

Community Recovery Information #5

This newsletter contains recovery information for people impacted by bushfires across NSW.

A message from the Office of Emergency Management

As we travel around the southern region of NSW, we see first-hand the bushfire damage and also the direct impact on people, local communities and business.

We want to reassure you that the recovery effort is well underway.

We are focused on the clean-up with Laing O'Rourke on the ground in several towns and many of the local waste management plans are now finalised.

We are also working closely with charities, including the Minderoo Foundation. We will be jointly funding more than 100 temporary accommodation pods for people whose homes have been destroyed and have no alternative accommodation available. We will work with local councils to ensure the pods go to those most in need.

Lastly, we have heard that many bushfire affected towns are experiencing strong bookings for the upcoming Easter long weekend. While this is good for local tourism, if you are bushfire affected and being displaced from your current accommodation over the holidays, we can assist in arranging an alternative place to stay. Please call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.

More information on the clean-up, grants and assistance is available via Service NSW on 13 77 88.

Clean-up Register

The NSW Government and the Commonwealth are jointly covering the clean-up cost of **insured and uninsured** residential and eligible commercial (small business and primary production) properties destroyed in the NSW bushfires since 1 July 2019.

Destroyed or damaged buildings on a property that are the primary residences or places of business, and any associated debris, will be safely cleaned up and removed. As necessary, work may include:

- removal of known hazardous materials, including asbestos
- removal of materials destroyed by bush fire and hazardous trees near the destroyed or damaged primary residence or place of business
- removal of damaged driveways that could impact on the safety of the clean-up
- with consent of building owners, removal of concrete slab foundations.

You need to opt in to the clean-up program and register your property. You can do this by calling Service NSW on **13 77 88** or visit **service.nsw.gov.au**

Laing O'Rourke has been appointed to lead the clean-up. If you're not able to register through Service NSW, Laing O'Rourke will help with your registration directly when they are on the ground in your location.

Once you've registered:

1. Laing O'Rourke staff will contact you to discuss the damage and assess your eligibility.
2. Once the area is declared safe, they will meet with you on site.
3. You approve the scope of works.
4. The clean-up of the property will commence.
5. You confirm the completion of the agreed scope of works.

Laing O'Rourke will always pre-arrange any household visits and will not turn up unannounced or demand payment.

Are you OK?

Bushfires are distressing and you might still be feeling sad or anxious, or have trouble sleeping or remembering things.

This is a normal reaction.

There are some things you can do to take care of yourself and your mental health, or the mental health of someone you know.

- spend time with family and friends
- try to get back in to a routine
- continue a healthy lifestyle (eating, sleeping, exercise)
- take time out but don't isolate yourself
- write down your worries and concerns
- express your feelings in your own time and way
- accept help when it's offered
- limit the amount of media coverage you are exposed to
- don't expect to have all the answers
- understand you are not alone in your experience

Having someone to listen and support you at times like this is important.

The NSW Government has invested \$15.3 million to support bushfire mental health. There are 30 clinicians across the State. People suffering from trauma or stress as a result of the State's bushfire crisis should contact their local health service via the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

The following are additional free services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- **NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511**
- **Beyondblue: 1300 22 4636**
- **Lifeline Bushfire Recovery: 13 43 57**
- **Mensline: 1300 789 978**
- **Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800**
- **If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call 000**

Bushfire Customer Care Service

The NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service can help you navigate the support and financial assistance that's available across all levels of government. This service is delivered by Service NSW. It offers one-on-one support for people and businesses over the phone or in-person.

Call 13 77 88 (7am to 7pm daily) or **visit [service.nsw.gov.au](https://www.service.nsw.gov.au)** for locations of Service NSW Centres or Mobile Service Centres.

So far, over 6,660 people have signed up to the Bushfire Customer Care program. The Service NSW Mobile Service Centres have visited over 50 bushfire-impacted towns across the state and helped over 764 people.

Emergency temporary accommodation

Emergency accommodation is available to people who have been directly affected by a natural disaster. This includes fires and floods.

The Natural Disaster Housing Assistance Service can also help with rental bond loans and advance rent. **Call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444**

Government financial assistance

Please note, a number of these measures have eligibility requirements.

Commonwealth Government Disaster Recovery Payment

\$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child for people severely affected by bushfires. An additional \$400 will also be provided for children. This additional payment is applied automatically.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Commonwealth Government Disaster Recovery Allowance

The Disaster Recovery Allowance is a short-term support payment if your income has been affected as a direct result of the bush fires.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

NSW Government Disaster Relief Grants

Grants are available for eligible individuals and families whose homes and essential household contents have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

To be eligible for this assistance you must:

- Be a low-income earner and meet an income assets test
- Demonstrate that the affected home is your principal place of residence
- Not be covered by insurance
- Demonstrate that the damage was caused by the disaster
- Lodge the application within four months of the disaster occurring

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Volunteer Firefighters' Financial Support

Payments for eligible volunteer firefighters who are self-employed or employed by a small or medium business and have lost income.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Primary Industries Grants Program

\$75,000 recovery grants, concessional loans and transport subsidies for eligible primary producers. More than \$40 million has been paid out to date.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Small Business Grants

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available if your business has been directly affected by bush fire.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Business Loans

Up to \$500,000 is available for eligible businesses.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Replacement of documents

Free replacement of licences, permits and certificates, including NSW Fair Trading permits/licences.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Legal advice

The Disaster Response Legal Service NSW can provide free legal advice to people affected by disasters on a range of issues.

They can help you with:

- Insurance claims and disputes
- Financial hardship
- Centrelink
- Tenancy problems
- Your rights at work
- Replacing important documents
- Domestic violence advice
- Other everyday legal problems

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Stamp Duty Relief

The NSW Government is providing stamp duty relief of up to \$55,000 for people who lost their homes during bushfires and who choose to purchase a replacement home elsewhere rather than rebuild. If they do decide to buy a replacement home, they can do so without the added financial burden of paying stamp duty.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Visit us at a Recovery Centre

If you have any questions about anything you've read in this newsletter, come and see us at a Recovery Centre or Assistance Point.

A Recovery Centre offers more than just help with applications for financial assistance. It's also a place where you can share your concerns with people who can understand and support you.

To find a Recovery Centre or Assistance Point near you, visit emergency.nsw.gov.au or call the **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.**