire Recovery Plan

Eastern Queensland Bushfires, 7 October – 19 December 2019

Endorsed by: Lockyer Valley Regional Council on 17 June 2020



Mayor
Cr Tanya Milligan



CEO
Mr Ian Church

Recovery narrative

Recovery narrative

Known as Australia's Food Bowl, the Lockyer Valley is rated among the top 10 most fertile farming areas in the world and has been positioned as one of the leading agricultural production zones in Australia. The Traditional Owners of the Lockyer Valley region are the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul People. Lockyer Valley's \$1.65 billion economy supports more than 13,000 jobs, with the main industries being Goods, Household Services, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. Lockyer Valley Regional Council is committed to deliver sustainable services to enhance the liveability of the community while embracing our economic, cultural and natural diversity.

Council Values

Lockyer Valley Regional Council has a strong set of values that remind us of what is important as an organisation. We strive to enable opportunities within our region with a strong customer focus. Our values are:

- **Leadership** - We lead through excellence and partner with the community to achieve Council's vision and mission.
- **Accountability** - We accept ownership of our role and take responsibility for our actions. We are results focused, take pride in our successes and efforts and learn from our mistakes.
- **Integrity** - We strive to be valued and trusted by the Lockyer Valley community. We are respectful, open, transparent and honest in our dealings with the community. At all times we act in the best interests of the community.
- **Communication** - We embrace diversity and communicate openly and honestly. We listen actively, consider and value the views of others. Our communication is clear, concise and consistent.
- **Customer Focus** - We strive to engage and communicate with our internal and external customers to meet agreed outcomes. We identify and aim to meet the needs of all customers in a responsive and equitable manner.
- **Teamwork & Collaboration** - We value creative thinking and look for opportunities to collaborate and connect to deliver a better Lockyer Valley. We work together by recognising and sharing our talents, skills, experience and knowledge.

About the disaster event

On 19 September 2019, a lightning strike started a fire within Glen Rock Park. This fire made its way into private property and escalated on 8 October 2019 at Left Hand Branch, Thornton and Townson. These fires were fuelled by warmer than average temperatures (up to 41 degrees), gale-force westerly winds, and at one stage, the fire danger level reached catastrophic for the first time ever. On 7 November 2019 a smouldering tree in an inaccessible area reignited the fire in the Thornton area of the Lockyer Valley. The fire escalated on 8 November and affected Thornton, Mulgowie, Left Hand Branch and Ingoldsby over the following weeks. Approximately 22,000 hectares were impacted by the 2019 bushfires in the Lockyer Valley region.

Local Recovery Group

Chaired by: Chief Executive Officer, Ian Church

Lines of Recovery

The Lockyer Valley Regional Council Recovery Sub Plan involves five key functions: Human and Social, Economic, Environment, Built and Roads and Transport.

Key stakeholders

Stakeholders include lead state government agencies, community groups, non-government organisations/non-government associations, local businesses and other invested parties.

Damage and impacts

Damage and impacts

Human and Social

- Evacuations – short term instructed and self-evacuations (129 people registered at evacuation centre, many more self evacuated).
- Psychosocial wellbeing of community members affected, compounded by drought.
- Public health – air quality impacted due to smoke, leading to increase in respiratory illnesses.
- Isolation for children due to school closure - Thornton State School.
- Laidley hospital – one patient relocated to Ipswich hospital.
- Compounded financial stress from bushfires and drought for small businesses and primary producers due to loss of stock, pastures and fencing.
- Increase in requirement for mental health support within the community, compounded by drought.

Built

- Power poles damaged/destroyed.
- 1 house destroyed.
- 11 properties sustained damage across the region
- Many kilometres of fencing destroyed
- Numerous sheds and outbuildings destroyed

Transport and Roads

- Road closures in fire impacted areas
- Road furniture damaged/destroyed.

Environment

- Loss of native flora and fauna in the region.
- Koalas moving into new habitats.
- Intensive soil damage.
- Increase in soil erosion due to loss of top soil as a result of the bushfires and compounding affects of drought.
- Threats to water quality.
- Increase in pests and weeds.
- Loss of power to a number of properties /businesses.
- Burnt and fallen trees – public health and safety risk.

Economic

- Tourism impacts:
 - Potential impact on tourism due to road closures and closure of national parks (Glen Rock)
 - Potential impact on tourism due to closure of the Bicentennial National Trail
 - Potential impacts on tourism due to closure of recreational facilities and campgrounds at Centenary Park, Thornton for two weeks.
- Impacts to rural properties such as, loss of fencing, drop in stock welfare and paddock feed.
- Smoke impact to horticulture producers – loss of crop/production.
- Loss/damage to primary production equipment – plant, vehicles, sheds etc.
- Mulgowie Short Course car racing cancelled due to bushfire impacts.
- Loss of cattle in the Thornton region.
- Hobby farmers destocking due to fires, compounded by drought.

Recovery objectives

Recovery objectives

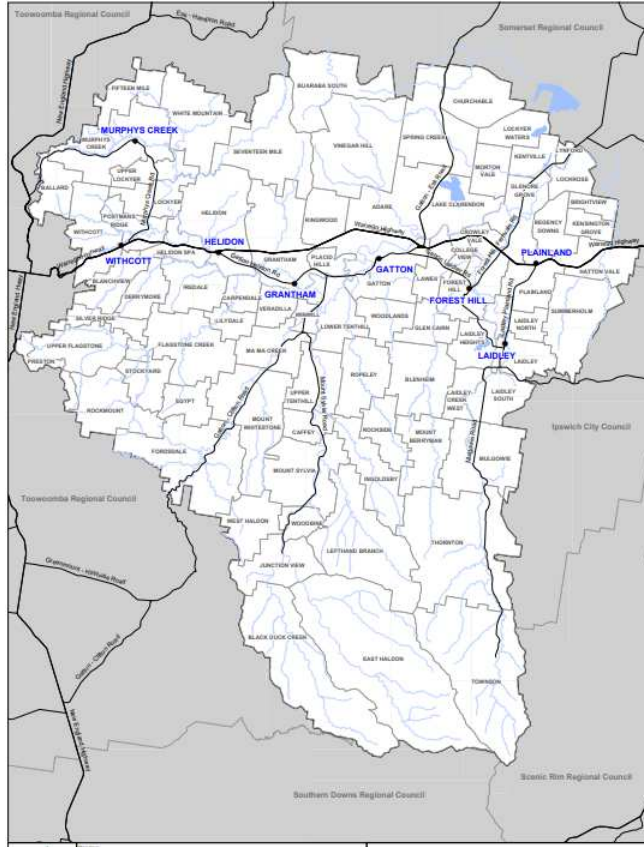
1. Immediate response and recovery activities have been undertaken to ensure communities have access to essential services.
2. Evacuated individuals have returned to their homes.
3. Affected community members are aware of, and have accessed, available psychosocial support services and information on financial support.
4. Impacted businesses and primary producers are aware of and have accessed to financial support services.
5. A weed management program has been developed and implemented to assist with the rejuvenation of flora in the region
6. Funding assistance opportunities have been identified to support community recovery efforts where required.
7. Funding assistance has been identified to support land management resilience.
8. Rural properties have been supported in the repair of fencing, sheds, stock welfare and paddock feed.
9. Risk mitigation and building resilience for essential services is undertaken.
10. Recovery of national parks and surrounding environment to increase the production of flora and fauna in the region.
11. Revegetation to restore habitat for native fauna and biodiversity conservation.
12. Confidence is restored in the tourism market.
13. Enhance community education for resilience for all hazards through community engagement.

Recovery timeframes

Recovery timeframes

	Short term			Medium to long term				Ongoing								
Human and Social	1	2	3	6	12	13	3	6	8	12	13	3	6	12	13	
Economic	4	6			12	13	4	6		12	13	6		12	13	
Environment				5		11	13	6	11	13		6	7	9	11	13
Built	1	6				13		6	8	13	6					13
Transport and Roads	1	6			11	13		6		13	6					13

Map of Lockyer Valley



Activations for Disaster Recovery Funding Assistance

For details of activations and assistance measures visit www.qra.qld.gov.au/activations.

Disaster relief measure

- Counter Disaster Operations
- Extraordinary Bushfire Assistance (Primary Producer) Loans
- Freight Subsidies for Primary Producers
- Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants for Primary Producers

Activation date

- 15/11/2019
- 31/01/2020
- 31/01/2020
- 21/02/2020

Recovery tasks

Human and social

- Assess human and social impacts to community.
- Conduct community outreach visits to affected individuals.
- In partnership with relevant agencies, provide access to psychological support services to those in need of assistance.
- Promote psychosocial support to impacted community members.
- Reopen schools.
- Participate in LDMG and agency briefings
- Community education around land management.
- Review and update local plans as required.
- Provision of information and referrals to existing support services.

Built

- Power reconnections to affected areas of the community.
- Provide assistance in the repair of infrastructure on rural properties by advising residents of available support programs.
- Repair and restore essential services.
- Undertake damage assessments.

Economic

- Develop a strategy to re-engage the tourism market by issuing messaging that promotes the Lockyer Valley region.
- Assist with fencing replacement by directing impacted residents to relevant funding opportunities.
- Identify impact on agriculture and small businesses and potential funding opportunities to assist recovery.

Environment

- Seek resources to support the development and implementation of a pest and weed program.
- Implement targeted pest and weed program.
- Seek resources to support the development and implementation of an ecological restoration and regeneration program.
- Undertake hazardous tree assessment.
- In partnership with wildlife carers, provide support to impacted wildlife.
- Test water quality of natural waterways to determine impacts from bushfire residue.
- Monitor air quality.
- Reopen national parks.

Roads and Transport

- Reopen roads once bushfire related hazards are contained.
- Replace damaged road furniture.
- Remove burnt trees/vegetation from road corridors, as required.

Measures of success

- Impacted individuals have returned to their homes or have transitioned into appropriate accommodation.
- Targeted outreach visits to impacted areas have been completed, human and social impacts have been identified and referrals have been made to relevant partner agencies if required.
- Psychosocial support has been provided to community members where required.
- Schools have reopened and children have returned to school.
- Essential services have been restored and are operational.
- Landholders, small businesses and primary producers have been made aware of and have access to relevant support.
- Pest and weed program has been developed and implemented.
- Ecological restoration and regeneration program has been developed and implemented.
- Relevant funding has been secured, developed and implemented to support community recovery.
- Improvements to infrastructure that were damaged by the bushfire events have been made.
- Strategies have been developed to support re-establishment of native flora and fauna and monitoring has indicated a revival in numbers.
- National parks and camping grounds have been reopened.
- Relevant funding applications have been lodged.
- Water/air quality issues have been resolved.
- Assets damaged by the bushfires have been identified.