



Robyn Preston MP

Member for Hawkesbury

MEDIA RELEASE

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HORSE CARE AND SAFETY OPEN DAY A HIT WITH HAWKESBURY NEIGH-BOURS

Horse owners in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley yesterday headed to the Richmond TAFE Equine Unit to take part in a specialised Horse Care and Safety Open Day.

The event featured masterclasses with former National Champion rider and coach Colleen Brook, film and TV horse trainer Cody Rawson Harris and high performance show-jumping manager Todd Hinde.

Member for Hawkesbury Robyn Preston MP said the day had a strong focus on helping owners keep their animals safe during natural disasters such as floods

“The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley has a long history of damaging floods, and while there hasn’t been a major flood here for over 25 years, floods can and will happen again,” she said.

“I know how important these majestic animals are to the residents of the Hawkesbury-Nepean area and we need to ensure that we factor their safety into our Flood Strategy.”

“That’s why events like these, that build the resilience of our floodplain communities and help them prepare, respond and recover, are such a key element of our Flood Strategy for this region.”

Ms Preston also said the high number of large animal and pet owners in the region means making sure owners are prepared for disaster is essential.

“The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley is home to around 10,000 horses and many thousands of much loved pets,” she said. “Over 90% of owners consider their animals to be part of their family and will want to save them in an emergency — even if that means putting their own safety at risk,” she said.

“This area also has the highest flood risk in NSW, so we need make sure owners are prepared.”

SES Volunteer and Animal Rescue expert David King urged animal owners to think ahead about what they would do with their animals in an emergency.

“In an emergency, people’s affection for their animals will influence their decision to relocate or evacuate in a timely way,” he said.



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"If you own animals it is essential that you develop a plan, for what you would do for all your family - including your animals - in case of severe storms and floods, bush fires, heat waves and other extreme weather events."

The Open Day was a Hawkesbury-Nepean Animal Ready Community Project supported by NSW SES, the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Agnes Banks Equine Clinic, Rural Fire Service and Hawkesbury City Council.

Key questions for horse owners

- How will you transport your animals? Will you need to make more than one journey?
- If you own a horse and have a float, is it registered and well maintained?
- If you don't own a float, where can you borrow a float?
- Have you practiced loading your horses onto a float?
- Can you set up a buddy arrangement with horse owners outside your area for when you need to move your horse to a safe location?

David King's (NSW SES) top tips for keeping your animals safe during an emergency

- Understand the level of risk associated with where you live. Do you live in or near the flood plain, nearby a creek or in a low-lying area? Is your area subject to flash flooding?
- Permanently identify your animals. This will help reunite you and your animals if separated during an emergency
- Prepare an evacuation kit for all your animals. It should be able to maintain your animals for 3 to 7 days and include whatever you might need for restraint and transport, food, water, toileting, medications, first aid, housing and bedding
- Have a list of people you can call who are willing and able to help relocate or evacuate your animals if you are not at home
- Think about the route you will take to get your family and animals to safety. Have a plan A, B and C, based on where the dangers may be and what roads may be closed. If you need to evacuate leaving early is the safest option
- Help other animal owners in your community to become "Animal Ready"
- Listen to the warnings and act early. Be prepared and relocate your animals to safety early — this can reduce stress for them and for you