

# Bushfire and Drought assistance

## Australian Government - Disaster Recovery Allowance

This allowance provides a short term support payment to assist people whose income has been affected as a direct result of the bushfires.

- Call 180 22 66 or visit [humanservices.gov.au](https://humanservices.gov.au)

## Australian Government - Disaster Recovery Payment

If your home has been damaged by smoke - including your clothes, furniture or carpets - you may be eligible for this payment.

- Call 180 22 66 or visit [disasterassist.gov.au](https://disasterassist.gov.au)

## 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 grant 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 Service NSW on 13 77 88.**

## Australian Tax Office

For identified impacted postcodes, the Australian Tax Office will automatically grant deferrals for lodgments and payments due. Call 1800 806 218 for more information.

## 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.**

## **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.

**Visit your nearest Service NSW centre or call 13 77 88.**

## **Motor vehicle stamp duty relief**

Financial assistance for eligible motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of bushfires. Contact the Office of State Revenue on 1300 139 814.

## **Legal assistance**

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

**Call Service NSW on 13 77 88.**

## **Housing assistance**

The NSW Government has launched the Bushfire Housing Assistance Service to support people who are temporarily or permanently displaced due to the recent NSW bushfires.

If your home has been lost or significantly damaged, you can access the Bushfire Housing Assistance Service that will help you with:

- emergency temporary accommodation
- assistance with a private rental bond and advance rent costs
- sourcing accommodation options from the private rental and short-term housing sector.

The service also helps people source rental housing in their local communities or areas where they have family and local networks.

People impacted by the fires can access the new service by:

- calling the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line (DWAL) on 1800 018 444; or

- contacting or visiting a local Department of Communities and Justice Housing office.

## Insurance

### If you are insured:

If you are insured talk to your insurance company as soon as possible about how to make a claim.

Take photos or video of damage to your property and possessions as evidence for your claim.

If you have clearance from your insurer and evidence for your claim, you can start cleaning up.

- The Insurance Council of Australia can be contacted with any questions, complaints or concerns about insurance on 1800 734 621.
- Legal Aid NSW can provide free legal advice and minor assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues, including insurance, on 1800 801 529.

### If not are NOT insured:

NSW Government Disaster Relief Grants are available for eligible individuals and families whose homes and essential household contents have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster. **Contact Service NSW on 13 77 88.**

## Disaster assistance for landholders

### NSW Rural Assistance Authority

Disaster relief low interest loans of up to \$130,000 are available to eligible primary producers and small businesses, and transport subsidies of up to 50% of the cost to transport livestock or fodder, to eligible primary producers.

Call the Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.

### Disaster Recovery Grants

The Natural Disaster Recovery Relief Grant is available to eligible primary producers, small businesses, sporting clubs and not for profit organisations, following the declaration of a Natural Disaster by the NSW Government, and following the approval of the Australian Government. Disaster recovery grants of up to \$15,000 are now available to primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations. To find out more and to apply visit <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/disaster-recovery-grants/bushfires>.

## Rural Aid Disaster Assistance

Rural Aid Disaster Assistance is available - [Get the information flyer here\(PDF, 3MB\)](#)

It's important to look after yourself and your family, this fact sheet may be helpful:

[Getting through floods, drought and extreme climate events\(PDF, 2MB\)](#)

## Free title searches and plan images

NSW Land Registry Services (NSW LRS) is helping landholders affected by the recent NSW bushfires by providing title searches and plan images of their property free of charge.

Property searches and plans can assist landholders with insurance claims and development applications to council, as well as provide peace of mind regarding land ownership following natural disasters.

**If you have been affected by the recent bushfires and would benefit from access to land and property information from the land titles register, please call the NSW LRS Contact Centre on 1300 396 076 and we can discuss how best to assist you.**

NSW LRS operates the land titles register on behalf of the NSW Government, as well as the General Register of Deeds and the Water Access Licence Register. These registers hold essential information about properties across the state, including about ownership, restrictions on use, title boundaries, plans, and water access and use. Information held on these registers is available for landowners to view through land and property information searches.

## Legal assistance

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

- Call 1800 801 529 or visit [legallaid.nsw.gov.au](http://legallaid.nsw.gov.au)

## Disaster relief low interest loans

Disaster relief low interest loans of up to \$130,000 are available to eligible primary producers and small businesses, and transport subsidies of up to 50% of the cost to transport livestock or fodder, to eligible primary producers.

**Call the Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.**

## 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.

- **Call the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on 1300 361 967 or visit the [NSW Environment website here](#).**

If you need to get in touch with your neighbour about adjoining fences but do not have their [contact details these can be requested here](#). We can only provide contact details for the purposes listed on the application.

## BlazeAid

BlazeAid are a volunteer organisation that works with family and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters. They help rebuild fences and other structures that have been damaged or destroyed.

A BlazeAid camp has been established in Braidwood and if you need assistance you can register with the camp coordinators Dennis and Carol McGrath on 0439 623256 or via email [blazeaid.braidwood@gmail.com](mailto:blazeaid.braidwood@gmail.com). More information about BlazeAid is available on their website - [www.blazeaid.com.au](http://www.blazeaid.com.au).

## Farm Gate counsellors

Farmers and business owners in bushfire affected areas can access Farm Gate counsellors and peer support workers. Contact the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

## Businesses affected by bushfire

### Disaster Recovery Grants

The Natural Disaster Recovery Relief Grant is available to eligible primary producers, small businesses, sporting clubs and not for profit organisations, following the declaration of a Natural Disaster by the NSW Government, and following the approval of the Australian Government. Disaster recovery grants of up to \$15,000 are now available to primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations. To find out more and to apply visit <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/disaster-recovery-grants/bushfires>.

### Business Connect

A free mobile advisory service is available to small businesses. A local 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 1300 134 359 or register at [industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect)

## Dispute Resolution Service

A confidential and free dispute resolution service has been set up to help small businesses needing assistance to work through problems with other businesses or government.

- Call 1300 795 534 or visit [smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/dispute-resolution](http://smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/dispute-resolution)

## General information for Regional NSW

Information, advice and assistance is available for people managing a business, including business tools to analyse profitability and prepare for export.

Call (02) 6760 2670 or visit [nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw](http://nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw)

## Liquor & Gaming NSW, support for licensees

Liquor & Gaming NSW is providing the following support to licensees who have been affected by the bushfires:

- extra assistance for liquor licence applications
- temporary relocation of liquor licences to other premises
- replacement copies of destroyed licences
- replacement signage cost waivers or reductions
- financial hardship provisions for annual liquor licence fees
- gaming machine tax deferral.

If you have lost your physical competency card, download a [digital version](#). Licensees can also find basic details of their licence, including licence number and conditions, at the [online register](#).

To find out what you may be eligible to apply for, email Liquor & Gaming NSW at [contact.us@liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au](mailto:contact.us@liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au) with details of your situation. Include 'Bushfires' in the subject line.

If your licensed premises is unable to trade for more than 6 weeks, please notify the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority by submitting a [Cease to trade notice](#).

## Lost or destroyed licences, permits, certificates

### Fair Trading

Free replacement of the following licences, permits or certificates that have been destroyed or lost during the bushfires:

- home building: contractor, qualified supervisor, tradesperson
- property and real estate
- motor vehicle dealer or repairers
- pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers
- tattoo parlour or tattooist
- owner-builder
- tow truck.

To apply for a replacement card use the [Application for a Duplicate Licence, Certificate or Permit – PDF](#), and note on the form that the reason for the card replacement is that it was lost in the bushfires. Also provide the home address if it is different to your nominated address.

Free Owner-Builder Permit where you opt to rebuild or repair your home damaged or destroyed by a bushfire (all other standard requirements and associated development approvals apply).

For further assistance, visit your [nearest Service NSW Centre](#) or call [13 77 88](#)

## Animal welfare

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Local Land Services officers are assisting landholders in south eastern NSW to manage animal welfare-related issues, which include:

- Emergency fodder and stock water
- Animal assessment and veterinary assistance
- Stock euthanasia and burial
- Livestock feeding and management advice
- Care of animals in evacuation centres

Call the Agricultural Services Hotline on **1800 814 647**.

## Helping native wildlife

The fires have had a severe impact on wildlife. Many animals have been affected by the fires, including threatened species.

For information on how you can help

visit <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/helping-wildlife-in-emergencies>.

## Bank assistance

Australian banks have hardship teams to help those affected by the devastating bushfires. Assistance can include deferral of loan repayments and waiving of fees and charges. Contact your bank or visit

<https://www.ausbanking.org.au/policy/customers/financial-hardship> for contact numbers.

## Clean up

### General advice

- 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.

### Hazard identification notices

A hazard identification notice indicates dangers like electrical risks, falling branches or asbestos may have been identified at your property.

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.

- **Call the Public Works Advisory on 1800 88 55 39.**

## **Clean up assistance**

The NSW Government is coordinating the clean-up of NSW residences and businesses impacted by the NSW bushfires. This includes both insured and uninsured properties.

Public Works Advisory (PWA), in consultation with property owners, is leading the clean-up effort with insurers, local government and contractors, to ensure that properties are efficiently and safely cleared.

The clean-up of bushfire-impacted properties may include:

- containment and removal of asbestos and other contaminated materials released as a result of bushfire
- removal of all dangerous debris including destroyed material and hazard trees
- removal of concrete slab foundations.

Testing will be carried out on all properties to ensure communities already impacted by fire are not exposed to contamination, and workers are not exposed to any hazardous materials. Work will begin once firegrounds are declared safe by the Rural Fire Service.

Note: The cost of clearing properties will not be deducted from the funds available under insurance policies.

## **Owners of business/commercial premises**

Please register with your details. The government is working through the eligibility criteria and will contact you when the specifics are finalised. If you are insured, also speak with your insurer.

**Call Service NSW on 13 77 88 or register online -**

**<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/nsw-bushfire-clean-register-now>**

## **Fire retardant contamination**

Retardants dropped from the air to suppress / slow fires may have landed on some properties. This type of retardant is basically a fertiliser (a mix of ammonium and diammonium sulphate and ammonium phosphate). Coloured foam 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.

- **Contact Service NSW on 13 77 88.**

## Using rainwater after a fire

It's important for residents in fire affected areas, or in areas where ash may have fallen on roofs, to ensure rainwater from the first full rainfall event is not collected as it may be contaminated by ash.

If you think that your rainwater tank has been contaminated you can still use the water to fight fires, flush toilets and wash clothes (provided it will not stain them).

## Smoke damage

If your home has been damaged by smoke - including your clothes, furniture or carpets - you may be eligible for the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment.

- Call 180 22 66 or visit [disasterassist.gov.au](http://disasterassist.gov.au)

## Donations

NSW Government agencies along with charity partners and local community organisations are helping to provide emergency shelter, food and water.

The best way to help our impacted communities is to donate **money** to one of the many charities or appeals that have been established.

Money gives people the choice to buy things they need and support local businesses that have also been impacted.

- The Salvation Army **13 72 58**
- Vinnies **13 18 12**
- The Red Cross **1800 733 276**

## GIVIT

Givit is a national not-for-profit service which matches real and urgent requests for goods and services with resources from the community. If you have something that you wish to donate visit the website where you can view items that are required. You are also able to list an item that you have that you wish to donate.

Visit <http://givit.org.au/> for more information.

## Australian Red Cross grants

If you've lost your home in a bushfire since July 2019, you can apply for an emergency grant of \$5,000. Grants will be open until 30 April 2020.

**Red Cross: 1800 733 276.**

## St Vincent de Paul Society and Salvation Army support

Impacted people are encouraged to register with these charities to receive assistance.

- [The Salvation Army](#): 13 72 58
- St Vincent de Paul Society: 13 18 12

## Health

When smoky, avoid vigorous exercise outside, especially if you have asthma, diabetes, heart disease or a breathing related condition.

If you have an air conditioner at home, turn it on and use it in a recirculate mode.

If you are experiencing any adverse reactions to the dust or smoke, such as shortness of breath, prolonged coughing or wheezing, seek medical advice.

Tank water could have become contaminated from debris, retardant, ash or dead animals. If the water tastes, looks or smells unusual, do not drink it or give it to animals.

All foods that have been fire-damaged or affected by heat should be thrown out - including refrigerated foods if there has been a power outage during the fire.

The NSW Department of Health has a range of information which can be accessed here - <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/air/Pages/bushfire-smoke.aspx>.

## Mental health

It's completely normal to experience a range of emotions after a fire, including anxiety, forgetfulness, sleep disturbance and more. Having someone to listen to and support you through this is very important. Check in on your friends and neighbours, and if you or someone you know needs help, reach out.

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.

## Farm Gate counsellors

Farmers and business owners in bushfire affected areas can access Farm Gate counsellors and peer support workers. Contact the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

## Justice of the Peace

The Queanbeyan Library has a Justice of the Peace available Monday - Friday from 9.30am - 12.30pm. David Harding volunteers at the library and is available to witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit, and to certify copies of original documents.

You can contact the library on 02 6285 6255. The library is located at 6 Rutledge Street, Queanbeyan.

## Sporting clubs, churches and non-profit organisation assistance

### Sporting club assistance

Concessional loans for eligible sporting clubs. Contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.

### Church and non-profit assistance organisation assistance

Up to \$15,000 recovery grants and concessional loans for eligible churches and non-profit organisations.

Contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/disaster-recovery-grants/bushfires>

## 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.

Contact Service NSW on 13 77 88 or at [www.service.nsw.gov.au](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au).

## Water

Access to town water from the Bungendore, Captains Flat and Braidwood water supplies for eligible farmland properties, limited to 1000 litres per day. Water can be obtained from the following sites:

- Braidwood - Bicentennial Park
- Captains Flat - Wilkins Park
- Bungendore - near Council depot in Ellendon St

## **Using rainwater after a fire**

It's important for residents in fire affected areas, or in areas where ash may have fallen on roofs, to ensure rainwater from the first full rainfall event is not collected as it may be contaminated by ash.

If you think that your rainwater tank has been contaminated you can still use the water to fight fires, flush toilets and wash clothes (provided it will not stain them).

More information is available on the NSW Health website -

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/fire-retardants.aspx>

## **Potable 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 not on town water.

**Call Service NSW on 13 77 88.**