

# NORTHERN NSW FIRES | 7 November 2019

## OCTOBER Long Gully Road and Busbys Flat Road Fires

### Community Recovery Information #3

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

#### Cleaning up your home

The Commonwealth and NSW Government have made funding available to make sure all homes that are affected by asbestos and hazardous materials can be cleaned up.

Public Works Advisory has been conducting tests for asbestos and is contacting home owners with results.

Call **Public Works Advisory Hotline** on **1800 88 55 39** for more info or to find out about the asbestos status of your home.

**Insured?** Please contact your insurer.

**Uninsured home with asbestos?**  
Public Works Advisory      **1800 88 55 39**

#### Insurance support

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*

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](http://disasterassist.gov.au)

#### *Disaster Recovery Allowance*

The Disaster Recovery Allowance has been activated by the Australian Government for people affected by the Northern 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](http://humanservices.gov.au)

## CLEAN UP CONTACT NUMBERS

### Volunteer clean up help

Including labour clean-up, repairs, safety kits and more.

**Samaritan's Purse** 0413 367 332

**Team Rubicon** 02 9158 9380

### Fencing repairs and clean up

BlazeAid – Casino 0439 574 707

BlazeAid – Ewingar 0427 164 105

### Local waste and clean up questions

Richmond Valley Council 02 6660 0300

Clarence Valley Council 02 6643 0200

## 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 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 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.

## 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](http://safework.nsw.gov.au)

For information about transport and disposal of hazardous materials, visit [epa.nsw.gov.au](http://epa.nsw.gov.au)

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

## Scrap metal clean up

Bushfire affected residents of Clarence Valley LGA can complete an expression of interest for scrap metal collection and get other fire recovery news and updates on council's website:

[clarence.nsw.gov.au/bushfirerecovery](http://clarence.nsw.gov.au/bushfirerecovery)

## Health and wellbeing

### Looking after yourself and others

Bush fires are distressing and you might feel sadness or anxiety, or have trouble sleeping or remembering things. This is a normal reaction and it 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
- write down your worries and concerns
- 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.

### **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.**

## Support for landholders

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

### *Animal welfare*

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.

## 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](http://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](http://smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/dispute-resolution)**

### *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.

BlazeAid – Casino 0439 574 707

BlazeAid – Ewingar 0427 164 105

If you can volunteer or make a financial donation to support their wonderful work, please visit [blazeaid.com.au](http://blazeaid.com.au).

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

## 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](http://legalaid.nsw.gov.au) or call 1800 801 529** for Lismore Legal Aid call **6621 2082**

## 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**

For more information and updates

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

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**NSW Disaster Recovery**