

## Report On Flood Relief Actions In The District 9705

**Purpose.** The purpose of this message is to provide D9705 executives with a report on flood relief actions in the district and what is planned.

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**Situation.** Eugowra is clearly the most heavily damaged location in District 9705 and our relief action is concentrated there. Flood-affected communities in Cabonne Council such as Molong and Cudal as well as Forbes and Condobolin are beginning the long-term processes of recovery and restoration. Further west, the flood waters have now mostly moving down rivers and channels to eventually join the River Murray. The towns of Lake Cargelligo and Hillston are still affected, and many farms are underwater or are dealing with the consequences of inundation. Mosquitoes are becoming a widespread problem. You can get a sense of the situation in [this Guardian report](#).

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**D9705's Response and Actions.** Our district's actions are now re-orienting from providing immediate relief to longer-term recovery initiatives and projects

Over the last three weeks we have been providing immediate relief at Eugowra in the form of:

- the receipt and management of donated goods both at Eugowra and Orange;
- the operation of a kitchen to provide food and respite for Eugowra residents;
- operation of a BBQ to help feed volunteers for other organisations at Eugowra; and
- provision of an interim storehouse at the Eugowra Showground containing donated items available free to residents.

Those activities have been undertaken by a team led by **Michelle Duncan** (President, RC of Orange Daybreak). **Colin Nadya** has worked for three weeks continuously at Eugowra to organise and coordinate people and goods on the ground. Many other volunteers from Bathurst and from across D9705 have helped, as well as volunteers from other districts. Most recently the DG of D9506 and an Area Governor (**Paul Rogers**) from the Blue Mountain-Hawkesbury arrived with goods and volunteers to assist.

The activities at Eugowra were made possible by the leadership and extensive coordination onsite from **Robert Shore** (President RC of Parkes) and **Scott Griffiths** (RC of Orange). They have worked every day over the period, liaised with other organisations, verified the situation on the ground, recruited volunteers and directly undertaken a lot of work to bring order to a complex situation that is evolving daily. **Deidre Tome** in the less-affected Wagga Wagga- Riverina has been doing similar coordination and liaison functions. Their contributions cannot be understated.

At the same time, other Rotary clubs and Rotarians have acted independently to help bring relief. In particular:

- The RC of Forbes (**Chris Finkel**) and Forbes Ipomoea (**Sue-anne Nixon**) have raised and received sufficient funds from Rotary clubs across the D9705 and beyond to enable the distribution of \$200 cash vouchers via the NSW Rural Financial Counsel Service and Catholic Care. The latter organisations seem to have widespread rural networks and know where genuine need exists. They can also distribute funds without inducing embarrassment.

- The RC of Hall (**Paul Tyrell**) has provided \$20,000 in cash vouchers to the NSW Rural Financial Counsel Service in Wagga Wagga for similar distributions.

At another level, DGE **Andrea Grosvenor** has worked with RAWCS/RABS to bring their experience and resources to bear, and to liaise with other Rotary districts in flood-affected Victoria. RAWCS has made large quantities of large mosquito-repellent candles available and these will be distributed in the new two weeks from Wagga Wagga (where they have just arrived) and from Parkes. **Brad Quilliam** (RAWCS National Projects Supervisor and Southern Region Volunteers Supervisor) has an active role in facilitating this initiative.

- RAWCS/RABS Project 32-2022-23 has also collected donations in excess of \$130,000. In the next week these will be placed under D9705 management (Project Manager **Tony Maple**, Deputy Project Manager PP **Peter Thompson** from the RC of Parkes and who farms 16 km from Eugowra) for use in flood relief and recovery benevolent projects yet to be identified and approved. This will be a longer-term action.

District Treasurer **Rosemary Everett** has been very helpful in repurposing unused bushfire recovery funds, ensuring necessary financial compliance processes are observed, and in facilitating expense claims.

**Robert Shore** has also organised for a videographer to capture D9705 actions, experiences and learnings. The hope is that this will be a record of the district's response and that it will inform Rotary's response to future disaster relief activities. You can see an unedited section of a very-tired Robert reflecting on his observations [on YouTube](#)

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**Outcome of Actions to Date.** We have received feedback from **Craig Ronan** (RC of Bathurst and NSW SES Coordinator Planning - Hazards) that the communities in the flood affected area are very appreciative of Rotary's efforts. Similar appreciation has been expressed by **Sean Haynes** who as President of the Eugowra Progress Association is the defacto community leader. He also noted that without Rotary's help, he would not have been able to undertake several activities to prepare the Eugowra community for the next steps in their recovery.

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**Next Steps and Planning.** There is still a lot to do and I am conscious the Rotary leaders and volunteers onsite have been working long hours and travelling continuously for three weeks. This places a lot of stress on people, particularly in the lead to Christmas. Volunteer energies will flag and we will be hard-pressed to sustain a Rotary actions.

As we begin the recovery and restoration phase at Eugowra, we will be undertaking the following actions.

- **Monitor and coordinate action** across the Central-West NSW and the Riverina and respond to requests for assistance.
  - Be aware some Rotary clubs act independently which creates the potential for duplication of action
- **Slim down & close kitchen and BBQ relief action at Eugowra**, consistent with volunteer availability and community needs
- **Work with RAWCS/RABS** to bring donation funds to bear appropriately. This will involve consultation with the Eugowra and other flood-affected communities on their

needs, the preparation of a *Project Expenditure Proposal*, and the subsequent execution of projects. This will almost certainly not take place until Jan 2023 and beyond, and we may solicit D9705 clubs to take up the delivery of projects.

- **Distribute mosquito repellent candles** across the districts via Rotary clubs or kindred organisations that can get them to where they are needed.
- **Manage unrequested donated goods** (still arriving) and move their storage and management to Eugowra Showground.
- **Consider using GIVIT** system to request goods needed by individuals (use of GIVIT is a slow process and we are being careful)
- **Plan Actions and Projects.** Plan ahead and collaborate with Sean Haynes, President of the Eugowra Progress Association, to determine where Rotary action is needed. To that end, I provide some details so the D9705 executive is aware of what Mr. Haynes has asked for through Robert Shore:

### **Ongoing Role for Rotary at the Eugowra Showground**

During a catch up with **Rob Shore** today, in working with Cabonne Council we have established several milestones over the next 2 months we are working towards which also extends to the support being provided by others including government agencies, assisting in the Eugowra recovery process.

- The first date is the 14<sup>th</sup> January - gets us through the Christmas & New Year period.
- The second milestone date is the 3<sup>rd</sup> February which is the end of the first week of the new school term.

At these milestone dates we will be reviewing a range of community requirements including the availability of food, shelter, security and other services by the community.

- We will continue to identify other volunteers who may be willing to assist Rotary in the great work that is taking place at the Showground and share details as they come to hand.

### **School Holiday Activities**

- We have been in contact via Resilience NSW over the last few weeks and have requested assistance from the Office of Regional Youth in organising school holiday activities, especially with no pool available and a damaged state park in Eugowra.
- A meeting is planned for Monday in which I will share any requests for assistance with **Rob Shore** for the holiday period.

**Tony Maple, Robert Shore, Scott Griffiths, Peter Thompson and Deidre Tome** (where appropriate) will give consideration to that request and frame a plan. My present conception is that the community consultations on 14 Jan and 3 Feb will identify suitable projects that will populate the RABS *Project Expenditure Proposal*. In my view such projects should be deliverable by a Rotary club, be of relatively short duration, require no or minimal government approval (local or state), and be of direct benefit to flood-affected people.

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**Recommendations for the D9705 Executive.** D9705 executives might consider the following:

- **Give recognition to key leaders.** Key Rotarians have and continue to lead daily action on multiple levels to benefit flood affected people. To date the most prominent have been **Robert Shore, Scott Griffiths, Deidre Tome, Michelle Duncan and Colin Nadya.** **Andrea Grosvenor** and **Rosemary Everett** have undertaken important supporting actions. **Chris Finkel and Sue-anne Nixon** at Forbes have been active and energetic club presidents in a flood affected town and have distribute much cash to affected people over a wide area.
- **Note the beginning of new phase of recovery and restoration.** We are entering a new phase of recovery. Experience elsewhere suggests that this can become a long and drawn-out process as damaged communities and weary leaders grapple with the challenges of local and state government initiatives and compliance processes, evolving expectations, their personal situations and community grief. D9705 should expect involvement in flood recovery actions might be a long process as well.
- **Note a continuing role for D9705.** We will continue to engage with the Eugowra community to plan Rotary actions that meet their needs. This will almost certainly take the form of projects delivered after Jan 2023. The high-level plan for the period up to Jan 30 2023 is as depicted in the attached graphic.
  - We are conscious this might entail small expenses which are not forecast or budgeted.
- **Rotary's role in Emergency Disaster Response.** The district leadership might consider the posture Rotary will adopt towards similar future events. Such events are becoming more frequent and are forcing governments to consider new arrangements and organisations. What does this mean for Rotary and D9705?
  - **Brad Quilliam** (RAWCS) already sits on or observes a Federal Government disaster management committee
  - There seem to be no established NSW Government - Rotary standing emergency management arrangements
  - The action Rotary has undertaken to date in D9705 was in ignorance of the formal emergency plans that apply in NSW
  - **Resilience NSW** has proposed to Robert Shore some long-term arrangements with Rotary be set up.
  - **Craig Ronan** (RC of Bathurst and NSW SES planner) has suggested the following: "Can I suggest that I run a training session on Teams or Zoom for interested Rotarians to help understand the emergency management arrangements for NSW. Please let me know if you want to go ahead with this."

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Yours in Rotary

[Tony Maple](#)

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