



Memorandum

To:	All SLSNSW clubs and Branches
From:	Surf Life Saving New South Wales
Date:	19 February 2020
Pages:	4
Subject:	Disaster Assistance for Individuals and Organisations – NSW Bushfires from August 2019 onwards

In response to the NSW bushfires from August 2019 to February 2020, assistance has been activated for affected individuals and organisations.

Below are the details of the current grants and other forms of assistance that individual members and clubs may wish to consider if they have been affected by the recent and ongoing disasters.

1. For Individuals:
 - a. Centrelink Disaster Recovery Allowance and Disaster Recovery Payment
 - b. Centrelink Crisis and Special Payments
 - c. Disaster Relief Grants (Administered by the NSW State Government via the Office of Emergency Management)
 - d. Other Assistance including Financials Support for Volunteer Fire Fighters
2. For Organisations:
 - a. Natural Disaster Grants Not-for-Profit Organisations

Eligibility criteria apply to these grants.

This information is current as of 19 February 2020. Please check latest information using the links provided below.

FOR INDIVIDUALS - CENTRELINK DISASTER RECOVERY ALLOWANCE AND PAYMENT

Disaster Recovery Allowance

Disaster Recovery Allowance is a short term payment to help you if a declared disaster directly affects your income. You can get it for a maximum of 13 weeks. It's payable from the date you lose income as a direct result of the NSW Bushfires from August 2019 through to February 2020.

To get Disaster Recovery Allowance you must:

- be 16 years or older at the time of the fire and not a dependent child
- be an Australian resident or hold an eligible visa
- get an income by working in an affected Local Government Area (LGA) or live in an affected LGA
- lose income as a direct result of the NSW Bushfires in August, September, October, November, December 2019 and/or January, February 2020
- show you will earn less than the relevant income threshold amount in the fortnight following the loss of income.

You have until **4 August 2020** to make a claim for the following LGAs:

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| • Armidale | • Coffs Harbour | • Kempsey |
| • Ballina | • Cootamundra Gundagai | • Ku-ring-gai |
| • Bega Valley | • Eurobodalla | • Kyogle |
| • Bellingen | • Glen Innes Severn | • Lake Macquarie |
| • Blue Mountains | • Goulburn Mulwaree | • Lismore |
| • Byron | • Greater Hume | • Lithgow |
| • Central Coast | • Gwydir | • Mid Coast |
| • Cessnock | • Hawkesbury | • Mid-Western |
| • Clarence Valley | • Inverell | • Muswellbrook |



- Nambucca
- Narrabri
- Oberon
- Penrith
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Queanbeyan-Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Snowy Valleys
- Sutherland
- Tamworth
- Tenterfield
- Tweed
- Upper Hunter
- Upper Lachlan
- Uralla
- Wagga Wagga
- Walcha
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

For more information on eligibility, visit the Services Australia website at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/nsw-bushfires-september-2019-disaster-recovery-allowance> or contact the Australian Government Information Hotline on 180 22 66 for claims for assistance.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment provides one-off financial assistance to eligible Australians adversely affected by the fires.

The rate of this Payment is \$1,000 per eligible adult and \$400 per eligible child. Claims for this payment can be lodged with the Department of Human Services for a period up to six months.

To get the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment you must:

- be an Australian resident or hold an eligible visa
- be 16 years or older at the time of the fire or getting a social security payment
- have not already received an Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment for NSW Bushfires in August, September, October, November, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020.

You also need to have been adversely affected by the fire. For example: you have been seriously injured; your principle place of residence has been destroyed or must be demolished; your principle place of residence has been declared structurally unsound; you're the principal carer of a dependent child who has experienced any of the above; etc. For the full list please visit <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/nsw-bushfires-september-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment>.

You have until **4 August 2020** to make a claim for the following LGAs:

- Armidale
- Bega Valley
- Blue Mountains
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- Clarence Valley
- Coffs Harbour
- Eurobodalla
- Glen Innes-Severn
- Goulburn Mulwaree
- Greater Hume
- Hawkesbury
- Inverell
- Kempsey
- Kyogle
- Lismore
- Lithgow
- Mid Coast
- Mid-Western
- Nambucca
- Oberon
- Port Macquarie-Hastings
- Queanbeyan-Palerang
- Richmond Valley
- Shoalhaven
- Singleton
- Snowy Monaro
- Snowy Valleys
- Tenterfield
- Tweed
- Upper Lachlan
- Walcha
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

For more information on eligibility, visit the Department of Human Services website at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/nsw-bushfires-september-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment> or contact the Australian Government Information Hotline on 180 22 66 for claims for assistance.

FOR INDIVIDUALS - CENTRELINK CRISIS AND SPECIAL PAYMENTS

Persons not eligible for Disaster Recovery Allowance and/or Disaster Recovery Payment, but affected by extreme circumstances may be eligible for support payments from Centrelink. For more information, please visit <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/crisis-and-special-help>.



FOR INDIVIDUALS - DISASTER RELIEF GRANTS

If you are not insured and have limited income, you may be eligible for a disaster relief grant.

- 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; and lodge the application within four months of the disaster occurring.
- Contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444.

FOR INDIVIDUALS - OTHER ASSISTANCE

Those affected by extreme circumstances may be eligible for the following:

- **Clean Up Assistance**
 - If your property is insured, contact your insurer about clean-up.
 - If you are uninsured and your home has been damaged or destroyed, Public Works Advisory will arrange for the clean-up of your residence. Please contact Public Works Advisory on 1800 88 55 39.
- **Housing assistance from NSW Department of Communities and Justice:** social housing providers can provide support and assistance to people who are affected as a direct result of natural disasters. This assistance may include temporary accommodation and emergency temporary accommodation. Call
 - Link2Home - 1800 152 152 - for temporary accommodation. This information and referral service is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - DCJ Housing Contact Centre - 1800 422 322. This contact centre is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Australian Red Cross Emergency Grant:** persons whose home has been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable in a bushfire since July 2019 can apply for an emergency grant of \$5,000 <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/recovering-from-emergencies/direct-assistance-application>
- **Australian Red Cross Register Find Reunite:** this service registers, finds and reunites family, friends and loved ones after an emergency. <https://register.redcross.org.au/>.
- **NSW Bushfire Housing Assistance Service:** this service assist people who are temporarily or permanently displaced from their home as a result of the bushfires. It can provide emergency accommodation and assist in sourcing accommodation. More information is available at <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/families-and-communities/bushfire-housing-assistance-service>
- **P2/N95 masks:** the NSW Government is distributing Commonwealth-provided P2 masks to community pharmacies and health services in bushfire-affected areas. A list of community pharmacies is available at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/face-mask.aspx>. Please ring ahead to check availability.
- **Financial Assistance from Banking Organisations:** Most financial organisations are offering their customers and clients grants and other assistance. Please contact your relevant banking organisation to see what you are eligible for: Westpac https://www.westpac.com.au/help/disaster-relief/?pid=iwg:sc:Disaster_2001:tile:car_hmpg, Commonwealth Bank <https://www.commbank.com.au/latest/bushfire-appeal.html>, ANZ Bank <https://bit.ly/2SQSTvi>, NAB <https://news.nab.com.au/nab-pledges-5-million-support-for-bushfire-recovery-extends-grants-to-affected-businesses-and-farmers/>, BankFirst <https://www.bankfirst.com.au/about-us/corporate-information/news/australian-bushfire-crisis>
- **Mental health support services for firefighters, emergency personnel, individuals and communities impacted by the ongoing bushfire disaster:** the Australian Government has released counselling and Medicare rebates for bushfire affected individuals. For more information please visit <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/how-get-mental-health-support>
- **Additional assistance for children in early education or school:** If you are the parent/guardian of a child in early education or school, please visit <https://www.education.gov.au/support-bushfire-affected-communities> to find out if your child may be eligible for extra support or scholarship consideration.



- **Assistance for persons with lost medications or prescriptions:** Arrangements are in place to allow for emergency supply of prescription medicine for most medicines. More details at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/air/Pages/bushfire-medications.aspx>
- **Telecommunications support:** Telstra, Optus and Vodafone are providing unlimited access to emergency services websites for customers in bushfire affected areas. Some providers are also providing additional measures. Visit <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/assistance-bushfire-affected-communities#telco-support>
- **Assistance from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO):** Individuals located in postcodes identified as affected by bushfire will be granted an extension to sort out their tax affairs. The ATO can also assist persons affected by natural disasters through helping reconstruct records. For further details please visit <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Dealing-with-disasters/In-detail/Specific-disasters/Bushfires-2019-20/>
- **Reece Bushfire Rebuild Grant:** If you, or a tradesperson you know is involved in a project to help rebuild in a community that has been affected by the Australian bushfires, you can apply for funding to assist rebuilding <https://www.reecegrant.com.au/bushfires>
- Document replacement services may be free to people who live in a declared disaster area. For more information, please visit <https://www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/recovery-after-disaster/replacing-documents>.
- **Oaks Hotels, Resorts & Suites Bushfire Support Offer:** Oaks Hotels is offering up to seven nights accommodation per family unit who can evidence that their primary place of residence has been wholly or substantially impacted by the 2020 fires and that their home requires rebuild or substantial refurbishment in order to be fit for occupation. More details are available at <https://www.oakshotels.com/en/bushfire-support-offer-questions-and-answers>

Further information is also available at <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/for-the-community/disaster-assistance/disaster-assistance-for-individuals.aspx>.

FOR INDIVIDUALS - FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS

- Rural Fire Service Volunteers in NSW who are self-employed or work for small and medium businesses (businesses with a turnover of less than \$50 million in the 2018-19 financial year), and who have been called out for more than 10 days this fire season, will be able to apply for the payments 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. In the interim, volunteer firefighters may register their interest in accessing the program at <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/register-interest-volunteer-firefighters-financial-support-program>.
- Federal Government employees fighting bushfires are eligible for increased paid volunteer leave allowance. Commonwealth public service leaders are to offer at least 20 working days paid leave, or 28 calendar days, for volunteers aiding with firefighting efforts. And for additional leave to then be provided as when needed. Further details are available at <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/boosting-leave-aps-volunteer-firefighters>.
- Telstra is offering free mobile bills for eligible volunteer firefighters for December 2019 and January 2020. For more details visit <https://exchange.telstra.com.au/free-calls-for-firies/>.

FOR ORGANISATIONS - NATURAL DISASTER GRANTS NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Eligible not-for-profit organisations and small businesses that have suffered direct damage to their premises or equipment as a result of the 2019-20 bushfires may be eligible for a bushfire recovery grant. More details are available at: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-bushfire-recovery-grant-directly-impacted-small-businesses>

Additional information on assistance available to not-for-profit organisations and small businesses can be found at <https://www.bushfirerecovery.gov.au/recovery-assistance/small-business>.

Kind regards

Surf Life Saving New South Wales