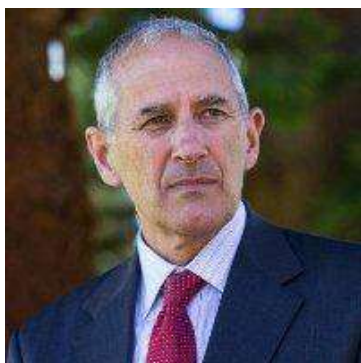


Community Newsletter Tathra & District Fire Recovery Committee



A message from Recovery Coordinator, Mr Euan Ferguson AFSM

I've been appointed by the NSW Government to coordinate the recovery effort in Tathra and Reedy Swamp. This means coordinating all the agencies, councils and organisations working to assist the fire recovery. Our priorities so far have been finding accommodation for displaced people, managing potential asbestos concerns, cleaning up, getting insurance assessors on the ground and supporting the needs of residents. We have established a Recovery Committee and I have met with community leaders and many affected people. Our first Community Recovery Meeting on Wednesday 28 March will provide an update to the community on the recovery effort so far. Representatives from Bega Valley Shire Council and key recovery agencies will be available to answer questions. While we move into recovery, it is heart-warming to see businesses generously supporting their community despite suffering their own losses. I urge anyone feeling overwhelmed by distress to please contact the mental health line or visit the Recovery Centre to talk to someone. The Recovery Committee is now focused on housing, infrastructure, clean up and health and wellbeing. Most importantly, I would like to thank the many kind people within the community who continue to support those who have suffered most. The Bega Valley Shire Council staff, emergency services, volunteers, contractors, local businesses and community groups have rallied and given so much time. Your community spirit is something to be proud of and your hard work is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

This newsletter contains information for residents and businesses impacted by the recent Tathra and Reedy Swamp fire.

Recovery Centre

The Recovery Centre is 10am – 5pm Monday – Friday and 10am – 4pm weekends.

The Recovery Centre provides a one stop shop for affected residents and businesses to access recovery assistance from a range of agencies and organisations.

Agencies based at the Recovery Centre include: Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW Health, Disaster Welfare Services, Insurance Council of Australia, Housing NSW, Business Connect, Legal Aid, Red Cross, Chaplaincy Network, Salvation Army and Safe Work NSW.

Recovery Centre

Bega Civic Centre, Zingel Place, Bega.

Monday – Friday 10am - 5pm

Saturday - Sunday 10am - 4pm

Easter: Open Sat 31 March
10am - 4pm

Ph: (02) 6499 2475

Bus Services

Sapphire Coast Bus lines provides bus services to the Bega Valley, with a **free shuttle bus** running between Tathra Surf Club and the Recovery Centre at Bega Civic Centre.

No bus services will be operating over the Easter period.

A natural disaster area has been declared in Tathra and Reedy Swamp.

You may be eligible for financial assistance from the NSW or Australian Government, depending on your circumstances. This newsletter provides information on the assistance available and contact details for agencies that can assist with your recovery.

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 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 your insurance on **1800 734 621**

Disaster Relief Grants for Individuals

The Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Management can provide disaster relief grants to 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**.

A Disaster Welfare Officer will assist you to assess your eligibility and provide you with an application form. This will include a home visit.

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

Call **13 28 65**

Small Business Assistance

The NSW Government provides practical support to businesses affected by the fire.

Business Advice

Business Connect can provide you with two free independent and confidential business advice sessions. An advisor can meet you at a convenient place and discuss your business needs.

Advice is offered about managing cash flow, planning the next steps, accessing financial support schemes and connecting to additional support.

Call **1800 806 218**

Small Business Survey

The Small Business Connect Office is conducting a survey of businesses affected by the fire. Businesses are encouraged to do our survey to help assess the impact for small businesses.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Tathra>

Health and Wellbeing

Having someone to listen and support you at times like this is important. Talking to family and trusted friends about your concerns can help.

If you experience persistent issues (thoughts or feelings) that interfere with your life you are encouraged to talk to your General Practitioner or health care provider.

You can also use the 24 Hour GP hotline on 1800 022 222.

The NSW Mental Health Line can assist on **1800 011 511** for information and referral information.

Support is also available at the Recovery Centre.

Housing

Family & Community Services (FACS) can assist by providing temporary accommodation for up to 28 nights while impact 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 weeks. All fire affected residents are eligible for this assistance.

Call **1800 422 322**

FACS staff are also available at the Recovery Centre.

Other Assistance

Legal Assistance

Legal Aid NSW helps people with their legal problems. 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.

Visit support officers at the Recovery Centre or call Legal Aid NSW: **1800 801 529**

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

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

Revenue NSW: **1300 139 814**

Births Deaths and Marriages

Births Deaths and Marriages will replace certificates at no cost to those affected by the fire.

Michelle Gould can assist you:

(02) 9035 6350 or
michelle.gould@justice.nsw.gov.au

For more information

Visit our website at
www.emergency.nsw.gov.au

Or follow **NSW Disaster Recovery** on Facebook