

# RURAL SUPPORT & NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE

## WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE & WHERE DO I FIND IT?

This factsheet lists help and services that may be available to rural communities, particularly during times of drought or other natural disasters such as floods and bushfires.

As additional support and assistance becomes available following the declaration of new disasters, Landcare NSW will endeavour to keep this factsheet up to date with the latest information.

### LANDCARE NSW

Landcare Coordinators and groups across NSW will work to support their communities through the impacts of natural disasters.

For more information contact your local Landcare Coordinator – see list of coordinators [here](#).

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

Staff can provide on ground support to landholders impacted by natural disasters in NSW, including assistance with stock fodder and water and animal care.

If you, or your community are impacted by a natural disaster and have concerns about your livestock, pets, companion animals or wildlife, call the Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647 for assistance.

### 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 click [here](#) or call the following numbers:

Central Region: 1800 940 404  
Northern Region: 02 6662 5055  
Southern Region: 1800 319 458

### 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 click [here](#)

### NSW DISASTER WELFARE ASSISTANCE LINE

1800 018 444  
Open every day, 8:30am - 4:30pm

### 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.

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, click [here](#) or phone 1800 678 593.

### NSW DISASTER RELIEF GRANTS

Available for eligible individuals and families whose homes and essential



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household contents have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

Find out if you are eligible: 1800 018 444

### 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 a natural disaster.

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.

More information [here](#)

### FARM HOUSEHOLD ALLOWANCE

The Farm Household Allowance (FHA) program provides assistance to farming families experiencing hardship, no matter the cause of that hardship.

The program provides eligible farmers and their partners with a package of assistance that includes:

- up to four years of fortnightly income support (in every 10 year period)
- ancillary allowances such as Pharmaceutical Allowance, Telephone Allowance, Rent Assistance and Remote Area Allowance
- a professional financial assessment of the farm business (worth up to \$1,500)

- funding to help develop skills, access training and pay for professional advice (up to \$10,000 and can now include reasonable travel and accommodation to undertake training)
- regular support of a case manager.

Check your eligibility for the FHA [here](#) or call the Farmer Assistance Line at Services Australia on 132 316.

### 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). Find out more [here](#).

### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE FUND

The NSW Government is offering a \$50,000 interest-free loan to transport stock, fodder and water, genetic banking of breeding herds and installing on-farm fodder and water infrastructure. The loans term is seven



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years and there are no repayments required in the first two years.

The loan can be used for:

- transport of livestock, fodder and / or water
- improving water and fodder infrastructure
- desilting dams
- collection and banking of genetic material of livestock.

For more information click [here](#).

### 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. Vinnies can offer emergency assistance and immediate support during and following natural disasters, 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, call 13 18 12 or click [here](#).

### 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.

The Salvation Army Disasters Assistance team can be contacted by calling 1300 662 217.

For more information click [here](#).

### RED CROSS EMERGENCY GRANTS – AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES 2019/20

The Australian Red Cross fund raises to assist the victims of natural disasters and generally offers relief grants direct to victims during or following a natural disaster.

It also has a wide range of resources available to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Call 1800 RED CROSS (1800 733 276) or click [here](#)

### RURAL AID

Grants of up to \$1,000 for payments of bills. Must register online and provide a primary producer declaration. Call 1300 327624 Website [here](#)

### CWA OF NSW DROUGHT AID FUND

Assistance to meet household expenses for drought affected families, up to a maximum of \$3,000 per



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family/household. Expenses can include grocery bills, vehicle maintenance, school, electricity, rates, telephone, medical treatments etc. Phone: 02 8337 0200 Website [here](#)

### DROUGHT ANGELS

Assist farming families affected by Natural Disasters Australia wide. 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. Click [here](#)

### 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 [here](#)

### 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. Requests are listed on the website, where everyday Australians can donate in response.

Alternatively, donors can pledge items for donation into GIVIT's virtual

warehouse, a private online portal where registered charities can see and reserve what's available [here](#).

### 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 are available up to \$2,000,000 at an interest rate of 2.11%. Website [here](#)

### MENTAL HEALTH

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

NSW Mental Health Line

Phone: 1800 011 511

Rural Adversity Mental Health

Web: [www.ramhp.com.au](http://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 user's independent advisor.



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