



STORM & FLOOD

**ASSISTANCE
INFORMATION**

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.

Information about the recovery will be provided on Council webpage

<https://council.lithgow.com/flooding-assistance/> you can follow us on Facebook or call our Customer Service team on 6354 9999 for details as they become available.

For ongoing updates during our recovery, it's IMPORTANT TO REGISTER your details here <https://council.lithgow.com/register-flood-updates/>. This is important even if you registered your details for the storm and flash flooding on 11 January 2022.

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

For weather forecasts, advice and warnings visit the Bureau of Meteorology online at www.bom.gov.au.

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 legal problems including insurance claims and disputes, financial hardship, tenancy and Centrelink, 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**.

Disaster Declarations

Current declarations

A Disaster Declaration is a frequently updated list of Local Government Areas (LGAs) that have been impacted by a natural disaster. With a disaster declaration for their area, affected communities and individuals can access a range of special assistance measures.

Disaster declarations are issued by the NSW Government and incorporate an Australian Government reference number (AGRN).

View the declared disasters <https://www.nsw.gov.au/disaster-recovery/natural-disaster-declarations>.

Financial Assistance

A disaster declaration is required to activate assistance under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and financial assistance through Service NSW and Services Australia.

INDIVIDUALS:

Service NSW provide a one stop shop for people and businesses to access all available recovery services. People can call **13 77 88** or visit www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods to access the assistance currently available.

Disaster Relief Grant: If your home or essential household contents were damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster, you may be eligible for the Disaster Relief Grant for individuals. To apply for this, phone **13 77 88** and ask for the Disaster Relief Grant. For more information <https://www.nsw.gov.au/resilience-nsw/disaster-relief-grant-for-individuals>.

Services Australia:

Disaster Recovery Payment:

The disaster recovery payment is a one-off payment of \$1000 per adult and \$400 per child.

Apply here www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/nsw-floods-february-2022. If you need help to claim call 180 22 66.

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**.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS and NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS:

A range of assistance is available for primary producers, non-profit organisations, landholders and small business operators through the Rural Assistance Authority <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au> or call 1800 678 593.

Rural Aid supports and engages with farmers and rural communities to support farmers to recover from disasters when they occur. If you are a flood affected farmer, you may be eligible for some assistance. faa.ruralaid.org.au/ or call 1300 327 624.

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 has support services for small business owners who have suffered direct damage to their assets or loss of income following flooding.

<https://www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/get-help/featured/nsw-small-business-storms-and-floodsupport> or call **1300 795 534**.

Business NSW has opened access to their Workplace Advice Line, free to all businesses in NSW impacted by the current flood disaster. The Advice Line can help manage issues like employees not being able to work because they cannot travel to work or safely enter the workplace because of flooding. Normally available to members only, the service will be available for the next four weeks at no charge to all businesses in impacted areas. Call **13 29 59** between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Other Financial Assistance

Salvos National Recovery Services: Assistance with spiritual, practical needs and goods. Phone: 1300 662 217 or visit salvationarmy.org.au

Money Care Financial advisors are able to support you if you are struggling financially. This link will allow you to find that support www.fcan.org.au. If you need immediate emergency relief, please call the Salvos Assessment Line (SAL) on 1300 371 288

Australian Red Cross Community Recovery: Public Information and Inquiry Centre (PIIC) in NSW to provide accurate, up-to-date general information to the public, and to also answer inquiries regarding the flood events which have impacted on the community 1800 227 228.

Department of Primary Industries (DPI): DPI Recovery Support for Primary Producers: Jamie 0407 910 221 or email jamie.perry-meijer@dpi.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 Most banks have a support package in place for flood-affected people. Find your bank www.ausbanking.org.au

Services to help customers impacted by the floods may include:

- 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

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW –1800 246 545 www.ewon.com.au Free, fair and independent assistance for customers and small business who are experiencing difficulties with their energy or water retailer or network and cannot resolve the complaint with their provider. You can ring for information and / or lodge a complaint. We will investigate and resolve the complaint working with the customer and their provider.

Animals and Livestock

For assistance with stock and the care of animals phone the Agricultural and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Local Land Services (LLS) provide assistance to landholders and communities with animal welfare-related issues resulting from the floods.

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.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/helping-wildlife-in-emergencies> for more information.

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.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 000.

Rural Mental Health Coordinator NBMLHD RAMHP: Information, support and referral for mental health and wellbeing Phone: Sonia 0448 125 676 or email sonia.cox@health.nsw.gov.au or visit www.ramhp.com.au. In an emergency, please call 000 or the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511

Step by Step Wellbeing Services: Wellbeing Counsellor Megan 0490 676 269. Providing practical, emotional and holistic support for the whole family. stepbystep@gatewayfamilyservices.org.au

Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network: Psychological Therapy Services: Up to 10 free sessions with a professional are available for people affected by disasters. Talk to your GP or visit www.nbmphn.com.au

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>

Going Home – What you need to do

- Drive slowly, plan your route carefully to avoid any flooded roads and allow extra travel time. Damage to roads, bridges or buildings caused by flooding and landslip may still exist in your area.
- Be aware of road hazards including mud and debris.
- Remain vigilant as there could still be water in low lying areas.
- Take care as local roads could still have water over them.
- Check in on your neighbours if safe to do so.
- Check on animals and livestock.

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

The Australian Red Cross has a number of services and resources offered to communities. Access the full library at <https://council.lithgow.com/australian-red-cross-support/>

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.

Cleaning up after an emergency: dealing with wind and water damage (booklet)

www.redcross.org.au/globalassets/corporatecms-migration/downloads/pdfs/disaster-plan/cleaning-up-after-an-emergency-wind-and-water-damage.pdf

More information to help you clean up your house and property is available from NSW Health at:

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/weather/Pages/default.aspx

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

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/news/news/2022/nsw-storm-and-flood-updates-2022>

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 <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/news/2022/nsw-storm-and-flood-updates-2022/asbestos-in-flood-affected-areas>.

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

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

Optus

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.

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.