

# Speak Out Loud:

## Stories of Strength from the Southern Downs

EPISODE: GRATITUDE, MINDSET AND HOBBIES

GUEST: Val Voss

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### SUMMARY OF EPISODE

Val Voss and her husband Doug live on the edge of town in Stanthorpe which is at the southern end of the Southern Downs Region. Val loves pansies and patchworking and her home is a wonderful and cosy space to indulge in her hobbies. In September 2019 the picture was somewhat different as the bushfire took a turn for her home and she spent hours sitting by the creek nearby watching the flames and smoke and the frantic activity that accompanies any event like that. Val's home was saved although the outbuildings and their contents were largely destroyed.

Listen to the podcast conversation to hear me read Val's story in her own words. You'll hear:

- when and how Val heard the news that a fire was approaching her home
- how Val's husband joined the efforts of the emergency services to save their home while she stayed by the nearby creek watching and wondering what was going on
- how Val has drawn on an inner sense of calmness during times of despair by focusing on what she can control, not what she can't
- the support of friends during and after the bushfire made a difference
- as her house became safe during the night, the fire moved on to other areas
- the art of giving thanks and receiving support
- things can change very quickly and unexpectedly
- the amazing work of the emergency service workers during the fire
- the gratitude for the charities, friends, council representatives, business houses and others who helped with the disaster recovery

### TOP 3 TAKEAWAYS

The Top 3 Takeaways that I gained from my conversations with Val that might support you on your recovery journey are:

1. Find gratitude in the big things AND the little things in life
2. Choose your mindset – instead of focusing your mental energy and time on things you can't control, accept what is, move on, and make the best of what you CAN do and what you DO have
3. Have a hobby, something you enjoy doing either with other people or by yourself.

*Please note that this episode reflects on events and circumstances as the fire burned through Val's property. Her house was saved and no one was hurt, but this is a topic which may trigger some people. If you are concerned about this, you might choose to skip through to another episode of this podcast or use the contact details below to access support for yourself.*

## RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THE PODCAST

### **Mental Health Service Navigator (Helen O'Brien)**

E: [helen.obrien@rhealth.com.au](mailto:helen.obrien@rhealth.com.au)

P: 0459 022 561 or 1300 012 710

### **Crisis Support - "Lifeline"**

24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services

P: 13 11 14

### **Local hospitals**

Find your closest hospital on the Darling Downs here:

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/darlingdowns>

### **General Practitioner (GP)**

My GP is \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Community Development Officers, Southern Downs Regional Council**

P: 1300 697 372

<https://www.sdrc.qld.gov.au/>

### **New Access (Beyond Blue)**

Mental health coaching support

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess>

### **Beyond Blue**

Mental health and well-being information and support

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

### **headspace Warwick**

Early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds including mental health, physical health (including sexual health) alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support

P: 07 4661 1999

<https://headspace.org.au/>

### **Black Dog Institute**

Mental health and well-being information and support

<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>

### **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program**

Helen Ferrier (based in Stanthorpe)

E: [wellbeing@mallow.net.au](mailto:wellbeing@mallow.net.au)

P: 0401 557 338

### **Samaritan's Purse**

<https://samaritanspurse.org.au/>

### **State Emergency Service – SES**

P: 132 500 if you need the assistance of the State Emergency Service (SES) in non-life-threatening emergency situations, during floods and storms or other similar events. If the situation is life threatening, always call Triple Zero (000).

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about-us/frontline-services/state-emergency-service/ses-assistance>

### **Volunteering with SES or RFS**

Read more about volunteering with the State Emergency Service (SES) or Rural Fire Service (RFS)

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/careers-and-volunteering/community-volunteers>

### **Stanthorpe Border Post**

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/stanthorpe>

### **Kathryn Walton**

Kathryn Walton Consulting and Outdoors is my Therapy

<https://www.kathrynwalton.com.au/>

### **Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN**

<https://www.ddwmpnh.com.au/>

Use the clickable map to find mental health services in the region

*The information shared in the podcast and handouts is intended for general support only.*

*To the best of our knowledge, this information was correct at the time of publishing.*

*Please consult with your doctor or health provider for support based on your individual needs.*

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*Speak Out Loud: Stories of Strength from the Southern Downs Podcast*

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