

## Community Recovery Information #2

This newsletter contains recovery information for people recently impacted by bush fires in NSW.

### Clean-up Assistance

If your property is insured, please contact your insurer about clean-up.

If you are uninsured and your home has been damaged or destroyed, Public Works Advisory will arrange for the clean-up of your residence and immediately adjacent outbuildings, including the removal of concrete slabs.

If you are uninsured, please contact Public Works Advisory on **1800 88 55 39** to discuss the clean-up of your property.

### Small Business Grants

Grants of up to \$15,000 are available if your business has been directly affected by bush fire.

Applications can be made to the Rural Assistance Authority on **1800 678 593** or visit <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/disaster-recovery-grants> for eligibility criteria.

### Primary Producer Grants

Grants of up to \$15,000 are available for bush fire affected primary producers.

Applications can be made to the Rural Assistance Authority on **1800 678 593** or visit <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/disaster-recovery-grants> for eligibility criteria.

Local Government Areas this applies to:

Armidale Regional, Ballina, Bellingen, Byron, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell, Kempsey, Kyogle, Lismore, Mid-Coast, Nambucca, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Richmond Valley, Tenterfield, Tweed and Walcha.

## Health and wellbeing

### *Looking after yourself and others*

Bush fires can be distressing and you might feel things like sadness, frustration, anxiety or have trouble sleeping or remembering things. This is a normal reaction to an abnormal event and is not a sign of weakness.

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

Some tips on managing your recovery include:

- spend time with family and friends
- try to get back into a routine
- continue a healthy lifestyle (eating, sleeping, exercise)
- take time out but don't isolate yourself
- express your feelings in your own time and way
- accept help when it is 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.

*Keep checking in with your friends and neighbours and looking out for each other.*

### **Free telephone support**

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

Mental Health Line	1800 011 511
Lifeline	13 11 14
Mensline	1300 789 978
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636

*If you or someone you know is in immediate danger always call 000.*

### **Free face-to-face support**

Free face-to-face or telephone counselling services with a mental health practitioner, such as a psychologist or mental health social worker, to provide people with strategies and techniques to manage mental health.

- **Hunter/New England – Healthwise**  
**1800 931 540**
- **North Coast - Connect to Wellbeing**  
**1300 160 339**

## Are you insured?

If you are insured you should talk to your insurance company as soon as possible about how to make a claim. If you have clearance, you can start cleaning up immediately - but first take pictures or video of any damage to your property and possessions as evidence for your claim.

The Insurance Council of Australia can be contacted with any questions, complaints or concerns about insurance on **1800 734 621**.

## Support for Individuals

### *Disaster Relief Grants*

**If you are not insured and have limited income, you may be eligible for a disaster relief grant. Please call Disaster Welfare on 1800 018 444.**

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

Contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on **1800 018 444**.

### *Disaster Recovery Payment*

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment has been activated for people severely affected by the NSW Bush Fires.

This provides a one-off payment of \$1000 per adult and \$400 per child if your home has been destroyed or severely damaged – including smoke damage.

Call **180 2266** to apply.

### *Disaster Recovery Allowance*

The Disaster Recovery Allowance has been activated by the Australian Government for people affected by the NSW Bush Fires.

This provides short term support payment to assist those whose income has been affected as a direct result of the bush fires.

Call **180 2266** or visit [humanservices.gov.au](http://humanservices.gov.au)

### *Domestic Water Assistance*

If your potable water has been used by a fire fighting agency to fight the fire, you may be eligible to have it replaced. This assistance is for residential properties in rural areas.

Disaster Welfare is working with NSW RFS to identify impacted properties.

Call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on **1800 018 444** (Mon–Fri 8.30am-4.30pm) for more information.

## Support for Landholders

Local Land Services and NSW DPI are providing assistance to landholders who have been impacted by bush fire through the Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area (AASFA). Their priority is assisting you to ensure the survival and welfare of animals.

### *Emergency Fodder*

AASFA provides emergency fodder and assistance to bush fire affected landholders for short-term relief (usually up to three days) to enable landholders to make alternative arrangements for livestock feed.

For fodder call the **Animal & Agriculture Hotline: 1800 814 647**

## Emergency Water Supplies

AASFA is providing water to manage immediate animal welfare issues and are contacting landholders who have requested water.

Prioritisation of emergency water provision will depend on the

- significance of the impact on animal welfare
- significance of the impact on other agricultural activities

Assistance for minor/temporary repairs to infrastructure to enable water supply is also available.

For emergency water call the **Animal & Agriculture Hotline: 1800 814 647**

## Reporting Stock Loss and Damage

Landholders are encouraged to report damage to property online at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rrp](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rrp) or call the Animal & Agriculture Hotline: **1800 814 647**.

The survey enables DPI to determine the area the natural disaster has impacted and the scale of the event, the severity of the impact, the value of impact to primary production, where and what assistance or resources may be needed.

## Replacing personal documents

Service NSW can help replace many of your personal documents free of charge if they were damaged or destroyed. This includes birth certificates, marriage certificates, licences and number plates.

For assistance please visit your nearest NSW Service centre, **or call 13 77 88**

## Legal Assistance

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)

## Fire Retardant Information

Retardants are dropped from the air to suppress and slow the fires and may have landed on some properties.

This type of retardant is basically a fertiliser (a mix of ammonium and diammonium sulphate and ammonium phosphate). This coloured foam will need to be flushed from roofs and water sources.

For assistance with removing fire retardant from your roof please call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on **1800 018 444**

## Hazard Identification Notices

You may find a hazard identification notice on your property when you return after a bushfire.

This notice indicates your property has been visited and dangers like electrical risks, falling branches or asbestos may have been identified.

Only return home when you have been given approval. When you do, even if there is no sign, there may still be hazards on your property.

Please ensure you wear a P2 face mask, which can filter out very fine particles from the air.

If the Hazard Identification Notice indicates asbestos is suspected on your property, you can get further information from the Public Works Advisory on **1800 88 55 39**.

**NSW GOVERNMENT**

# HAZARD IDENTIFICATION NOTICE

**THIS PROPERTY HAS BEEN INSPECTED AFTER THE FIRE.**  
For your safety, we have indicated the possible hazards that may be present.

ASSESSMENT DATE:	
SITE DETAILS:	
ASSESSING OFFICER:	

**IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL HAZARDS:**

Electricity (Mains)	Suspected Asbestos (no sample taken)	Dangerous Tree / Branches
Electricity (Solar)	Suspected Asbestos (sample taken)	Structural Instability
Gas (Mains)	Respiratory Irritant (Fibreglass etc.)	Sharps
Gas (Cylinder)	Bulk Flammable Liquids	Exposed edge (Fall Hazard)
Sewage	Chemicals	Pool Fencing

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS** These hazards may cause serious injury. If asbestos is suspected, it is recommended you do not enter the property. For further information or advice please contact **1800 88 55 39**.

## **Local Housing Contacts**

### **Mission Australia**

1/39 Gordon Street, Coffs Harbour  
**1800 269 672**

### **Community Housing Limited**

**1300 245 468**

#### **TAREE**

183 - 185 Victoria Street  
Taree NSW 2430

#### **PORT MACQUARIE**

Level 1, 16 Clarence Street  
(PO Box 837)  
Port Macquarie NSW 2444

#### **COFFS HARBOUR**

1/19 Park Avenue  
(PO Box 2523)  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

#### **KEMPSEY**

84 Belgrave Street  
Kempsey NSW 2440

### **Compass**

**1300 333 733**

57 Albert Street  
Taree NSW 2430  
PO Box 99

1/9 Brown Street  
**Newcastle** NSW 2300  
PO Box 2135  
Dangar NSW 2309

Shop 3A/11 Molly Morgan Drive  
**Greenhills** NSW 2323  
PO Box 597  
East Maitland NSW 2323

114 Vincent Street  
**Cesnock** NSW 2325  
PO Box 597  
East Maitland NSW 2323

1/56-58 Brook Street  
**Muswellbrook** NSW 2333  
PO Box 71  
Muswellbrook NSW 2333

## **Housing Assistance**

In NSW, social housing providers can provide support and assistance to people who are affected as a direct result of natural disasters such as fires, floods and severe storms.

### **What types of service are available?**

Social housing providers in NSW can assist affected people with access to products such as:

**Temporary Accommodation** – time limited accommodation for clients who are experiencing immediate homelessness

**Emergency Temporary Accommodation** – short-term temporary housing for up to 3 months for clients in urgent need of housing because of natural disaster [who would not normally be eligible for social housing]

**Rentstart Bond loan** – an interest-free loan to assist eligible clients pay a rental bond for a tenancy

**Housing Assistance** – a range of housing assistance products and services [including the above] that a person may be eligible for.

### **Where to go for help during business hours**

During regular business hours 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, visit any social housing provider.

A list of social housing providers can be found at  
[www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/contact/housing](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/contact/housing)

### **Where to get help after hours**

The Department of Communities and Justice Housing Contact Centre (HCC) operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The HCC can assist people with

- Temporary accommodation
- General housing enquiries
- Applications for housing assistance

### **Important numbers**

Link2Home - **1800 152 152**

For temporary accommodation – this information and referral service is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

DCJ Housing Contact Centre **1800 422 322**  
Available 24/7, 365 days a year.

## Starting your clean-up

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

Hazardous household materials that may be present after a bush fire include asbestos, ash from burnt treated timbers, like copper chrome arsenate (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 or missing fencing panels around 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.
- 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.
- Wear a P2 face mask and protective clothing

## Disaster Welfare Assistance Points OPEN

Disaster Welfare Assistance offer help to bushfire affected people with their immediate needs. You can access:

- ✓ Disaster Relief Grants and assessments
- ✓ Red Cross
- ✓ Disaster Recovery Chaplains
- ✓ Salvation Army
- ✓ Anglicare and more.

### FIND YOUR LOCAL DISASTER WELFARE ASSISTANCE POINT:

📍 Disaster Welfare Assistance Point: 265 Grey Street, Glen Innes, Mon-Fri 9-5

📍 Disaster Welfare Assistance Point: 68 Wynter Street, Taree, Monday- Fri 9-5

📍 Disaster Welfare Assistance Point: 60 Smith Street Kempsey opens Tuesday to Friday 9-5pm  
Willawarrin Community Hall Tuesday to Friday, 9-11am Limited assistance services available.

📍 Disaster Welfare Assistance Point: 42 Victoria Street Grafton, Mon-Fri, 9-5

Assistance points are the bases for support with Mobile Recovery Teams visiting and connecting with communities around affected areas.

Locations for Mobile Recovery Team visits will be advertised on the @NSW Disaster Recovery Facebook page and on [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)

If you can't visit an assistance point, please call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444 (8:30am - 4:30pm)

For more recovery information and updates:

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

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