



**NEIGHBOURHOOD
CARE
NETWORK Inc**

Being connected to stay safe

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COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW



**HEALTHY
NORTH COAST**

phn
NORTH COAST
An Australian Government Initiative



**BELLINGEN
SHIRE COUNCIL**



Purpose

This document describes the Neighbourhood Care Network Communication Action Plan initiative.

The Communication Action Plans aim to make it as easy as possible for people who live nearby to help each other each other during emergencies and severe weather events.

The information contained in the local plans will also be provided to emergency services if they request it such as the RFS and SES, so that they can help more easily when possible.

These plans are developed by people who are part of Local Neighbourhood Groups, supported by the Neighbourhood Care Network Inc.

Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN)

The NCN is an incorporated Association based in the Bellingen Shire.

Our vision is that *people are connected and safe across the Bellingen Shire and surrounding area*. Our purpose is to make it as easy as possible for neighbours to help neighbours during and between emergencies.

Getting Ready – Why Plan?

We need to be as prepared for emergencies and severe weather events as we can because they are happening more frequently. Emergency services including volunteer organisations like the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Services are critical in emergencies but they can't be everywhere at once. There are things we can do to keep ourselves and each other safer and to make it as easy as possible for emergency services to help us.

Communication

Not being able to get timely, reliable information is one of the things that often happens during emergencies. During severe weather events and bushfires, mobile services, the NBN and even land lines all can go down. Often there are power outages too. This plan is a simple way to help neighbours living near each other plan how they will stay in touch, share information and help each other if help is needed.



What's in the Plan

It's important for neighbours to get to know each other. Things like sharing garden produce and helping each other out during the good times makes it easier to help each other when it's really tough. However, it's important that people's privacy is protected and that personal information is only shared with informed consent.

This plan is in **three parts** so that your personal information is protected. Each Local Neighbourhood Group must develop a Communication Action Plan. The other two activities are optional and are shaped by each group's needs.



1. Communication Plan

This plan includes information from the Register that participants have said that they are happy to share with each other.

It includes a **Contact Tree** which shows how households in the group will communicate with each other during an emergency.

All members of the Local Neighbourhood Group will have a copy of this Plan.

2. Assets and Needs Register

The register is held securely by the Local Neighbourhood Group Coordinator and also stored on a secure database by the Neighbourhood Care Network. It will be provided to emergency services if they ask for it. The register consolidates the information provided by participating households on their:

- Communication resources – (for example, phone, internet, mobile etc.) ;
- Household characteristics (for example, how many people live at your address; any specific needs and vulnerabilities that household members have relevant to emergencies);
- Resources that you have that could be helpful for others during an emergency – (for example, backup power, water, power tools etc.)
- Access arrangements and limitation for emergency services (for example, fire trucks).

You can provide as much or as little information as you like.

When you provide your information you will be asked which information you are happy to be shared across the rest of your Local Neighbourhood Group.



3. Local Neighbourhood Group Region Maps

The NCN Hub Team is able to work with Local Neighbourhood Groups to develop local maps which show important information useful in emergencies. They can include things like water filling points, helicopter landing sites, local bridge names etc as well as key information from the assets register.

These maps can be developed closely with the local RFS and SES and can help inform disaster preparation planning.



Privacy and Confidentiality

Every Local Neighbourhood Coordinator has signed a Volunteer Agreement which includes a commitment to confidentiality. They have also had a National Police Check and a Working With Children Check.

The Neighbourhood Care Network Hub Team have all signed confidentiality agreements and had National Police Checks and Working With Children Checks.

The database used by the Neighbourhood Care Network is protected and very secure.



Other Resources

Figuring out how to help each other locally is an important part of being prepared for emergencies. There are also important things that we can do in our own homes to get ready.

The following is a list of resources that provide tips and tools to help households get ready.

Rural Fire Service Bush Fire Survival Plan

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/bush-fire-survival-plan

State Emergency Service Home Emergency Plan

www.seshomeemergencyplan.com.au

Red Cross Preparing for Emergencies

www.redcross.org.au/prepare



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Contact

For more information contact the Neighbourhood Care Network Hub Team by email at team@ncaren.org.au or leave a message at 6655 1121.

The Neighbourhood Care Network provides this information to help residents plan for disasters and severe weather events. It is not responsible for the outcomes of residents decisions or disaster impacts in any way.