

15<sup>th</sup> January 2020

## Mobilising for Mogo

For me it started with a text message from Sallianne McClelland that goes;

'Hello Lovely – can I impose on you and Bryan for a Ute / small truck when time comes to deliver down to Mogo? I think its going to be just after school goes back'.

The next day (Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January) Bryan and I were called to an emergency action plan meeting for Mogo at Magpies Waitara. In a small group, Sallianne told us how she had connected with key members in the community of Mogo, a small town 10 minutes drive south of Batemans Bay.

NYE 2019, the families and businesses of Mogo were impacted by a ferocious fire that razed homes, shops and dreams. Working directly with Mogo Public School, Mogo Public School P&C, Mogo Aboriginal Local Land Council and the Boomerang Meeting Place Inc, we (Team Mobilising for Mogo) curated, customized and coordinated a relief effort onsite at SOS Removals and Storage in Thornleigh.

A ute or a small truck would no longer do the trick. This included 6 tonne of donations, \$10,000 in grocery and petrol cards, \$3000 in funds for the P&C. These donations were delivered to SOS depot over 4 days and sorted by a small group of volunteers and SOS staff. The camping gear weighed in at 1.4 tonne.

On arrival to Mogo on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January, we were greeted by 100 + members of the Mogo community, The Mayor, Twiggy (Andrew Forest) and his team, reporters from SBS and other media. It was a human chain of gratitude unloading the 8 tonne truck. Sallianne had secured two shipping containers onsite for housing our donations.

Special thanks to SOS Removals and Storage Thornleigh, Rotary Clubs of Wahroonga, Ryde and Galston, Webster's, Harris Farms, Signarama Thornleigh.

With the money donated by Wahroonga Rotarians at last Wednesday mornings coffee shop meeting, Mogo received 15 stove tops and gas, 16 sleeping bags and 2/10 person tents and 9 sets of 3 saucepans with a frying pan. I want to convey a very big thank you to the members of my club who actioned and delivered to SOS Depot our request for more camping gear on the same day as our club meeting.

Mobilising for Mogo was a success because;

- At the start Sallianne reached out to Mogo and a relationship was etched between Sallianne with key people of Mogo – The Mogo Public School P&C, The Mogo School Principal and Mogo Aboriginal Elders.
- Data on Mogo school families and other community members in need was established. A list of essential items was created in conjunction with the Mogo key people.
- A private facebook page was set up for communication.
- A signup list of essential donations was put out to our community with strict guidelines and a timeframe. Only items on the list was accepted at SOS Depot.
- The essential grocery and baby donations were boxed in 8 litre plastic tubs (as per list) by the people donating and then delivered to the SOS Depot. This ensured items arrived to SOS depot ready for loading once checked and labelled by volunteers. Other items such as camping gear and pet food was boxed and labelled at SOS depot by volunteers.
- Respect towards the people of Mogo was of the utmost. We listened, asked questions and acted.

This is not the end – it is the beginning of a relation with the people of Mogo to help get them back on their feet. We will walk along side them, and behind them.....

Our next planned delivery will be the first weekend of February. It will be themed back to school and tools of trade. We want the children to be school ready. A number of tradies in the community have lost their tools in the fire and want to start working.

We are also planning a visit to Mogo to provide assistance to those wanting to apply for grants from the Government to get their businesses back up and running. More to follow on this initiative shortly.





