

Media Release



North West Community Services receives funding to train spontaneous volunteers

21 July 2025

When floods and other disasters strike, people want to step up and help their community. North West Community Services is today announcing free training for 100 volunteers thanks to funding from the NSW Government under the Supporting Spontaneous Volunteers Program. Just-in-time volunteering involves people stepping up when needed. Spontaneous volunteering suits many people as they can choose when to help with whatever skills they might have, without being involved in formal regular volunteering.

Minister for Recovery Janelle Saffin said: “Local communities show incredible resilience and generosity, especially in times of hardship. The instinct to step up and support one another is a powerful reflection of our shared community spirit. These sessions are about equipping people with the confidence, skills and connections they need to make a real difference when lending a hand during a crisis or natural disaster. By fostering knowledge-sharing and resourcefulness, we’re strengthening the foundations of volunteerism and building more connected, empowered communities.”

Angela Van Dyke, CEO of North West Community Services Inc said: “As a local Centre, based in Riverstone, we are on the ground every day so we see emerging issues quickly. During the 2022 floods, the Centre led a group of local organisations and volunteers to respond safely and effectively by sharing knowledge and resources. The result was a strong and real time response. We coordinated a large volunteer workforce and significant help to people in need. Our Centre has now been funded to provide free training for about 100 people to become spontaneous volunteers. Being a spontaneous volunteer is a great way to help during floods and other disasters .By donating a small amount of your time, you’ll make a big difference to the local community. Our training is a great opportunity for busy people who want to be skilled-up ready to help when disasters happen in and around Riverstone. We also know that established local relationships are a critical part of the social capital needed to sustain community resilience when disasters strike.”

The spontaneous volunteer training will start in late July and continue until December 2025, led by the Centre’s Disaster Engagement Coordinator, Shari Driver. The Centre will deliver the training alongside the NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES), together with a professional first aid trainer. Volunteers will be given one-off free training and practical skills, like first aid and sand bagging, to help become flood and storm ready. Spontaneous volunteers will develop the capability, knowledge and confidence to support a community response to an emergency.

The Riverstone project provides a community-led, coordinated approach to informal volunteering alongside state agencies such as the NSW SES. Funding for the Spontaneous Volunteers Program is one of the outcomes of the 2022 NSW Government review into emergency volunteering. The review underscored the need for a coordinated approach to volunteering. If your group is interested, or you want to become a Spontaneous Volunteer, please contact North West Community Services on (02) 9627 3622 or Reception@nwcs.org.au

“Building a Stronger Community Together”

North West Community Services Inc

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