



NEIGHBOURHOOD CARE NETWORK

COVID-19 Bellingden Shire

Getting ready

The Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN) has been set up to make it easy for us to help each other to get through the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis across the Bellingden Shire.

It is a community led initiative and is part of the Bellingden Shire Pandemic Response Group. The NCN's set up has been resourced by Bellingden Shire Council and it will be run by community members volunteering to help.

Registering with the NCN will make it easier to get help and give help.

Small local groups of neighbours will help each other with practical support, connection and resources. Being a part of the network will also give you easy access to reliable information about the COVID-19 pandemic and the health, social and economic impacts.

Physical distancing doesn't have to mean social isolation.

We are doing everything we can to stay connected but preparing for the worst while we all hope for the best. We would love to be able to say in three months' time that all this was a waste of effort! But at this point it is looking like that's an unlikely outcome.

This approach is inspired by the groups that were established across the Shire during the 2019/20 bushfires and the COVID-19 Neighbourhood Mutual Aid networks that have sprung up around the UK.

BELLINGDEN SHIRE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC RESPONSE GROUP

A local and vocal response to COVID-19 focusing efforts on the key community areas of clinical support, community preparedness and resilience, community information and support, business support services and the maintenance of Council's essential community services.



Why are we doing this?

We don't know how many of us will be in home isolation and we want to make it as easy as possible to help each other. We also know that the economic crisis is hitting some people hard and that is causing extra pain.

If you are already in a local group or micro community that's great. We won't try and change what you do – we just want us all to be able to be connected across the Shire, share information and make sure no-one is falling through the cracks.

Who is the network for?

The network is for people who are self-isolating or are quarantined at home now, or who might be in the future plus anyone who wants to help. Everyone is a participant – it doesn't matter whether you need or give support

The needs of older people, people living with disabilities, carers, single parents and anyone who feels vulnerable and wants help are a priority.

Everyone is encouraged to join the network. Even if you don't want to actively participate in your local network it means that we will be able to get help to you if you need it.

How does this work?

Different small groups of people are setting up street by street, or in rural hamlets. Lots of groups have already set up – either during the fires or earlier in the pandemic.

Everyone registers online or by phone. This is so we can link people up and share information as things keep changing.

Local Networks – by street

People in the local network might need help, can provide help or be in both situations at the same time! We expect that everyone's needs will keep changing as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. This network provides a way for us to help each other as each of our needs change.

The groups are small and local – just based in a small area, which we are calling micro communities. Each local network has around 50 houses in it. So, chances are you will already know some of the people in the group. This is about neighbours helping neighbours.

Groups that are already in place will have their own coverage and size, which is fine.

Support Networks – by needs

Support networks for people with similar needs can also be set up – for example there could be a network for people with disabilities, LGBTI people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or people with carer responsibilities.

It is possible to join more than one network.

What sort of help is there?

Practical

Examples of the sort of practical help that the networks will provide include picking up and delivering shopping, running errands, picking up medication from the chemist, posting letters, walking the dog, mowing the lawn, tackling the weeds etc. Practical help is based on what people need and what network participants can do.

Help for people to set up Zoom and Skype and other forms of communication on home computers and devices is being organised as a first, urgent priority. This will make it much easier for people to stay connected with family and friends while they are at home. Playing board games by video will be the new trend for sure

Wellbeing

Participants who are house-bound or still active can provide help and connection with each other – e.g. by being phone or Zoom/Skype buddies. We can share good ideas about interesting ways to stay engaged and socially connected. We might even find some new ways to have fun! Our aim is that we all care for our own and each other's wellbeing and stay connected as this situation unfolds.

Actively supporting local businesses and sole traders across our Shire

We are very concerned about the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in our Shire. We must do whatever we can to help our local businesses and sole traders stay afloat. They are a big part of what makes our communities so great and we need them to survive.

Bellingen Shire Council and the three local Chambers of Commerce have established the Business Information Centre in the premises of the Waterfall Way Visitors Information Centre, while the Visitors Centre is closed. They are setting up a Business Support Network and our two Networks will work closely together.

The Neighbourhood Care Network will help to find new ways to keep money in our towns and villages. We will build relationships with local businesses and help deliver shopping, takeaway, medications and other local goods to Local Network participants across the Shire.

The two networks will work together to find other creative ways to help local businesses and sole traders adapt and provide goods and services that help all of us as we are increasingly practicing physical distance.

Stay tuned and watch this space. To get in touch with the Business Support Network email them at bushelpCV19@gmail.com.

How will we stay safe and maintain physical distancing?

Strict guidelines are in place for practical help involving any out-of-the-home activities, such as shopping or errands etc. Infection control will be strictly managed, and once the networks are up and running there will be no direct personal contact between participants.

Lots of support and help will be provided online and by phone – which means everyone stays safe in their own space.

Participating in a local network will be one of the ways people who are self-isolating but not sick can stay connected and engaged.

Reasons to join the network

- If you are currently self-isolating or in quarantine and need help
- If you are older, living with a disability, have a pre-existing medical condition, are a single parent or just feel vulnerable and know you will need help if you must self-isolate
- If you are healthy and not self-isolating and want to help
- If you are self-isolating/quarantining and want to help, and stay connected and engaged
- If you want to be a Champion for the network in your street or rural hamlet – which means you will have a coordination role to help get the communication going and be a conduit back to the NCN Team

What support will be provided to participants?

- There will be tools and resources online that will be constantly updated.
- We will share useful information and ideas about staying connected and things to do at home.
- There will be regular information as things progress.

How to get involved?

Register online at: www.ncnbellingdenshire.net

Email us at inbox@ncnbellingdenshire.net

Phone us on 6655 1005 M-F between 10am – 4 pm

What happens when I register?

You will be linked up with the person who is the Champion for your area. Each group is self-managed. This means that you will decide in your street or rural hamlet how you work and what sort of help and contact you have with each other. Tools and resources will be provided to you as they become available.

Privacy

Your contact details will be kept confidential apart from being used in ways that you consent to when you complete the form.

Risk and Responsibility

This is a local network of people who are helping each other. Everyone is responsible for themselves and for maintaining safe infection control practices. Each person participates in this network at their own risk.

Health advice is not our thing

This network doesn't provide any advice about COVID 19 or health related matters. This information is available on the COVID [website](#) set up by Bellingden Shire Council, with links to other sites with official information.

Who set up this network?

The establishment of the NCN has been funded by Bellingden Shire Council as part of the Bellingden Shire Pandemic Response. The idea originally came from the Housing Matters Action Group Inc and once established it will be community led, through the contribution of volunteers.

More info or to join the Network?

Join the network at www.ncnbellingdenshire.net

Contact our Registration Help Desk at inbox@ncnbellingdenshire.net

Go to our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/ncnbellingdenshire and like us

Phone the Registration Help Desk between 10 am to 4 pm at 6655 1005, Monday to Friday

We will respond to requests as quickly as we can. Please be patient with us as we are still gearing up. This has been fast paced roll out to go live as quickly as we can.