

Community Recovery Information #4

This newsletter contains recovery information for people impacted by bushfires in the Hunter, Greater Sydney, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands and South East NSW regions.

New Bushfire Customer Care Service

For people impacted by bushfire, the **NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service** will help you navigate the support and financial assistance that's available across all levels of government.

Offering one-on-one support for people and businesses, available over the phone or in-person.

Call 13 77 88

7am to 7pm every day

Or visit www.service.nsw.gov.au for locations of Service NSW, and Mobile Service Centres.

All recovery services can now be accessed via Service NSW. However, if you prefer to continue contacting an agency directly, you can still do so.

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.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88
or NSW Housing Contact Centre: 1800 152 152 (available 24/7)

Animal welfare

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

Call the Animal and Agriculture Hotline on 1800 814 647

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.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Government financial assistance

Please note, a number of these measures have eligibility requirements.

Commonwealth Government Disaster Recovery Payment

\$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child for people severely affected by bushfires. An additional \$400 will also be provided for children, this payment will be applied automatically.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88,
or Human Services: 180 22 66

Commonwealth Government 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.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

or Human Services: 180 2266 or humanservices.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

**Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88
Or Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.**

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.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries Grants Program

\$75,000 recovery grants, concessional loans and transport subsidies for eligible primary producers.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Or NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593

Small Business Grants

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available if your business has been directly affected by bush fire.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Bushfire Working Capital Loan

Offers up to \$50,000 to help businesses cover salaries or wages, rebuild infrastructure and purchase goods and services.

Also, the Bushfire Recovery Loan of up to \$500,000 is available for eligible businesses.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Motor vehicle stamp duty relief

Financial assistance for eligible motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of bushfires.

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

Replacement of documents

Free replacement of licences, permits and certificates, including NSW Fair Trading permits/licences.

Service NSW: 13 77 88

NSW Government to coordinate clean-up

The NSW Government will coordinate the clean-up of fire damaged residential and commercial properties. **This includes both insured and uninsured properties**, and it includes the clean-up of potentially hazardous materials like asbestos.

Call Service NSW on 13 77 88, or visit www.service.nsw.gov.au to register your details and provide consent so contractors can access your land.

Bushfire clean-up assistance and waste management

The NSW Government will coordinate the clean-up of fire damaged residential and commercial properties.

This includes both insured and uninsured properties, and it also includes the clean-up of potentially hazardous materials like asbestos.

Residents who were impacted by the bushfires, will have the following services available to them:

- Containment and removal of asbestos and other contaminated materials released as a result of bush fire
- The removal of all dangerous debris including destroyed material and hazardous trees
- Removal of concrete slab foundations

Residents can call **the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88** to arrange for the clean-up and removal of bushfire debris.

Clean-up health and safety

- Do not enter your property until you are advised that it is safe to do so by emergency services, utilities companies or your 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 and septic systems 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
- Waste generated as a result of the fires needs to go to lawful facilities to ensure soil, water and human health is protected
- 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 dust and fibres have the potential to present a health risk
- Asbestos clean-up and removal must be done by a licensed asbestos removalist

Mental health and wellbeing

Major events, such as the current NSW bush fires, that cause widespread loss and distress impact the whole community.

If you have been impacted by the recent fires, you might feel things like frustration, sadness and 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.

Sometimes it's difficult to talk about what's going on but it's important to reach out if you need help.

This could be as simple as sending a text, a message on social media, inviting someone over for a cuppa or making a phone call.

The following are free services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- **NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511**
- **Beyondblue: 1300 22 4636**
- **Lifeline: 13 11 14**
- **Mensline: 1300 789 978**
- **Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800**
- **If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call 000.**

Legal advice

The Disaster Response Legal Service NSW can provide free legal advice to people affected by disasters on a range of issues, including: They can help you with:

- Insurance claims and disputes
- Financial hardship
- Centrelink
- Tenancy problems
- Your rights at work
- Replacing important documents
- Domestic violence advice
- Other everyday legal problems

Call the Bushfire Customer Care Service on 13 77 88

For more recovery information and updates visit:

www.service.nsw.gov.au

Also, follow live updates from the Office of Emergency Management on Facebook:

[@NSWDisasterRecovery](https://www.facebook.com/NSWDisasterRecovery)