

## Community Recovery Information #3

This newsletter contains recovery information for people recently impacted by bush fires in the Northern Tablelands, North Coast and Mid North Coast regions.

### Bushfire clean-up assistance and waste management

The NSW Government is providing \$25 million to help cover the cost of cleaning up home sites, concrete slab removal, and ensuring that hazardous materials, including asbestos, are removed and handled in a safe and orderly manner. This means that your insurance money is maximised towards rebuilding your home. This funding also covers those whose homes are uninsured.

#### *If you are: Insured*

For insured homes that have been damaged or destroyed, insurance companies will arrange clean-up and removal of bushfire debris.

Contact your insurer about clean-up as soon as possible. Clean-up can start immediately once you have clearance. Make sure that you take photos or recordings of any damage for your records and to assist with your claim.

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

#### *If you are: Uninsured*

For uninsured homes that have been damaged or destroyed, Public Works Advisory can arrange for the clean-up and removal of bushfire debris from residences and immediately adjacent outbuildings, including the removal of asbestos and concrete slabs.

**Public Works Advisory: 1800 88 55 39**

### Emergency temporary accommodation

Emergency accommodation is available to people affected as a direct result of the recent fires.

Short-term housing support for up to three months is available to all people in urgent need of housing because of a natural disaster. This also covers people who would not normally be eligible for social housing.

➤ **Housing Contact Centre: 1800 422 322**  
(available 24/7)

For more recovery information and updates:

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

FB @NSWDisasterRecovery

### 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**.

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 (Main)	Suspected Asbestos (no sample taken)	Dangerous Tree / Branches	
Electricity (Solar)	Suspected Asbestos (sample taken)	Structural Instability	
Gas (Flame)	Respiratory Irritant (fiberglass etc.)	Shards	
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.			

## Fire retardant information

Coloured foam dropped from the air to suppress / slow fires may have landed on some properties.

This type of retardant is basically a fertiliser and will need to be flushed from roofs and water sources.

To prevent any retardant or ash getting into water tanks, residents should disconnect their downpipe/s from water tank/s, so that the first flush (either rain or washing) does not wash anything from the roof into tanks.

- **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line:**  
**1800 018 444**

## Fire-damaged fences

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) offers assistance under certain conditions to repair or replace fences bordering national parks in accordance with the NPWS boundary fencing policy.

This is of particular relevance to landholders who immediately border national parks and nature reserves affected by the recent fires.

NPWS is offering to purchase and supply an agreed quantity of fencing materials to reconstruct boundary fences.

This offer applies to the replacement or repair of pre-existing boundary fences only.

- **Department of Planning, Industry and Environment:**  
**1300 361 967**

## Telstra disaster relief

Telstra customers who have suffered severe damage or loss of their premises can access:

- Free call diversion from the customer's Telstra fixed phone service to another Australian fixed or mobile service of their choice, regardless of the carrier. This offer is applicable for a maximum period of 6 months from the date of the fire.
- In addition, Telstra will apply a one off credit to the value of \$500 inc. GST to the customer's Telstra fixed phone account to help cover the costs of the following, if required:
  - Connection of a Telstra fixed phone service at one temporary residence
  - Re-connection of a Telstra fixed phone service at the customer's original permanent premises.

Call **Telstra** on **132 203** to register for assistance.

## Disaster Welfare Assistance Points

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.

Locations are as follows:

📍 60 Smith Street, Kempsey, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

📍 68 Wynter Street, Taree, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

📍 42 Victoria Street, Grafton, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

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

Assistance is also available by calling:

- **Housing: 1800 422 322 (24/7)**
- **Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511**
- **Animal and Agriculture Hotline: 1800 814 647**
- **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line:**  
**1800 018 444**

## 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.

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.

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**
- **Beyondblue: 1300 22 4636**

If you or someone you know is in **immediate danger 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**

## Support for individuals

### *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
- **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line:**  
**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 \$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child if your home has been destroyed or severely damaged (including smoke damage).

- **Human Services:**  
**180 2266 or humanservices.gov.au**

### *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.

- **Human Services:**  
**180 2266 or 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 Assistance Line:**  
**1800 018 444**

## Support for landholders

Local Land Services and NSW Department of Primary Industries (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 for short-term relief (usually up to three days) to enable landholders to make alternative arrangements for livestock feed.

- **Animal and Agriculture Hotline:**  
**1800 814 647**

### *Emergency water supplies*

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

Prioritisation of emergency water provision will depend on the:

- Significance of the impact on animal welfare; and
- Significance of the impact on other agricultural activities.

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

- **Animal and Agriculture Hotline:**  
**1800 814 647**

### *Reporting stock loss and damage*

Landholders are encouraged to report damage to property.

This enables DPI to determine where and what assistance or resources may be needed.

- **Animal and Agriculture Hotline:**  
**1800 814 647 or**  
**[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rrp](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rrp)**

### *Primary Producer Grants*

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

Eligibility criteria apply.

- **Rural Assistance Authority:**  
**1800 678 593 or**  
**[www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/disaster-recovery-grants](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/disaster-recovery-grants)**

### *Small Business Grants*

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

Eligibility criteria apply.

- **Rural Assistance Authority:**  
**1800 678 593 or**  
**[www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/disaster-recovery-grants](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/disaster-recovery-grants)**

## *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.

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

**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.

## ***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**

(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

For more recovery information  
and updates:

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

FB @NSWDisasterRecovery