



Team Leader Gail,
outside training venue



MISSION +
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

- › Compassion
- › Integrity
- › Inclusiveness
- › Dignity

Disaster recovery

NEWSLETTER WINTER EDITION 2024

Team Training at Junee

In June, Anglicare Disaster Recovery volunteers from western NSW met for their first face-to-face training session for several years. New and seasoned volunteers from Cootamundra, Junee, Wagga Wagga, and surrounds gathered at St Lukes parish in Junee to increase their readiness to respond to natural and man-made disasters.

As well as coming together to review and update their DR training, the group welcomed a presentation by Anna Conyers, Disaster Recovery Team Leader for Wagga Wagga, on the trend towards increased domestic violence following disasters and discussed warning signs and referral processes.

The group also learned more about Anglicare's immediate and ongoing response to the 2019 bushfires from Joanne Murrell, Anglicare's then Manager of Bushfire Recovery in Batlow and the Snowy Valleys.

A significant advancement in ensuring volunteers can be activated in an organised and immediate way, has been Anglicare's adoption of a Disaster Recovery app. Magnus Linder, Anglicare Sydney's Disaster Recovery Manager, attended the Junee workshop to introduce the app and provide practical guidance to new users.

Batemans Bay farewell lunch

Earlier in the year Helen Bennett, Regional Disaster Recovery Coordinator joined members of the Batemans Bay DR team for lunch at the Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens to farewell Garry and Vere Gray, Deputy Team Leaders before they moved north to be closer to family.

Several Anglicare DR teams now have vacant team leadership positions. Should you be interested in stepping up into such a role; please contact **Joanne Murrell** on **0490 707 543** or **email disaster.recovery@anglicare.com.au** for a position description.



DR volunteers farewell retiring leaders.

New faces in the Disaster Recovery space!

Joanne Murrell - Manager, Bushfire Recovery, Disaster Relief & Recovery, Emergency Relief & NILS

Based in Batlow, Joanne brings extensive personal and professional experience to her current role with Anglicare. Joanne's hometown was directly impacted by the Black Summer Bushfires of 2020 and she has spent the past 4 ½ years working with Anglicare's Bushfire Recovery team, an experience she has found both challenging and hugely rewarding. Her training in Trauma-Informed Care and Mental Health First Aid, has come to good use when interacting with those experiencing and recovering from natural disaster.

Prior to joining the Anglicare team, Joanne spent 18 years working in a medical practice. She is passionate about assisting communities to be better prepared for disaster, sharing knowledge and resources across services, ensuring information is accessible across languages and cultures, and assisting those who are most vulnerable in the community.

Joanne volunteers and advocates for mental health in her community through Gotcha4Life and is a committee member of the Snowy Valleys Resilience Hub. She loves endurance running and shares a passion for military history with her husband, Kevin who runs a small business called Beyond the Front Lines—Military Portfolios.

Joanne is immensely proud of her three adult daughters Hayley, Loren and Holly who work in education, health and nursing.

We are thrilled to have Joanne leading our Disaster Recovery team!

Tshering Dema - Administrative Office, Anglicare College & Disaster Recovery

Originally from Bhutan, Tshering relocated from Brisbane to Canberra in 2023 and still misses the warm weather! She joined the Anglicare team just over a year ago as an Administrative Officer for our RTO, Anglicare College, and more recently took on administrative responsibilities for the Disaster Recovery team.

With an MBA from the Hague University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, Tshering brings more than a decade of administrative experience to her role, along with plenty of enthusiasm, sincerity and diligence.

Tshering lives in Canberra with her husband, her brother and partner, and her two beautiful daughters. We are so pleased to have Tshering helping us as part of the Disaster Recovery family!



Joanne Murrell



Tshering Dema

Anglicare Disaster Recovery Volunteer app "VAPP"

Our Disaster Recovery app is now live and available to download for free at the Google Play Store or Apple App Store for all registered volunteers working across NSW and the ACT.

The app is designed to communicate quickly with registered volunteers by providing real-time information about disaster events. In addition, the app has the capability to provide updates on training opportunities and allows participants to check-in and check-out of events when needed.



Anniversary Awards 2024

In June, several Disaster Recovery volunteers were recognised for their lasting dedication and commitment during Regional Anglicare Leadership Forum events in Batemans Bay and Wagga Wagga. Here are excerpts from their awards citations:

Graham and Shirley Piper – Moruya Team

For over 20 years, this husband-and-wife team, have been steadfast supporters of Anglicare’s Disaster Recovery on the South Coast, embodying the spirit of compassion and resilience.

Their journey with us began when Rev. David Hill asked them to take over as team leaders of the Moruya team. Graham and Shirley led with quiet competence, guiding the team through numerous challenges before passing the leadership to Fran Sanders.

Graham and Shirley’s dedication, compassion, and resilience have made a lasting impact on countless lives. We are deeply grateful for your service and honoured to have you as part of the Anglicare family.

Gail Commens– Junee Team

While her journey with Anglicare began in 2010 as a Disaster Recovery Volunteer, Gail’s history of supporting struggling communities started well before. Distributing food parcels and essential commodities to families affected by drought and other calamities, Gail has always been there for those in need.

During the Dunns Road Fires of 2019-20, Gail played a crucial role at a Recovery Centre in Wagga. In 2022, she extended her volunteering efforts to Moree, working alongside Anglicare staff and volunteers during another disaster.

Gail’s willingness to help knows no bounds. She often rearranges her commitments at short notice, embodying a “Yes and” attitude rather than a “Yes but” approach. The only exception was when she was asked to become the Junee Anglicare Disaster Recovery Team Leader. Understanding her many commitments, she accepted on an interim basis. Many years later, Gail still holds this position, and the term “interim” has long been forgotten. Thank you, Gail, for all that you do.

Leonie White - Wagga Wagga Team

Leonie’s journey began in 2003 when she first trained as a Disaster Recovery volunteer under Jenni Davies from Anglicare Sydney.

As the team leader for the Anglicare Wagga Disaster Recovery team for many years, Leonie demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment.

Leonie has been activated during numerous flood events in Wagga and the surrounding areas and was available to assist during a fire event in Junee.

Leonie’s passion for disaster recovery and her dedication to supporting people in times of crisis remain unwavering. She continues to be a valued and respected member of the Anglicare Disaster Recovery team.

Leonie, your tireless efforts, compassion, and leadership have made a significant difference in the lives of many.

Anna Conyers– Wagga Wagga Team

Since her training in 2006, Anna has balanced her volunteer work with numerous commitments to her church and community, becoming an invaluable team member.

Anna first assisted in 2010 with outreach doorknocking following floods in Lockhart, Uranquinty, and The Rock. She worked through the night at Evacuation Centres during the 2012 Wagga CBD flood threat and again in 2022 for North Wagga’s flooding.

Anna’s organisational skills, compassion, and encouragement of others make her an invaluable asset. We hope she continues as Wagga team leader for many years, and we’ll work to find her a deputy to share the load!



Anglicare volunteers and staff at the 2024 Anniversary Awards.

National Volunteers Week

In May, in celebration of National Volunteers Week, Anglicare hosted a morning tea for some of our 600+ volunteers at St John's Care in Canberra.

Speaking during the event, Anglicare's Interim CEO, Trevor Ament and Board member, Jane Bacot- Kilpatrick, both expressed their gratitude to these special, dedicated people, who give up their time and talents in support of Anglicare services. "There is no such thing as 'just' a volunteer" said Jane, "because being a volunteer is just wonderful!"

Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Charities, created a personalised video message for Anglicare volunteers in which he spoke of Anglicare's long and proud tradition of working to "build links between those who are on the margins of society and bring them into the mainstream". The minister thanked our volunteers for continuing this treasured, Australian tradition.

Long-time volunteer and manager of Anglicare's parish partnership op shop, Phil's Emporium, Chloe Pailthorpe spoke of the power of volunteering to provide for and connect communities. From humble beginnings, she described how her Bungendore-based team turned an outpouring of support following the Cobargo bushfires into two bustling op shops, a food hub and breakfast club— all of which are volunteer run.

The final speaker of the day was ACT 2024 Senior Volunteer of the year, Ebenezer Banful OAM, who

entertained the gathering with tales of his nearly 40 years of volunteering in Canberra. From helping new refugees settle into Australia to founding Companion House, Ebenezer emphasised the social benefits of volunteering. He also encouraged volunteers to take a break for themselves when needed, but afterwards, to please come back, as they are truly valued and needed in the community.

Throughout June we were thrilled to celebrate more Anglicare volunteers at more morning teas in Moruya, Eden and Parkes. Across Anglicare's diverse services and locations, volunteers increase our impact and lengthen our reach and we are infinitely grateful for their time, dedication and giving spirit.



Anglicare volunteers enjoy morning tea during a National Volunteers Week event in Canberra.

Training Opportunities

In addition to the online and face-to-face Disaster Recovery training offered in conjunction with Anglicare Sydney, many of our DR volunteers have chosen to attend exercises and workshops offered by a range of other organisations.

Team members living at the coast had the opportunity to join an emergency simulation at Moruya airport, participate in a DCJ Multi-Agency Evacuation Centre exercise and engage in Vulnerable Communities Emergency Preparedness workshops. In Wagga Wagga, two team leaders participated in the Commonwealth Government sponsored Gender & Disaster Australia's Lessons in Disaster Training. Accidental Counsellor courses continue to be popular amongst Anglicare DR volunteers. A number also enrolled in the online Red Cross conducted Caring after a Disaster Community Supporter Wellbeing workshops.

Zoom sessions continue to be offered alternatively on the first Tuesday or Thursday evening of each month for those interested in Disaster Recovery volunteering with Anglicare. Participants are encouraged to first complete some short online modules before the interactive zoom meeting.



Anglicare is also planning a face-to-face training session for new and experienced volunteers. This is likely to be in Merimbula mid February 2025. Please check the website closer to the time for more details.