

## Bushfire-generated Green Waste Clean-Up and Processing Program (Stream A – Data collection initiative).

**Registrations Close  
12 April 2021**



## Questions and answers

### How does the Program work?

This program has two Streams:

#### *Stream A: Impact Assessments*

Councils will work with consultants to assess, quantify and report on the extent of outstanding green waste generated by the 2019/20 bushfires. These reports will be submitted for possible grant funding of the clean-up, recovery and disposal costs.

#### *Stream B: Clean-up and processing grants*

If successful in receiving a grant and dependant on available funding, Council will confirm and coordinate any clean up with residents.

Waste must be cleared, managed and disposed of to a standard that reduces danger and risk to public health and safety, and the requirements of the EPA.

It is unlikely there will be any further dangerous tree works after this program.

### What does the program cover?

Stockpiled green waste and Fire-damaged trees on public or private land that pose a significant risk to public safety is eligible. Fire-damaged trees must be assessed by a suitably qualified arborist and meet the following definition of hazardous tree: a tree that has significant structural defects that increase the risk of falling causing injury or death, damage to a residential structure or utility, or cause obstruction to a road or access route.

All properties will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### What about the presence of hazardous materials, such as asbestos, on destroyed sites?

Any identified hazardous materials must be appropriately removed from the area prior to any hazardous tree or green waste removal.

### Will fencing be included in the clean-up?

This funding does not include fencing work, materials or removal of damaged fencing. Council will correspond with property owners with any concerns that may arise from tree or green waste removal.

### What properties/towns are being cleaned up?

Due to the significance of the fires across the LGA, assessments will take place on multiple sites at any one time in fire affected communities including Ben Bullen, Bogee, Capertee, Clarence, Cullen

Bullen, Dargan, Glen Alice, Glen Davis, Lithgow, Marrangaroo, Megalong Valley, Newnes, Newnes Junction, Newnes Plateau, Palmers Oakey, Portland, Round Swamp, Running Stream, and Wolgan Valley.

### **Where and how will the materials be disposed?**

Under this program bushfire-generated green waste will be disposed of by licenced contractors into licensed tipping sites. All waste disposal will be overseen by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

Lithgow City Council will seek to maximise the amount of materials being recycled. Information and advice about bushfire waste and other hazards can be found on the EPA website

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

## **Registration process**

### **What happens once people register?**

A Council officer will contact each registered property owner by phone (or by email if no phone contact is available), to arrange for an appointment/inspection of the property to assess trees or green waste to be removed.

At the appointment, Council's Tree Assessor will discuss the scope of the clean-up with the property owner, and arrange the signing of a consent form.

Following this, Lithgow Council will assess each property on a case-by-case basis and submit the report of clean up works for the second stage of the program (Phase 2).

The assessment **does not guarantee** any tree works will be carried out.

### **Why can't Council use my registration following the fires?**

This is a new program outside of any previous works. It is administered by the EPA and Council and requires new assessments to be conducted.

### **What is a consent form and why do I need to sign one?**

The consent form provides your agreement as the property owner for works to be carried out as part of this program. After you have registered, Lithgow City Council will contact you to discuss the consent process with you.

Consent forms previously signed under previous tree works by Council in 2020 are not valid for re-use.

### **What if I don't want to sign the consent form?**

Lithgow Council can only undertake clean-up works where the property owner has consented to the works. If you have any concerns or questions about the consent form, Lithgow Council will be able to discuss these with you.

### **Is there a cut-off date for registration?**

Registrations will close on 12 April 2021.

### **What if I miss the registration closure date?**

Clean-up registrations have a strict closure date. There are no further programs of works scheduled after this round.

If you require bushfire clean-up and you weren't able to register by 12 April 2021, please email or call Lithgow City Council to discuss your situation and the options available.

### **Clean up of bushfire-generated green waste**

#### **How do I tell if a tree is hazardous, and what do I do about them if they are on my property?**

A hazardous tree is a tree that has significant structural defects that increase the risk of falling causing injury or death, damage to a residential structure, or obstruction of a road or access route.

If you are concerned about hazardous trees on your property, it is best to get professional advice. Through this program Lithgow City Council and its qualified Tree Assessor can assess whether trees are hazardous and provide a report on the condition of the tree, and advice regarding the treatment of the tree.

#### **There are dangerous trees already marked on my property – will Council clear all of these, and will my block be prioritised because of this danger?**

All trees marked and non-marked will need to be assessed to the program criteria. If a tree has been marked it will need to be assessed again to qualify. Some trees may be required to be removed to gain access to your property and/or for the safety of workers on your site.

#### **What about other native vegetation on my property?**

If there is other fire affected vegetation on your property you wish to have cleared, but is not posing an immediate risk, you should contact your Local Council or Local Land Services on 1300 795 299, as you may need permission to remove it.

Where native groundcover has been burned, there is a requirement to give it an opportunity to regrow. Burning is not considered authorised clearing, meaning that burnt groundcover is subject to usual land management rules.

#### **Who is responsible for removing dangerous trees on local roads?**

Dangerous trees on local roadsides may be included for removal as part of this program. If you are concerned about a tree, please contact Lithgow City Council on 6354 9999.

### **Costs and funding**

#### **Do I have to pay anything?**

No. The Phase 1 assessment is provided to property owners free of charge and is funded by the EPA.

#### **Will I need to be insured? Do I need to contact my insurer to participate in this program?**

No. You can participate in this program regardless of whether you are insured.

#### **If I don't participate in the program, will I be able to have my clean-up costs reimbursed?**

No. If you choose not to register for the program, you'll need to make your own arrangements to have your property cleared by a licensed contractor and the bushfire waste disposed of safely. You or the contractor will not be eligible to have the clean-up costs reimbursed.

The program does not reimburse costs for works already undertaken by Insurance, licensed contractors or individuals.

### **How is this funded?**

The Bushfire-generated green waste grants are available for NSW councils and other local government controlled organisations affected by the 2019/20 bushfires in NSW. The green waste clean-up programs is by application through the EPA and is funded under the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

## **Timeline**

### **When will the program start in terms of clean-up works being done?**

Assessments are already underway and you can register now by phoning Council on 6354 9999. Once you have registered, Council officers will be in touch with property owners to start the process for the site clean-up.

But before we can start:

- Safety is our number one priority - we still have areas where safe access can't be guaranteed.
- Site assessments will be needed.
- All hazards – including unsafe structures, asbestos and burnt septic tanks – must be managed appropriately.

Subject to the assessment process and funding, our expectation is that clean-up will commence when funding is approved.

### **Once registered, how long will it take from start to finish – what can residents expect?**

Every property is different and will be managed on a case-by-case basis. Lithgow City Council will contact registered property owners and work with them to ensure the clean-up process is explained, and that the works are done as safely and efficiently as possible.

## **Supporting bushfire recovery**

### **Why is Lithgow City Council doing this now?**

Lithgow City Council has a proven track record of coordinating hazardous tree removal services of a similar size and nature successfully after the 2013 and 2019/20 bushfires.

Lithgow City Council managed and disposed of large quantities of material, working with, training and supervising contractors and reserves from the ADF and Indonesian Army. Unfortunately funding for tree removal was exhausted and Council's own contribution was not able to match the scale of

impact. This experience is crucial to coordinate the assistance and address ongoing waste challenges.

**Was there a tender?**

Lithgow City Council will select the best services qualified, with a proven track record who can hit the ground running to manage this clean-up.

**Will Lithgow City Council be using local community contractors?**

Yes, Lithgow Council will be seeking to use as many qualified local subcontractors as possible.

**Where can I find more information about the program?**

More information about the program is available at:

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/grants/bushfire-recovery-programs/bushfire-generated-green-waste-grants>

<http://council.lithgow.com/bushfire-assistance/>