

## Community Recovery Newsletter #2

### This newsletter contains information and advice for people impacted by the fires across Northern NSW

Bush fires are distressing and you might feel sadness or anxiety, or have trouble sleeping or remembering things. This is a normal reaction and it is not a sign of weakness.

Kids in particular can be impacted by the uncertainty and confusion. Try to create a sense of calm and let them know that they are safe.

If you are struggling there are people you can talk to, like your local GP or health care provider.

You can also contact any of the following free services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

<b>Mental Health Line</b>	1800 051 511
<b>Lifeline</b>	13 11 14
<b>MensLine</b>	1300 789 978
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	1800 55 1800
<b>Beyondblue</b>	1300 22 4636

#### Upcoming Community Meetings

**Drake:** 5pm, Thursday 21 Feb  
Lunatic Hotel

**Tingha:** 7pm, Friday 22 Feb  
Sport & Rec Club

**Wallangarra /Jennings:**  
7pm (6pm QLD), Friday 22 Feb  
Wallangarra School of Arts

Council, RFS & Local Land Services will provide updates and answer your questions. Disaster Welfare and Health & Wellbeing staff will also be there.

### 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 your insurance on **1800 734 621**.

If you are not insured and have limited income, you may be eligible for a disaster relief grant:

### Disaster Relief Grants for Individuals

Disaster relief grants are 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

### Applying for a disaster relief grant:

To apply for financial assistance call Disaster Welfare Services on **1800 018 444**.

### Disaster Relief for Farmers

A range of assistance measures are available to eligible farmers and primary producers impacted by fire, including:

- Concessional fixed-rate loans up to \$130,000
- Transport subsidies for the carriage of livestock, fodder and water

For more information contact:

NSW Rural Assistance Authority **1800 678 593**

[rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.assist@raa.nsw.gov.au)

## Housing Assistance

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

Call FACS Housing **1800 422 322**

## Animal Welfare

Local Land Services has been assisting with emergency fodder, stock water and medical assistance for animals impacted by the fire.

Landholders are encouraged to call the Agriculture and Animal Hotline to request assistance or report any stock losses.

Animal & Agriculture Hotline **1800 814 647**

## Telstra Assistance

An assistance package is available for residential and small business customers in northern NSW who have lost services due to bushfires across the Tingha and Tabulam area.

Call Telstra on 132 203.

## 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

## 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**

## 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.

Legal Aid NSW: **1800 801 529**

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

Revenue NSW: **1300 139 814**

## Fire retardant Information

Retardants were 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.

See below.

## 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

## Using Rainwater after a Fire

If you think that your rainwater tank has been contaminated you can still use the water to:

- flush toilets
- water the garden
- wash clothes (providing it will not stain clothes)
- wash cars
- fight fires

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

## Clean Up Advice

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

Hazardous household materials that may be present after a bushfire include asbestos, ash from burnt treated timbers (i.e. copper chrome arsenate or 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 and missing fencing panels around swimming 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 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.

### **For more information and updates**

Visit our website at [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)

Or follow our Facebook page at [NSW Disaster Recovery](#)