

## Community Recovery Information #1

This newsletter contains recovery information for people recently impacted by bush fires in the Hunter, Greater Sydney and South East NSW regions.

### 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 covers people who would not normally be eligible for social housing.

- **Housing Contact Centre: 1800 422 322** (available 24/7)

### Are you insured?

#### *Yes, I'm insured...*

If you are insured talk to your insurance company as soon as possible about how to make a claim. Take photos or video of damage to your property and possessions as evidence for your claim. If you have clearance from your insurer and evidence for your claim, you can start cleaning up.

- The **Insurance Council of Australia** can be contacted with any questions, complaints or concerns about insurance on **1800 734 621**.
- **Legal Aid NSW** can provide free legal advice and minor assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues, including insurance, on **1800 801 529**.

#### *No, I'm not insured...*

NSW Government Disaster Relief 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

- **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line: 1800 018 444.**

### 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.

- **Service NSW: 13 77 88.**

### Animal welfare

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

- **Local Land Services: 1800 814 647.**

For more recovery information and updates visit:

[www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)  
Facebook @NSWDisasterRecovery

## NSW Rural Assistance Authority

Disaster relief low interest loans of up to \$130,000 are available to eligible primary producers and small businesses, and transport subsidies of up to 50% of the cost to transport livestock or fodder, to eligible primary producers.

- **Agriculture and Animal Services**  
**Hotline: 1800 678 593**

## Health, safety and wellbeing

### *Clean up considerations*

- 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 bushfires 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 during and after a fire if not properly managed.
- Asbestos clean-up and removal must be done by a licensed asbestos removalist.

## Fire retardant information

Coloured foam dropped from the air to suppress / slow fires may have landed on some properties.

This type of retardant is basically a fertiliser.

Coloured foam will need to be flushed from roofs and water sources.

To prevent any retardant or ash getting into water tanks, residents should disconnect their downpipe/s from water tank/s, so that the first flush (either rain or washing) does not wash anything from the roof into tanks.

- **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line:**  
**1800 018 444**

### *Looking after yourself and others*

Bush fires can be distressing and 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.

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 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.

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**
- **Beyondblue: 1300 22 4636**

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