

Important Information - Disaster relief for individuals

Australian Government - Disaster Recovery Allowance

The allowance has been activated for people affected by the bushfires. This provides short term support payment to assist those whose income has been affected as a direct result of the bush fires.

➤ Call 180 22 66 or visit 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 the payment.

➤ Call 180 2266 or visit 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 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.

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 NSW Service centre or call 13 77 88.

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 legalaid.nsw.gov.au.

Disaster relief for landholders

Animal welfare

Local Land Services can assist with emergency fodder, stock water and assessment of animals impacted by the fire. Landholders are also encouraged report any stock losses.

- Call 1800 814 647.

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 Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 678 593.

Small business support

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.

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.

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – DPC Regional

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

- Call 6760 2670 or visit nsw.gov.au/improvingnsw/regional-nsw.

Safety General advice

- People should avoid areas where bushfires are occurring. Stay off the road; don't travel unless you need to.
- Report unattended fires or suspicious activity immediately to Triple Zero (000) and follow the advice of authorities.
- Residents need to read all warnings in full to ensure they stay up-to-date with the latest information - this includes evacuation routes and evacuation centres.
- Areas closed off due to the bushfire emergency will reopen when it is safe to do so.
- Bushfires can topple trees and power lines and leave debris strewn across the landscape, posing a significant health and safety risk.
- People returning home need to be mindful of hazards even after a bushfire has been extinguished.

Health General advice

- 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.

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.

The following free services are available to people impacted by fires and drought. No GP referral is needed.

- Hunter / New England Healthwise 1800 931 540
- Northern NSW - Connect to Wellbeing 1300 160 339

Housing assistance

Communities & Justice can assist by providing temporary accommodation for up to 28 nights while impacted residents seek alternative longer term arrangements.

Communities & Justice 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 Housing on 1800 422 322.

Insurance

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.

Uninsured

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 the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.

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.

Asbestos

Asbestos dust and fibres have the potential to present a health risk during and after a fire if not properly managed.

Asbestos clean-up and removal by a licensed asbestos removalist.

Asbestos waste, including fibro, should be disposed of as soon as possible.

The materials should be kept damp until they can be double wrapped in heavy duty (0.2mm) plastic, sealed with tape and labelled as asbestos waste.

- For information about the safe handling and removal of asbestos, visit safework.nsw.gov.au.
- For information about transport and disposal of hazardous materials, visit epa.nsw.gov.au.

Water

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.

- Call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.

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). This coloured foam will need to be flushed from roofs and water sources.

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

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.

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.

Please do not donate physical goods such as toys, furniture and clothes at this time. They are usually fill up community spaces, while taking volunteers away from other important tasks. If you have unwanted physical goods please consider selling them and donating the proceeds instead.

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