

## Community Recovery Newsletter #4

**This newsletter contains information and advice for people impacted by the fires across Northern NSW.**



*Signs of new life emerging on the Bruxner Highway near Drake*

### Are you ok?

Bush fires are distressing and you might still be feeling sad or anxious, or have trouble sleeping or remembering things. This is a normal reaction and it is not a sign of weakness.

If you are still not feeling great a few weeks on from the fires it's a good idea to reach out and get some support. There are different people you can talk to, like your local GP or health care provider.

You can also contact any of the following free services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

<b>Mental Health Line</b>	1800 051 511
<b>Lifeline</b>	13 11 14
<b>Beyondblue</b>	1300 224 636
<b>MensLine</b>	1300 789 978
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	1800 55 1800

### Community Meetings and Events

- Drake:** **Bushfire Recovery Dance**  
Drake Hall, 16 March from 7pm
- Tingha:** **Community Recovery Meeting**  
7pm, Wednesday 13 March  
Tingha Town Hall  
Free BBQ from 6.30pm

### Legal Assistance

Legal Aid NSW helps people with their legal problems and insurance claims. Legal Aid NSW lawyers can provide free legal advice and minor assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues including insurance, tenancy and credit and debt problems.

Legal Aid NSW: **1800 801 529**

[www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

### Red Cross

Red Cross offers a range of information and practical tools to support communities to recover from disasters and emergencies.

Everybody responds to disasters differently but many of us experience the same sorts of feelings and emotions afterwards. Find out more about how to talk about it and how to check in with friends and family members of all ages at:

<https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/after-the-emergency/get-info>

### Fencing

If your property boundary borders a National Park and this boundary fencing was burned by the Northern NSW Fires, contact National Parks and Wildlife Services on **02 6739 0700** for assistance.

## Disaster Relief Grants for Individuals

Disaster relief grants are 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

### Applying for a disaster relief grant:

To apply for financial assistance call Disaster Welfare Services on **1800 018 444**.

## Disaster Relief for Farmers

A range of assistance measures are available to eligible farmers and primary producers impacted by fire, including:

- Concessional fixed-rate loans up to \$130,000
- Transport subsidies for the carriage of livestock, fodder and water

For more information contact:

NSW Rural Assistance Authority **1800 678 593**

[rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au)

## Housing Assistance

Family & Community Services (FACS) can assist by providing temporary accommodation for up to 28 nights while impacted residents seek alternative longer-term arrangements. FACS can also provide financial assistance through a repayable bond loan and a non-repayable advanced rent of two week. All fire affected residents are eligible for this assistance.

Call FACS Housing **1800 422 322**

## Animal Welfare

Local Land Services has been assisting with emergency fodder, stock water and medical assistance for animals impacted by the fire.

Landholders are encouraged to call the Agriculture and Animal Hotline to request assistance or report any stock losses.

Animal & Agriculture Hotline **1800 814 647**

## Tax Help

If you have been affected by the fire you don't need to worry about your tax affairs right away. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will give you time to deal with your more immediate problems first and can help you to sort out your tax affairs later.

Depending on your circumstance, the following assistance may be available to you:

- more time to lodge, pay and respond
- early access to your money
- assistance payments
- help with damaged or destroyed property
- reconstructing your tax records
- fuel tax credits for individuals, businesses and others

## Motor Vehicle Assistance

Motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of a natural disaster may be eligible for a stamp duty refund on their replacement vehicle.

Contact the Office of State Revenue via the website [www.osr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.osr.nsw.gov.au)

Revenue NSW: **1300 139 814**

## Clean Up Advice

Houses, sheds and other buildings that have been burnt in a bushfire can leave potential health and safety hazards in the remaining rubble and ash.

Hazardous household materials that may be present after a bushfire include asbestos, ash from burnt treated timbers (i.e. copper chrome arsenate or CCA), medicines, garden or farm chemicals, other household chemicals and cleaning products, damaged gas bottles, metal and other residues from burnt household appliances as well as ash and dusts.

Other hazards may include unsafe building structures, electrical hazards and missing fencing panels around swimming pools.

**When returning to your property after a bushfire, consider the following precautions to protect your health:**

- Do not enter your property until you are advised that it is safe to do so by emergency services, utilities companies or local council.
- Electrical hazards could exist such as live power lines that may be down or active solar panels.
- Buildings and other structures may be unstable to enter or walk over.
- Sewerage services may be disrupted causing health risks.
- Be aware that hot, smouldering coals and other potentially hazardous materials may be hidden under the rubble.
- Building rubble should not be buried as it may contain hazardous materials.
- Don't spread ash around your property, particularly if asbestos materials were used in your home or other structures, or CCA-treated timber was burnt.
- Moisten the ash with water to minimise dust and keep damp but do not use high pressure water sprays.

## For more information and updates

Visit our website at  
[www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)

Or follow our Facebook page at  
[NSW Disaster Recovery](#)

Tag us @NSWDisasterRecovery

## Communities Coming Together



On Saturday 9 March Tingha RSL sub-branch hosted 'All Roads lead to Tingha' fundraising concert to raise the spirits of locals affected by the fires.

There was an all-day BBQ, raffles, auctions, prizes and a Poet's Breakfast donated by Inverell's Australian Café on Sunday morning.



On Sunday 10 March Tabulam hosted a Fire Benefit Concert organised by Drake musician John Snitch (pictured).

The CWA opened their hall and served delicious food to those attending. The monthly Tabulam Markets were also on, with music, stalls and a fundraiser BBQ from Lions Bonalbo Upper Clarence.

***Thank you to everyone involved for your support!***