

Community Recovery Information #1

This newsletter contains recovery information for people recently impacted by bush fires in NSW.

Health and wellbeing

Looking after yourself and others

Bush fires are distressing and you might feel things like sadness, frustration or anxiety, or have trouble sleeping or remembering things. This is a normal reaction to an abnormal event and is not a sign of weakness.

Having someone to listen and support you at times like this is important.

Some tips on managing your recovery include:

- spend time with family and friends
- try to get back into a routine
- continue a healthy lifestyle (eating, sleeping, exercise)
- take time out but don't isolate yourself
- express your feelings in your own time and way
- accept help when it is offered
- limit the amount of media coverage you are exposed to
- don't expect to have all the answers
understand you are not alone in your experience.

Keep checking in with your friends and neighbours and looking out for each other.

Free face-to-face support

The following free services are available to people impacted by fires and drought.

- Hunter / New England – Healthwise
1800 931 540
- North Coast - Connect to Wellbeing
1300 160 339

Free telephone support

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

Mental Health Line	1800 011 511
Lifeline	13 11 14
Mensline	1300 789 978
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636

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

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.

Support for individuals

Disaster Relief Grants

If you are not insured and have limited income, you may be eligible for a disaster relief grant. Please call Disaster Welfare on 1800 018 444.

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

Contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.

Disaster Recovery Payment

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment has been activated for people severely affected by the NSW Bush Fires.

This provides a one-off payment of \$1000 per adult and \$400 per child if your home has been destroyed or severely damaged – including smoke damage.

Call 180 2266 to apply.

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 180 2266 or visit humanservices.gov.au

Animal Welfare

Local Land Services is assisting with emergency fodder, stock water and assessment of 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

For more recovery information and updates:

www.emergency.nsw.gov.au

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Starting your clean-up

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

Hazardous household materials that may be present after a bush fire include asbestos, ash from burnt treated timbers (i.e. copper chrome arsenate or CCA), medicines, garden or farm chemicals, other household chemicals and clearing 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 or missing fencing panels around 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.
- 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.
- Wear a P2 face mask and protective clothing

Replacing personal documents

Service NSW can help replace many of your personal documents free of charge if they were damaged or destroyed. This includes birth certificates, marriage certificates, licences and number plates.

For assistance please visit your nearest NSW Service centre, or call 13 77 88