

Bushfire & Drought Assistance

What help is available and where do I find it?

LANDCARE

Landcare Coordinators and groups across NSW are working to support their communities through the impacts of drought and bushfires.

Different regions are tailoring their support services to best meet the needs of their community depending on their capacity and impact in their area. Examples of what Landcare organisations are doing include:

- holding information sessions to provide updates on assistance available, recovery and adaptation strategies, bringing various agencies together for landholders
- hosting smokos / social activities to give communities an opportunity to get off farm
- coordinating distribution of donations in partnership with charities like RSPCA local branches, CWA, Lions Club, Rotary
- helping landholders and small business with awareness about assistance available and providing referral to services
- working with Rural Financial Counsellors to provide landholders with help to complete applications for assistance
- coordinating fodder distributions, emergency fencing, water and clean up with other organisations and businesses and/or providing referral to services.

Many Landcare members are also Rural Fire Service frontline and reserve firefighters who have worked across NSW helping protect livelihoods, communities and the environment.

Find your local Landcare Coordinator <https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/landcare-program/local-landcare-coordinators/>

LOCAL LAND SERVICES AND NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES (NSW DPI)

Staff are on the ground providing assistance to landholders who have been impacted by the fires in NSW.

They assist with:

- emergency fodder
- emergency stock water
- veterinary assistance
- livestock euthanasia and burial
- livestock feeding and management advice
- care of animals in evacuation centres.

Bee keepers are also eligible for assistance if affected by fire, just like other animal managers. If you require emergency assistance to care for your hives as a result of the recent fires, call the Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline.

If you, or your community have been affected by the fires and have concerns about your livestock, pets, companion animals or wildlife, call the **Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647** for assistance.

WATER PROVISION

The Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area (AASFA) is supporting fire affected landholders through the provision of emergency water removed by the RFS for fire fighting purposes.

Water replacement will be considered where there is an animal welfare or intensive production impact. We encourage those who are impacted to call the **Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647**.



RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS

Rural Financial Counsellors provide high quality free, impartial and confidential assistance to eligible clients through the provision of Financial Counselling Services. They can provide advice and help to access a range of federal and state government assistance packages.

To find your nearest Rural Financial Counselling Service visit <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service/nsw#head-office>

Central Region—Dubbo

Phone: 1800 940 404

Website: www.rfcscr.com.au

Northern Region

Phone: 02 6662 5055

Website: www.rfcsnr.org.au

Southern Region

Phone: 1800 319 458

Website: www.rfcsnsw.com.au

NSW DISASTER ASSISTANCE LINE

1800 018 444

Open every day, 8:30am - 4:30pm

People are encouraged to register online at [Register Find Reunite](#).

NSW RURAL ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY

To support relief and recovery following a declared natural disaster a range of measures are made available by the NSW Government. These measures include:

- Special Disaster Grants
- Disaster Recovery Grants
- Disaster Relief Loans
- Transport assistance
- Natural Disaster Transport Subsidy (for primary producers)

For more information, including eligibility criteria, see <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance>.

NSW DISASTER RELIEF GRANTS

Available for eligible individuals and families whose homes and essential household contents have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

Find out if you are eligible: 1800 018 444

DISASTER RECOVERY PAYMENT

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment has been activated for people severely affected by NSW Bush Fires. A one-off payment of \$1000 per adult and \$400 per child if your home has been destroyed or severely damaged (incl. smoke damage). Call 180 2266 to apply.

DISASTER RECOVERY ALLOWANCE

The Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA) provides income support payments to employees, primary producers and sole traders who can demonstrate they have experienced a loss of income as a direct result of the bushfires.

DRA provides fortnightly payments for up to 13 weeks up to the applicable rate of Newstart or Youth Allowance, depending on the person's circumstances.

You have until 21 June 2020 to lodge a claim for DRA <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/nsw-bushfires-september-2019-disaster-recovery-allowance>

RED CROSS EMERGENCY GRANTS – AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES 2019/20

Grants are available if you've lost your home in a bushfire since July 2019, you can apply for an emergency grant of \$5,000.

Emergency grants are open across Australia to people whose primary place of residence has been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable as the result of

bushfires from 1 July 2019 to 28 February 2020.

If you have poor internet access, or need help to make your application, phone 1800 RED CROSS (1800 733 276).

<https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/recovering-from-emergencies/direct-assistance-contact>

RURAL AID

Grants of up to \$1,500 for payments of bills and up to four deliveries of household water. Must register online and provide a primary producer declaration. Call 1300 327624

Website: www.buyabale.com.au/can-we-help-you/

CWA OF NSW DROUGHT AID FUND

Assistance to meet household expenses for drought affected families, up to a maximum of \$3,000 per family/household. Expenses can include grocery bills, vehicle maintenance, school, electricity, rates, telephone, medical treatments etc. Phone: 02 8337 0200 Website: <https://www.cwaofnsw.org.au/droughtaid.html>

DROUGHT COMMUNITIES SUPPORT

If you're a farmer, farm worker or farm supplier/contractor who is struggling financially because of the drought, you may be entitled to receive a one-off payment of up to \$3,000 funded by the Australian Government's Drought Community Support Initiative Round 2 (DCSI).

To be eligible you'll need to be over 18, an Australian citizen or permanent resident, and live/work in a specified Local Government Area (LGA).

Payments can cover numerous expenses such as groceries, vehicle maintenance, energy & utility bills,

health & medical expenses, for example.

Please note that assistance might be provided by either The Salvation Army or Vinnies, depending on your Local Government Area (LGA). The list of eligible LGAs and which organisation you should approach can be found at https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/subscribe/sites/auosalvos/files/need-help/Eligible_LGA_List.pdf

ST VINCENT DE PAUL (VINNIES)

Vinnies members are present in communities big and small throughout Australia, and always ready to support locals in times of hardship.

In NSW, they are currently offering emergency assistance for the drought and bushfires. Offering immediate support including:

- Food and grocery vouchers
- Clothing, blankets and other essentials
- Financial assistance to pay bills
- Interest-free loans for a variety of household items
- Emotional support and a shoulder to lean on
- Referrals to an extensive network of other providers to cover crisis accommodation

Vinnies also disburse Energy Accounts Payment Assistance funds on behalf of the NSW Government, which can help pay electricity and energy bills; and Drought Community Support Initiative funds on behalf of the Federal Government, available to farmers, farm workers and farm suppliers/contractors in eligible areas.

To access help from Vinnies, please call 13 18 12. Then press 2 for drought assistance, or 3 for bushfire relief.

https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/drought_assistance/

SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army offers a range of services and assistance measures to help people who have been impacted by disasters including financial assistance, emotional support and referrals.

The Salvation Army works with State and Local government to determine the best way to provide support to affected communities.

For enquiries, The Salvation Army Disasters Assistance team can be contacted by calling 1300 662 217. For more information visit <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/rural-support/drought-community-support-initiative/>

DROUGHT ANGELS

Assist farming families affected by Natural Disasters Australia wide. Our level of support consists of providing Stock feed, Financial support via Pre-paid visas and local produce vouchers from within the communities, moral support through personal face to face or phone contact and referrals to other support networks as needed.

Drought Angels pride themselves on their individualized support offered to each and every family.

<https://www.droughtangels.org.au/apply-for-assistance/>

NEED FOR FEED

Need for Feed is a Lions Club project initiated in Victoria in 2006 which coordinates the donation and distribution of fodder to drought, fire and flood impacted livestock producers.

If you have fodder to donate or are impacted by drought or bushfire please register at <http://www.needforfeed.org/home-1.html>

GIVIT

GIVIT Listed Ltd connects those who have with those who need, in a safe and private way. Through the GIVIT website, trusted Australian charities are able to request exactly what is needed by their clients.

These requests are listed here, where everyday Australians can donate in response. Alternatively, donors can pledge items for donation into our virtual warehouse, a private online portal where registered charities can see and reserve what's available. <http://www.givit.org.au/>

NAB DISASTER RELIEF FUND

NAB is providing grants of \$2,000 to customers who have lost their homes to bushfire. They are also providing support for NAB business and agribusiness customers directly impacted by bushfires.

For information on how to access the grants contact the NAB Assist team on the dedicated number 1300 683 106 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday; and 9am-1pm Saturday AEST/AEDT).

NAB business and agribusiness customer wishing to access the grants should call NAB's dedicated team on 1300 023 429

WESTPAC BUSHFIRE FUND

Westpac Group has established a \$1.5 million Bushfire Fund, which will include \$500,000 in grants to immediately support customers and employees whose properties have been destroyed or damaged.

Those requiring assistance or support should contact their local branch, Relationship Manager or call the Westpac Assist team on 1800 067 497 to discuss their circumstances.

COMMBANK EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

CommBank's Emergency Assistance Package is for customers and businesses affected by bushfires, floods and storms.

Commonwealth Bank understand that each customer will have different needs and they encourage affected customers to discuss their individual circumstances by either phoning 1300 720 814 or visiting their nearest open branch. If you are a business customer, please call 13 26 07 or your dedicated CommBank relationship manager.

ANZ BUSHFIRE RELIEF PACKAGE

ANZ is providing a bushfire relief package for customers affected by bushfires across the nation.

ANZ customers affected by bushfires in a disaster-declared area are encouraged to visit their local branch if they are able, or to contact their relationship manager to discuss the impact on their business or personal circumstances. Customers can also contact ANZ's dedicated financial hardship team on 1800 149 549 or <https://www.anz.com.au/about-us/sustainability/financial-hardship/>.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Volunteer firefighters will be able to access financial support for loss of income, where they have been called out for extended periods of service.

Rural Fire Service Volunteers in NSW who are self-employed or work for small and medium businesses; and who have been called out for more than 10 days this fire season, will be able to apply for the payments.

The payments will provide for lost income of up to \$300 per day up to a total of up to \$6,000 per person.

Payments are expected to be available before the end of January 2020.

Information on how to apply for assistance will be made available soon <https://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/the-premier/media-releases-from-the-premier/new-payments-to-support-nsw-volunteer-firefighters/>

RURAL RESILIENCE PROGRAM

The NSW DPI Rural Resilience Program can provide support for farming families by way of referrals and liaising with other services on your behalf. For more information visit

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rural-support/rural-resilience-program>

SERVICE NSW

Registration and licensing concessions and refunds will be offered to customers if their vehicle or other relevant documentation has been lost, damaged or destroyed during the NSW bush fires.

In some situations, you may be able to renew your licence over the phone. Call 13 22 13, or 13 77 88 for more information.

FARM BUSINESS SKILLS

Professional Development Program - NSW Dept. of Primary Industries. The program has \$45 million over 5 years for vocational training and farm business planning. The program will contribute up to 50% of the costs

for eligible courses, up to a maximum of \$5,000 for the first person in the business, and a total of \$9,000 for all members of the business over a 5 year period.

Closes 30 June 2020

Website: www.raa.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/farm-business-skills-application-for-reimbursement

CONCESSIONAL LOANS—REGIONAL INVESTMENT CORPORATION

Drought and Farm investment loans to assist with preparation for drought and recovery from drought. Loans can refinance existing debt or access new debt for operating expenses. Loans and available up to \$2,000,000 at an interest rate of 3.11%.

Website: <https://www.ric.gov.au/farmers/drought>

MENTAL HEALTH

There are a number of services providing support and advice for mental health during these challenging times.

NSW Mental Health Line
Phone: 1800 011 511

Rural Adversity Mental Health
Web: www.ramhp.com.au

Lifeline (Counselling)
Phone: 13 11 14

Mensline
Phone: 1300 789 978

Kids Helpline
Phone: 1800 551 800

Beyond Blue
Phone: 1300 224 636

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of January 2020. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Landcare NSW or the user's independent advisor.