



Greg Aplin MP

Member for Albury

MEDIA RELEASE

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How TAFE NSW Helps Heal Broken Communities

Member for Albury Greg Aplin has paid tribute to an inspiring TAFE NSW teacher and urged local residents to consider following in her footsteps and pursuing a career in disaster recovery.

In 2009, Anne Leadbeater was subjected to a true baptism by fire when her home town of Kinglake on the north-east fringe of Melbourne was at the epicentre of the nightmarish Black Saturday bushfires, which claimed 173 lives and more than 2000 homes.

Ms Leadbeater, an employee of Murrumbidgee Council at the time, was thrust into the role of recovery co-ordinator for the council area.

“It was a profoundly challenging period – we’d all lost people we knew, my parents and sister had lost their homes, we’d fought fires at our own home,” Ms Leadbeater said.

“And suddenly I was coordinating the community recovery effort.”

The experience, in parts harrowing and heart-wrenching, changed the course of Ms Leadbeater’s career – and her life.

She is now a disaster recovery teacher at TAFE NSW National Centre for Emergency Management (NCEMS), based in Albury, and also one of the nation’s leading disaster recovery consultants.

Mr Aplin described NCEMS as one of Albury’s “hidden gems” and paid tribute to Ms Leadbeater and her colleagues for helping train those on the frontline of natural disasters and emergencies.

“The horrific events of Black Saturday are forever etched in the minds of Australians but we should also never forget the extraordinary resilience of these communities and how far they’ve come since those tragic events,” Mr Aplin said.

“People like Anne played such a critical role in helping traumatised residents access a range of support agencies and be provided with important information.

“I am very grateful that Anne is now using her experience to train others in emergency management.

“We can’t always predict the timing or severity of natural disasters but we can ensure we are as prepared as possible to deal with the response and the recovery.

“Thankfully, our amazing emergency services personnel and organisations like NCEMS are doing precisely that.”

Mr Aplin said he was proud of the NSW Government’s commitment to ensuring TAFE NSW remained sustainable and innovative into the future as part of its OneTAFE modernisation program.

Ms Leadbeater, who earned an OAM for her work in Kinglake, said a career in disaster recovery could be both challenging and rewarding.

“After a natural disaster, people can lose control over their lives, sometimes significantly, and it can last a long period,” she said

“The goal is to get people back in the driver’s seat of their own lives and to do that, you have to have the support agencies in place and running smoothly.”

She said a career in emergency management appealed to a vast array of professionals.

“That’s the interesting thing about emergency management, people find their way here from a wide variety of directions,” she said. “Sometimes they’re from the operational

side, like a fire service or the SES, and others come through local government or just from the broader community.

“That’s part of the great contribution NCEMS makes. It brings together people with such diverse skills and experience and gives them a common platform to work on.”

The TAFE NSW Communities and Disaster Recovery unit is part of the Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management) offered at NCEMS. The course is one of nine units in the course, which is delivered through a blend of face-to-face and online learning. Other units include Emergency Risk Management and Planning for Emergencies.

If a career in emergency management appeals to you, enquire about enrolling in Semester 2 by contacting NCEMS on 6058 2730 or visiting

www.tafensw.edu.au/enterprise/training/emergency-management

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