



The power of Mother Nature overturning Lismore's starting barriers

ARCC Chaplains assist Northern Rivers flood victims

Australian Racing Christian Chaplaincy chaplains Brendon and Fran Hotschilt run a Christian campsite called Camp Drewe in Lennox Head.

In the middle of the Northern Rivers flood emergency, they offered the use of their campsite to accommodate those made homeless by the disaster.

Originally, it was envisaged to be only a few days, but the days have turned into weeks. Now, with further rains, this may become months.

As well as providing food and lodging, Brendon and Fran provide a compassionate listening ear to those under great hardship due to the flooding.

In addition to this, ARCC's National Chaplain, Rev. Colin Watts recently attended the Flood Recovery Centre in Lismore as part of a team from the Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network (DRCN).

The DRCN is a network of volunteer chaplains, co-ordinated by the Uniting Church, which provides chaplaincy support to

THE SCALE OF THE DISASTER WAS IMMEASURABLE AS SOME WELCOME HELP ARRIVED FOR NORTHERN RIVER FLOOD VICTIMS AT EVACUATION AND RECOVERY CENTRES

WORDS: **DR KARIN SOWADA**
(Chair, Australian Racing Christian Chaplaincy)

evacuation and recovery centres under the auspices of Resilience NSW.

Along with some Victorian counterparts, Colin provided emotional and practical support not just to those who came seeking assistance, but to the



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agency personnel who dealt with one harrowing case after another each day.

The scale of the disaster was immense. Many had faced intense and life-threatening situations (some had even begun saying their goodbyes to family and friends), whilst others had nothing but the clothes on their back.

Some did not have shoes, as they were ruined by the water.

During this there were also many tales of support from the local community which had rallied around them to provide accommodation, clothing, food and practical help.

Whilst in the region, Colin Watts visited Lismore, Murwillumbah and Ballina Racecourses and spoke with people in the racing community who had been impacted by flooding.

Lismore Racecourse had been so inundated by water that the roof of the grandstand was the



Rev. Colin Watts (centre) with Victorian volunteer chaplains Anneri (left) and Max (right) in the Lismore Recovery Centre at Southern Cross University

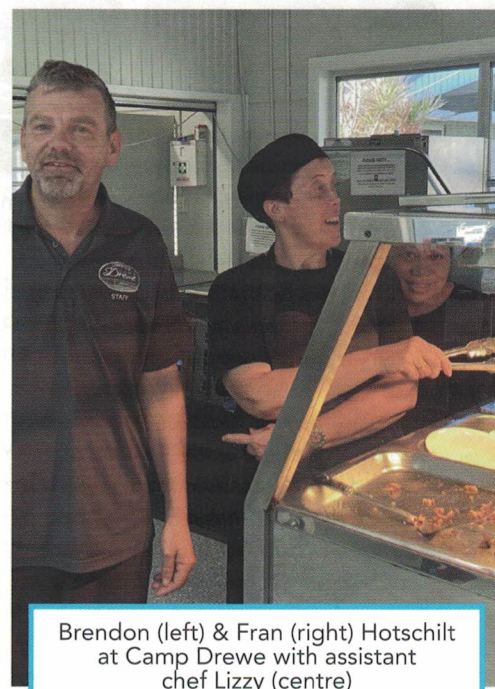
only thing visible. The force of the water was evidenced by it overturning the starting barriers.

Luckily all horses stabled at Lismore Racecourse were evacuated before the flood waters arrived.

Murwillumbah and Ballina Racecourses were also impacted but were starting to recover with Murwillumbah hosting classes for children from the flooded local school and Ballina playing host to a large contingent of ADF personnel who were contributing to the clean-up effort.

For more information about the Australian Racing Christian Chaplaincy visit – arcc.org.au

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Brendon (left) & Fran (right) Hotschilt at Camp Drewe with assistant chef Lizzy (centre)

FRONT RUNNER

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