



The newsletter of the Wolgan Valley Association Inc.

Vol.1, Issue 1

February 2021

Letter from the President

I would like to welcome you to the first newsletter of the Wolgan Valley Association Inc.

On 16 January 2021, 25-30 Wolgan Valley residents met at the Corn Paddock and agreed to form this group.

Congratulations to everyone who was nominated and accepted a position on the committee.

Through this association we hope to contribute to and advance valuable projects that will benefit our community long into the future. The Association will continue the work that Sarah and Kristie began through Wolgan Recovery, keeping Valley residents informed about issues that affect us. Their hard work was the catalyst for this Association.

Sincere thanks to Andrew Chalk for his advice which was invaluable in setting up the Association and for his ongoing contributions.

Please contact us if you are a Valley resident and would like to join the Wolgan Valley Association.

Jayne Vought
President

Committee Members

President - Jayne Vought

Vice President - Sarah Denmead

Treasurer – Shelley Dennis

Secretary - Dawn Bower

Committee Member – Kristie Kearney

Committee Member - Eddie Martignago

Committee Member – Paul Vought

The Association's Public Officer is Paul Bower.

Upper Macquarie County Council Weed Spraying March 2021

See attachment from UMCC (Lithgow City Council's weed control agency) regarding aerial weed spraying opportunities in March 2021.

Mobile phone coverage in the Valley

Our appeal for mobile coverage in Wolgan continues to steadily progress. Applications close for the Mobile Black Spot Program Round 5A on 5 March 2021. We've lobbied

the three major Telcos, relevant Federal Ministers, local Federal and State Members and Lithgow City Councillors. We continue to receive supportive correspondence at many levels. One day we might just stand in the Valley and use our mobile to phone the Wolgan old-timer who dared utter the words, "Don't hold your breath!" We'll know the outcome of this funding round within a few months.

LCC Bushfire Community Grants Program

The Wolgan Valley Association has applied for \$4,859.00 in funding through Lithgow City Councils Bushfire Recovery Community Grants Program. The Wolgan Valley Connecting Community Project will see the development of a community-based website that will provide important information regarding natural disaster preparedness, and in the event of a natural disaster provide critical information that will assist the community in making informed decisions regarding the protection of life and property. In addition, the website will showcase the unique natural environment and significant cultural heritage of Wolgan Valley to an estimated 10,000+ annual visitors to Wolgan Valley, whilst encouraging sustainable and responsible tourism practices that are strongly valued by the community. The website will also highlight the objects and role of the Wolgan Valley Association and provide community-based information for residents and property holders in Wolgan Valley including the village of Newnes and the surrounding areas of Wolgan Gap, Maiyngu Marragu, Long Swamp and Angus Place.

Council has allocated \$62,500 for community groups, joint organisations and not-for-profit groups to undertake projects that enhance social recovery and preparedness activities. The program has been made possible by funding from the Federal Government's National Bushfire Recovery Agency and the NSW State Government's Resilience NSW as part of the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund.

Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund

On 28 January, the Association applied for funding under the State Government's Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund. The application sought an amount of \$990,000 to construct three large water tanks and an emergency fire shelter. If successful, two of the tanks will be located at either end of the Valley; one near the bottom of the Gap and the other near Newnes. The third tank and the fire shelter will be constructed together at a location, yet to be determined, in the centre of the Valley. The shelter would also serve as an emergency co-ordination centre and as an evacuation point if the Gap is otherwise blocked. Aside from emergencies, the shelter would be used as a community hall and meeting place. The application also sought funds for the development of a fire management and ecology plan.

At present, the Valley has no public infrastructure of any sort to deal with a fire emergency. As the December 2019 fires showed, if the Gap is blocked those in the Valley must fend for themselves and in a context where there is no mobile coverage and power and landlines are easily rendered inoperable. While most landholders are well prepared to safely shelter in place, campers and day visitors are largely unprotected. The Association believes that the infrastructure proposed would dramatically add to the safety of all in the Valley in the event of a major fire emergency. The tanks would be permanently accessible to the RFS and landholders and the shelter would provide safety to those who lacked other options.

Letters of Support

The Association has also provided two letters of support to other organisations to assist them in their endeavours to care for the Valley. On 25 January, we wrote a letter of support for NPWS' application for funding to upgrade the Glow Worm Tunnel track; while on 8 February we wrote in support of an application by Mingaan Wiradjuri to undertake ecological studies focusing on the recovery of wildlife and vegetation at Maiyngu Marragu (Blackfellows Hands Cave).

My Connection to the Wolgan Valley - Aaron Pender



Photo: courtesy Aaron Pender

While I have been out running over the last few weeks, I have taken some beautiful photos of the Wolgan Valley. The mountains of the Wolgan Valley look beautiful in the morning mist but when the sun comes through the clouds the Valley looks even more beautiful and Donkey Mountain looks fantastic!

I am a Grader Operator for Lithgow City Council and in 2019/20 I had to go down into the Wolgan Valley with National Parks and Wildlife to create firebreaks around homes.

It was an eye-opening experience to see how fast and unpredictable the fires were as they came through our amazing Wolgan Valley. At night the glow from the fires was amazing. The fires went through our beautiful Valley and destroyed it, but a year later everything is growing back, and it is coming alive again. It really looks good.

When I was young, I used to camp in the Valley with my parents and to this day I go camping in our beautiful Valley. It's great to see the Valley come alive again after the fires but it will never be the same.

Aaron Pender

The Wolgan Valley Association expresses our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Aaron Pender for the work that he did during the bushfires of 2019/20. The firebreaks that Aaron built as the fire was raging through the Valley were instrumental in protecting a number of our homes and were an essential part of the fire protection work that occurred in the Valley at that time. Operating alone, Aaron showed tremendous skill, dedication and courage in what were very dangerous conditions.

We thank you, Aaron.

January 16 meeting at the Corn Paddock to form the Wolgan Valley Association.

Photo Kristie Kearney

ABN 51 260 854 312

Via 1180 Wolgan Road, Wolgan Valley NSW 2790

PO Box 378 Lithgow NSW 2790

President: Jayne Vought 0418 242 353

Vice President: Sarah Denmead 0432 912 341

Public Officer: Paul Bower 0417 275 176

Committee meeting 1st Saturday of the month 2pm.

