

NORTHERN NSW FIRES | 24 October 2019

OCTOBER Long Gully Road and Busbys Flat Road Fires

Community Recovery Information #2

This newsletter contains information for people impacted by the October Long Gully Road and Busbys Flat Road fires.

Community recovery meetings and events

- **Drake** - Drake Hall

Friday 25 October

Drop in from 12pm if you'd like to chat privately with someone.

Free BBQ kicks off at **12.30pm**.

Community recovery meeting from **1pm**

- **Ewingar** - Ewingar Hall

Friday 25 October

Drop in from 4.30pm if you'd like to chat privately with someone.

Free BBQ kicks off at **5.30pm**.

Community recovery meeting from **6.30pm**

- **Ewingar** - Ewingar Hall

Saturday 26 October

If you want to chat privately with a recovery agency, drop in session from **10am to 1pm**

- **Rappville** – Primary School

Thursday 31 October

Drop in session from **3.30pm**

Free BBQ kicks off at **5.30pm**

Community recovery meeting from **6.00pm**

Health and wellbeing

Looking after yourself and others

It's completely normal to experience a range of emotions after a fire, including anxiety, forgetfulness, sleep disturbance and more.

Having someone to listen to and support you through this is very important. Check in on your friends and neighbours, and if you need help, don't be afraid to reach out.

Free face-to-face support

The following free services are available to people impacted by fires and drought. No GP referral is needed.

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

Free phone services

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 call 000.

Insurance claims

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**.

If you are not insured and have limited income, you may be eligible for a disaster relief grant. Contact the **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line** on **1800 018 444**.

Disaster relief for individuals

Disaster Relief Grants

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 Northern 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** or visit disasterassist.gov.au

Disaster relief for landholders

Disaster relief for landholders that have been impacted by fire includes:

Animal welfare

Local Land Services can assist with emergency fodder, stock water and assessment of animals impacted by the fire.

If you require emergency assistance or to report stock losses, contact the **Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline** on **1800 814 647**.

Emergency fodder

If you still require emergency fodder, water or animal assessment please call the **Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline** on **1800 814 647** to register your request. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Requests already received are still being processed. Thank you for your patience.

So far assistance has been provided to more than 350 landholders, assessed bushfire affected livestock and damage on 200 properties and distributed 756 tonnes of emergency fodder.

NSW Rural Assistance Authority

Provides disaster relief low interest loans of up to \$130,000 to eligible primary producers and small businesses, and transport subsidies of up to 50 per cent of the cost to transport livestock or fodder, to eligible primary producers.

Call 1800 678 593.

Fencing repairs - BlazeAid

If you have damaged or destroyed fences, please register your request for assistance directly with BlazeAid.

- Gilbert Sims, 0438 253 873
- Jeanine Sims, 0439 574 707
- blazeaid.casino@gmail.com

If you can volunteer or make a financial donation to support their wonderful work, please visit blazeaid.com.au.

BlazeAid Casino is also accepting support food donations and volunteers who can assist in preparing meals for volunteers.

Please contact Gilbert and Jeanine directly.

Small business support

Business Connect

A free mobile advisory service is available to small businesses through Business Connect. A local advisor can meet you at a convenient place and discuss your business needs.

Advice is offered about managing cash flow, planning the next steps, accessing financial support schemes and connecting to additional support.

Call 1300 134 359 or register at industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect

Dispute Resolution Service

A confidential and free dispute resolution service that has been set up to help small businesses needing assistance to work through problems with other businesses or government.

Call 1300 795 534 or visit smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/dispute-resolution

Telstra disaster relief

Impacted customers and people who have lost their home are encouraged to call **132 203** to report a fault and register for assistance. For Telstra customers who have suffered severe damage or loss of their premises:

- Free call diversion from the customer's Telstra fixed phone service to another Australian fixed or mobile service of their choice, regardless of the carrier. This offer is applicable for a maximum period of 6 months from the date of the fire.
- In addition, Telstra will apply a one off credit to the value of \$500 inc. GST to the customer's Telstra fixed phone account to help cover the costs of the following, if required:
- Connection of a Telstra fixed phone service at one temporary residence
- Re-connection of a Telstra fixed phone service at the customer's original permanent premises

Legal assistance

Legal Aid NSW lawyers can provide free legal advice and assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues including:

- insurance policies
- tenancy or employment
- credit and debt issues

Visit legalaid.nsw.gov.au or call 1800 801 529 for Lismore Legal Aid call **6621 2082**.

Water

If your potable water has been used by a fire fighting agency to fight the fire, you may be eligible to have it replaced.

This assistance is for residential properties in rural areas.

Disaster Welfare is working with NSW RFS to identify impacted properties.

Call the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on **1800 018 444** to register or for more information.

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 cleaning 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 and missing fencing panels around swimming pools.

If 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 by emergency services, utilities companies or 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 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.

Asbestos

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.

Avoid unnecessary entry, particularly entry by children.

Asbestos debris may have been sprayed with PVA, or a similar sealant by Public Works to suppress the release of fibre until the material is safely removed.

For information about the safe handling and removal of asbestos, visit safework.nsw.gov.au.

For information about transport and disposal of hazardous materials, visit epa.nsw.gov.au.

Before removing any waste from your property, please contact your council for disposal advice.

Smoke damage

If your home has been damaged by smoke, including your clothes, furniture or carpets, you may be eligible for the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment. Please call:

180 2266 or visit disasterassist.gov.au

Volunteers – Clean-up help

If you have been impacted by the Busby Flat Road fire and you need help cleaning up your property, volunteer groups are servicing the area, offering help including clean-up, repairs, safety kits and more.

Call Richmond Valley Council on **(02) 6660 0300** Mon-Fri 8:30am-5pm to register for assistance.

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**

Mobile Service Centre - Tabulam

A Service NSW mobile service centre will be visiting Tabulam. You can apply for licenses, get a permit, register a birth, pay most fines and more.

Corner Clarence and Court Street

Tuesday 29 October

9am – 2pm

For more information and updates

www.emergency.nsw.gov.au

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NSW Disaster Recovery