

Emergency Plans in Isolated Communities

July 2022

The extremes of recent years have shown emergency planning to be a necessity for everyone, yet it can be easy to put off making and testing our plans, especially while we're in recovery.

The Emergency Plans in Isolated Communities (EPIC) project is a Hunter Local Land Services initiative to support communities to better prepare for disasters by undertaking flood, fire and biosecurity planning.

Project Officer, Heidi Chappelow, has worked in collaboration with emergency agencies supporting communities in the Singleton LGA to develop their community emergency plans. Hunter Local Land Services realised the potential for improved emergency planning in other communities and has established EPIC to broaden emergency preparedness across our region.

For example, Whittingham near Singleton, is one community that has completed a community plan. As a very flood prone area with large agricultural properties, Whittingham residents banded together to build their plan that is now recognised by authorities under their local emergency management plan. When a flood warning is issued, community members liaise with emergency services to enact their plan, moving livestock to safety before the flood arrives. The liaison provides local intelligence to agencies about their situation and support needs. The plan and two-way communication benefit landholders, communities and emergency agencies alike.

Communities have different experiences of emergencies, and residents can be at very different levels of preparedness. Emergency planning beforehand gives everyone their best chance of protecting assets and livestock. By listening to community and agency needs, Hunter Local Land Services' Emergency Plans in Isolated Communities project will build on what's already in place to help address local priorities for emergency preparation.

While supporting all emergency agencies' community engagement, Local Land Services and Department of Primary Industries have specific expertise and responsibility to help prepare for and respond to emergencies involving livestock and domestic animals through the Agricultural and Animal Services Functional Area of the NSW Emergency Management Plan.

5 Steps to consider for emergencies involving animals:

By thinking and acting ahead we can respond quickly when needed. If an emergency hits:

1. Could you and your animals evacuate or shelter-in-place?
2. Have you completed and recently updated your flood, fire and biosecurity plans?
3. Might a neighbourhood plan improve your disaster safety?
4. Have you completed your Annual Land and Stock Return with Local Land Services? (Please update emergency contact details too).
5. Do you have a Property Identification Code? Getting a PIC is easy and it's a legal requirement for everybody owning or moving livestock, even a pet sheep, pig or pony!

To build on your emergency preparedness, check out the free [resources](#) and assistance for community emergency planning and animal safety available from Hunter Local Land Services. Email Heidi.chappelow@lls.nsw.gov.au– call 0475 573740 or [express your interest here](#).



Image - Honey Atkinson, 2017. What do you value on your property? All good reasons to do emergency plans.

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