
COVID-19 Neighbourhood Care Network Up and Running

Neighbours helping neighbours across the **Bellingen Shire**

Looking after ourselves and each other while we are on this rollercoaster ride

Finding ways to support our elderly and people who are vulnerable

Making the most of being stuck at home by staying connected

Working with local businesses and sole traders to keep them afloat

The Bellingen Shire COVID-19 Neighbourhood Care Network is a group of people helping each other with practical support, connection and resources to get through this together. It is a means by which all of us in the Shire can help and connect with each other safely.

The network was started by Kerry Pearse, Rose West and Gai Stern in close collaboration with the Bellingen Shire Council, Housing Matters Action Group Inc and the Neighbourhood Centres of Bellingen Shire.

Kerry Pearse, the Neighbourhood Care Network Coordinator, said:

“We are doing everything we can now to be prepared for what is coming and make it as easy as possible to help each other. We are setting up local networks for anyone who wants to stay connected with their neighbours and the community as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds in our Shire.”

“The Network will be invaluable for older people and those with already compromised health. But it will also be helpful for all of us as a way of connecting and going through the challenges we face together.”

“We are all in this together- participants may offer services one day and use them the next, or be in both situations at the same time. We expect that everyone’s needs will keep changing as the pandemic progresses. This network provides a way for us to help each other as each of our needs change.”

How will it work?

The Local Networks will be small and local so the chances are participants will already know others in their network. The networks will provide practical help including 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. It is about neighbours helping neighbours.

Staying connected:

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.

Kerry said, “It’s important to remember that physical distancing does not have to mean social isolation and shut down does not have to mean shut out. We are lucky to be living in one of the most beautiful places in the world. Let’s care for each other and come through this crisis stronger and more connected than ever.”

“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.”

If you live in the Bellingen Shire you can register now at <https://airtable.com/shrLwdFmfGwX6vBwf> or by phoning 6655 1005 between 10 am and 4 pm

Contact

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