

Speak Out Loud:

Stories of Strength from the Southern Downs

EPISODE: NATURE IN RECOVERY

GUEST: Leon Ward

Published July 2021

SUMMARY OF EPISODE

Leon Ward chats in this episode about his experience of living on the southern end of the Southern Downs Region in an area known as the Granite Belt which was heavily impacted by the bushfires in September 2019. Leon and his wife moved from the city to the region just before the bushfire came thorough. As Leon explains, his home survived the fire whilst much of the surrounding bushland was severely burned and some of his neighbours lost homes, sheds and other property. Leon has a special understanding and connection with nature which you'll hear during our conversation.

Leon offers some practical and inspiring ideas about how we can observe and learn from nature's recovery journey to minimise losses from bushfires in the future whilst maintaining a close connection to nature.

Listen to the podcast conversation to hear Leon explain:

- some of the environmental impacts and the human impacts that he has noticed as a result of the bushfire
- the stages of change that the natural world is going through as it recovers from the fires
- what people and communities might be able to learn from the environment about recovery from natural disasters
- some ways in which the natural world is important to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities
- steps that people, communities and our whole society could take when rebuilding or planning future fire protection
- the best natural resources in the Southern Downs region
- some of the human strengths of the Southern Downs region
- how to take action by getting involved in looking after and planning for the future of our natural resources

TOP 3 TAKEAWAYS / TIPS

Leon's tips to look after your health and wellbeing after a disaster:

1. Go outside and observe nature- we are nature. Watch it and understand it.
2. Connect and talk with others about what's happened
3. Action is a healing power- get involved, do something good that helps nature that is achievable for you (eg create a vegetable garden)

RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THE PODCAST

The Granite Belt Sustainable Action Network (GBSAN)

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

Queensland National Parks and Forests

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/>

Girraween National Park

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/girraween>

Main Range National Park

Includes Goomburra, Cunningham's Gap and Queen Mary Falls Section; Spicers Gap; Mt Superbus

<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/main-range>

Emergency Services – Fire, Ambulance, Police

P: 000 (Triple Zero)

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: _____

QUEENSLAND

Bushfire Planning and Compliance

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/planning-and-compliance/bushfire-planning>

Current bushfires and warnings

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/Current-Incidents>

Current Bushfire Incidents

<https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/alerts-and-warnings/current-bushfire-incidents>

Queensland Rural Fire Service

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about-us/frontline-services/rural-fire-service>

Make your Bushfire Survival Plan

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/bushfires>

Prepare for bushfire season

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/prepare/bushfire/prepare-for-bushfire-season>

Know your risk

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/prepare/bushfire/know-your-risks>

Tune in to Warnings

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/prepare/bushfire/tune-in-to-warnings>

NSW

NSW Rural Fire Service – Fires Near Me (web version)

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me>

Apps

Fires Near Me NSW (Apple and Android)

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.

This project has been supported through funding by the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN.