



Lithgow
CITY COUNCIL

STORM & FLOOD

ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

VERSION 1 | APRIL 2021

Immediate Advice

Help for storm & flood affected landholders & communities

If you find yourself in a life-threatening situation, dial **000**. If you require assistance due to flood or storm damage, please phone the NSW SES on **132 500**. Do not drive through or enter flood waters. Roads may have been damaged severely, debris may have been deposited anywhere and flood waters can carry diseases and pathogens.

Please see below for information and links for help and financial assistance for those who have been affected. Please feel free to pass this on onto anyone you know who may have been impacted.

The Lithgow Council [Flooding Assistance - Lithgow City Council](#) is the best way for you to be aware of new information on the recovery. If you would like to receive information on the recovery support as it progresses, please register with the Community Recovery Officer Rachel Nicoll at Rachel.Nicoll@Lithgow.nsw.gov.au or phone **0419 100 085** to help you.

Storm or flood advice and warnings. Visit NSW SES or www.ses.nsw.gov.au or for help phone 132 500.

Road closures & travel advice. For up-to-date information on the latest road closures and real-time traffic conditions visit <https://www.livetraffic.com/>

Insurances. If you have insurance, contact your insurer for advice on the actions you should take as soon as possible after flooding. The **Insurance Council of Australia** can also provide advice on lodging a claim, click <https://disasters.org.au/> or call **1800 734 621** anytime.

The **Legal Aid NSW Disaster Assistance Hotline** is available to help with insurance claims and any associated legal problems that may arise, call **1800 801 529** or <https://disasterhelp.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/>.

To report suspicious or unusual activity call **NSW Police Crime Stoppers** on **1800 333 000**.

Current Declarations

Current declarations

A list of all Local Government Areas with current declarations as a result of flooding can be found <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/declared-natural-disasters>.

Mental Health Support

If you, or if you support a family member, friend, neighbour or workmate affected by a natural disaster, Mental Health Support is available 24hours/7 days. You can call: **Lifeline** on 13 11 14 or **Beyond Blue** on 1300 224 636 or the **NSW Mental Health Line** on 1800 011 511.

Financial Assistance

Disaster Recovery Payment: \$1,000 for adults and \$400 for children

The Disaster Recovery Payment is a one-off, non-means tests payment of \$1,000 for adults and \$400 for children, who have been seriously injured, lost their homes or whose homes have been directly damaged, or the immediate family members of a person who has lost their life, as a direct result of the storms and floods. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency> to find out if you are eligible, or phone **Services Australia on 180 22 66**.

Disaster Relief Grant

The Disaster Relief Grant helps people to recover from the effects of a disaster and re-establish a basic standard of living. It is not provided to replace insurance or compensate for losses. You may be eligible for financial support if:

- Your home (primary place of residence) was damaged by a natural disaster
- You do not have insurance for the damage
- You are a low-income earner with limited financial resources

<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Documents/factsheets/Factsheet%20Disaster%20relief%20Grant.pdf> or phone **Resilience NSW on 13 77 88** and ask about the Disaster Relief Grant.

Disaster Recovery Allowance: short-term income support for 13 weeks

The Disaster Recovery Allowance provides a short-term income support payment to assist individuals whose income has been affected as a direct result of the storms and floods, for up to 13 weeks. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency> or phone **Services Australia on 180 22 66**.

Disaster Recovery Primary Producer Grant

Disaster recovery grants of up to \$75,000 are now available to primary producers in LGAs affected by the NSW storms and floods that have occurred from 10 March 2021. This grant provides short-term targeted assistance for recovery and reinstatement activities, including salvaging crops and repairs to damaged farm infrastructure (e.g. fencing) and equipment.

Apply direct online via the Rural Assistance Authority at www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/special-disaster-grants-floods.

Alternatively, phone Service NSW on 13 77 88 and ask for the Primary Producer Disaster Recovery Grant administered by the Rural Assistance Authority

Farm Household Allowance

The Farm Household Allowance program provides assistance to farming families experiencing financial hardship, no matter the cause of that hardship. The program provides eligible farmers and their partners with a package of assistance that includes:

- up to four years of fortnightly income support (in every 10-year period)
- ancillary allowances such as Pharmaceutical Allowance, Telephone Allowance, Rent Assistance and Remote Area Allowance
- a professional financial assessment of the farm business (worth up to \$1,500)
- funding to help develop skills, access training and pay for professional advice (up to \$10,000 and can now include reasonable travel and accommodation to undertake training)
- regular support of a case manager.

For further information, <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/farm-household-allowance>

Rural Assistance Authority Natural Disaster Assistance

For disaster relief loans and natural disaster transport subsidy,

<https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance>.

Disaster Assistance Online Form

<https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/loan-application-online-form>

Natural disaster transport subsidy - Online Application Form -

<https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/ndts-forms>

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

Help for Small Business

If you have a small business you can call the Business Concierge at Service NSW on 13 77 88 or visit

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au>

The NSW Small Business Commissioner also has support services for small business owners who have suffered direct damage to their assets or loss of income following flooding.

For information on what supports are available visit www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au or phone 1300 795 534.

Other Financial Assistance

For information on all available disaster assistance, please contact the Disaster Customer Care Service at Service NSW on **13 77 88** or <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods>.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is supporting those doing it tough as a result of the floods by providing immediate help and support with food, clothing and other forms of assistance. Please visit:

https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/NSW/Disaster_Recovery/Flood_Relief_NSW/

Sporting clubs

A grant or a concessional fixed rate loan is available for sporting and recreation clubs and associations for clean-up, removal of debris and/or restoring essential facilities.

To access an application for grant assistance, contact NSW Treasury by email at

natural_disasters@treasury.nsw.gov.au

Financial Counselling

The Rural Financial Counselling Service has counsellors on the ground ready to assist Primary Producers in the recovery process. They provide FREE confidential and impartial help and will work with you for up to 3 years or more. They will be able to assist in applying for any government grants or loans that are or will become available as well as creating a plan to return your business to a better position than before the disaster. Call on 1800 940 404 or email ceo@rfcscr.com.au

National Debt Helpline for free legal and financial advice

The National Debt Helpline provides assistance to those in financial difficulty as a result of the flood crisis. It is a not-for-profit service for people struggling with insurance or other financial matters who need to speak with lawyers and financial counsellors. People can call the helpline for free advice on 1800 007 007, from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Banking Assistance

The 22 banks that are members of the Australian Banking Association (ABA) will offer a range of services to help customers impacted by the floods by:

- Deferring scheduled loan repayments, such as on home loans, car loans and personal loans
- Waiving fees and charges, including break costs on early access to term deposits
- Consolidating debts to help make repayments more manageable
- Restructuring existing loans without charging the usual establishment fees
- Deferring interest payments on a case-by-case basis
- Offering additional finance or emergency credit limit increases to help cover cash flow shortages
- Deferring upcoming credit card payments
- Increasing emergency credit card limits

Banking assistance Most banks have a support package in place for flood-affected people. Find your bank www.ausbanking.org.au

NAB Disaster Relief Package

- Immediate access to \$2,000 grants to help cover costs such as temporary accommodation, food and clothing (eligibility criteria applies).
- \$2,000 business grants to help restart or reopen and cover the cost of damaged property, equipment, fencing and for loss of stock or livestock. NAB business and agribusiness customer wishing to access the grants should call NAB's dedicated team on 1300 769 650.
- Support to restructure existing business banking facilities.
- Fee waiver on terminal rental for a period of up to three months for merchants with working terminals that are no longer able to trade.
- NAB customers who have suffered damage to their home and need assistance can phone NAB Assist on 1300 308 132.

WESTPAC Disaster Relief Package

- The Westpac Flood Support Fund will provide access to grants for customers and employees with significant damage to their home or business because of the recent severe weather events.
- \$5,000 re-open grants for businesses: to repair damage and help with costs like the loss of equipment and stock.
- \$3,000 emergency grants for households: to help with costs for essential items and services. Phone Westpac Assist on 1800 067 497

Animals and Livestock

Emergency assistance for fodder or livestock support. For help with the provision of emergency fodder, animal assessment, veterinary assistance, stock euthanasia and disposal, livestock feeding and management advice and care of animals in evacuation centres, call the **Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647** or <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock>

Missing or stranded stock. Register with the **Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647** and consider contacting your local council, local veterinary clinics, animal welfare or rescue groups, microchip registry, and check social media sources such as local community noticeboards.

Missing Pets

If you are missing a pet or need to update registration details, please contact Council and we will try to assist you. Contact Council on 6354 9999 or at council@lithgow.nsw.gov.au

Helping wildlife after floods

Native wildlife may have been heavily impacted by the floods, either through injury, death or habitat destruction. The exact location of disorientated, stressed and/or injured animals should be noted.

- For native wildlife care, contact **NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service on 1300 072 757**.
- For injured wildlife, contact **WIRES on 4754 2946**.

Visit https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/566296/Helping-wildlife-after-floods-and-fires.pdf for more information.

Road Damage

To report road damage or trees on roads please contact Lithgow City Council in the first instance, so we can confirm who owns the road. Local roads are owned and managed by Council, while other roads are managed by Transport for NSW.

For more information, contact Lithgow City Council Phone: 6354 9999 Email: council@lithgow.nsw.gov.au

If it is a Transport for NSW road, you can log a request online at <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/feedback-form.html>

Damage Survey

Primary producers and agricultural landholders affected by the floods are asked to complete the DPI's natural disaster damage survey, the information collected is used to determine the scale and severity of the impact and what assistance and resources are required where. Surveys can be submitted via phone or computer. Ag industry representatives can fill this form out on behalf of farmers, with their consent. Visit <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/emergency/community/primary-industries-natural-disaster-damage-survey>

Cleaning Your Property

Advice for Residents

Do not enter a damaged building or structure, unless deemed safe to do so by authorities.

Contact your insurance company directly and take plenty of photos of any property and contents damage before removing and disposing of items.

If removing/moving waste, remember to practice basic hygiene and use appropriate personal protective equipment including dust mask, gloves, covered shoes/boots and full-length clothing cover for arms and legs.

If using disinfectants and/or other cleaners, follow safety advice on labels and do not touch eyes and face.

Be alert to snakes, spiders, rats and other wildlife that may have taken refuge in the building, structure or furniture.

Floodwater may be contaminated with sewage and chemicals. Contact with floodwater can lead skin and stomach infections and other rare but serious conditions such as leptospirosis.

How do I clean my flood affected property?

Each area affected by floodwater within the house needs to be cleaned, including empty refrigerators and cupboards.

Wash mud, dirt and debris from your house with a hose, starting at the highest point and working down to ground level.

Where possible, remove all wet items such as floor coverings, rugs, mats, furniture, bedding, linen and clothing. If floor coverings are removed, thoroughly clean and dry the floor underneath before new material is laid.

Begin drying out the house as soon as floodwaters recede – open doors and windows during dry days, use fans where possible, check for trapped water and mud in wall or floor cavities.

Hard-surfaced floors, walls, benches and sinks should be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and disinfected by wiping or spraying surfaces with a chlorine bleach solution (see below) or a product labelled as a disinfectant. Once disinfected, allow to dry.

Flood-affected mattresses are difficult to treat and may need to be discarded.

Furniture, such as lounge chairs, may be air dried in the sun then sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant solution. Consult a local furniture renovating company if you are unsure about their condition.

Soft toys should be discarded, solid toys should be washed and then disinfected.

More information to help you clean up your house and kitchen is available here:

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/weather/Pages/household-cleanup.aspx

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/weather/Pages/kitchen-cleanup.aspx

How do I protect myself when cleaning my property?

Always wear gloves to avoid direct contact with the skin, and to protect yourself from injury while using tools and implements.

Wear protective footwear that covers your skin adequately to avoid direct contact with rotting vegetation and compost.

When collecting and removing rotting material such as spoiled food or vegetation, always wear a nose and mouth guard or dust mask.

Wash your hands after dealing with rotting food.

While cleaning up, be mindful of materials containing asbestos and take appropriate precautions.

See section on asbestos.

What do I need to do with hazardous waste material?

Keep hazardous materials aside for specialist disposal at your nearest Community Recycling Centres. These permanent drop-off centres are for common household problem wastes that can't be collected via council kerbside waste and recycling collection services. NSW householders can drop off problem wastes at these centres free of charge. Visit

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/yourenvironment/recycling-and-reuse/household-recycling-overview/community-recycling-centres>

Household hazardous waste includes materials such as acids and alkalis, brake fluids and coolants, car care products, cleaning products, paint, pesticides, insecticides, rodenticides, herbicides and other garden chemicals, polishes, pool chemicals, solvents (including paint thinners, turpentine) and varnishes and stains.

Appropriate handling and personal protective equipment must be used when handling hazardous chemicals requiring disposal, particularly gloves.

Asbestos

Asbestos is hazardous, but you can manage it safely.

If your house was built before 1987, it is likely to contain asbestos

It could be in the form of flat or corrugated sheets (fibro) used for walls, ceilings and roofing, or in products such as pipes, electrical conduit, eaves or the backing under vinyl flooring.

Find out what asbestos looks like and where it could be at www.asbestos.nsw.gov.au

If you find asbestos debris on your property you can safely remove it yourself if you wish. Follow the advice from [NSW Fire and Rescue](http://www.nswfireandrescue.nsw.gov.au).

Keep asbestos waste separated from other waste you are removing, and do not put it in red bins or skip bins. This is important to keep your community, volunteers and clean-up crews safe.

Health Advice

Storms and floods can present a range of health concerns and issues. Floodwater and debris may pose health and safety risks and could be contaminated with sewage and other hazards.

NSW Health has a range of resources and advice on maintaining health during and after floods and storms visit: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/weather/Pages/storms-and-floods.aspx

Health advice is also available 24 hours a day from healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222 or contact your GP for clinical advice.

Telecommunications

Telstra, Optus and Vodafone have each announced new support measures for impacted phone and internet customers.

If you are a Telstra, Optus or Vodafone customer experiencing property damage, loss of service, or any flood-related hardship, you may have access to relief including free calls, call diversions, and account credit.

Telstra

Telstra's help pack is available to customers who have been evacuated or who have lost phone or broadband services due to storms and floods.

Telstra is providing access to free short-term services to help customers stay connected and in touch over the next few days and weeks, including:

- Free use of Telstra payphones in affected areas
- Free call diversion from fixed homes or businesses to another fixed or mobile service of the customer's choice, regardless of carrier
- A 25GB data pack for postpaid mobile customers with a 30-day expiry
- A 25GB data pack and free calls for prepaid mobile customers with a 30-day expiry

For assistance from Telstra with diversions, data and reconnection support, call 1800 888 888

Optus

Optus is extending special support to customers who have been displaced or affected by the current disaster, with help and options to be determined by each customer's specific circumstances.

If you are an Optus customer in need of help, there is a dedicated customer number specifically for flood and storm assistance. Impacted customers can call 1800 507 581, or request support via the MyOptus app or the Optus Yes Crowd online forums.

Vodafone

Vodafone is offering a series of relief measures to customers in affected areas, effective immediately. Impacted postpaid and prepaid customers are eligible for the following:

- 10GB of bonus data for customers in evacuated areas (redeem by calling 1555 or speaking with Vodafone live chat)
- Data-free access to emergency websites
- Access to Vodafone's financial hardship options

If you're a Vodafone customer, you can also now access selected emergency services and news websites without using your plan's data. Data-free websites include:

- www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
- www.bom.gov.au
- www.abc.net.au

- www.livetraffic.com
- www.disasterassist.gov.au
- www.redcross.org.au
- www.emergency.nsw.gov.au
- www.ses.nsw.gov.au

Content on these sites will be exempt from data use, but be aware that third party services included on these sites may not be zero-rated.

Donations – Official donation channel: GIVIT

GIVIT, is a national online non-profit organisation that matches donors and community organisations to make sure people and communities get exactly what they need, when they need it.

Please do not drop donations into affected areas. Australians are encouraged to donate money, items, skills and services online at www.GIVIT.org.au, which is an easy, quick and efficient way of donating directly to people in need without overwhelming charities on the ground.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this page is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Lithgow City Council.