

17 April 2020

Hello. I'm writing to express my condolences for the losses you experienced during the bushfires, and to share information about government and other services available to you.

While the COVID-19 restrictions have introduced new challenges to bushfire recovery, I want to assure you that Council will continue to provide support in collaboration with the NSW Government.

Bushfire recovery helpdesk

We've introduced a bushfire recovery helpdesk so you can easily contact us for information. Council staff members who worked at the Recovery Centre will be able to direct you to the right services in the community, including our own teams who can help you with rebuilding, rates and waste information. **Call our bushfire recovery helpdesk during business hours on 4474 7434 or email recovery@esc.nsw.gov.au**

Case management

In partnership with the NSW Office of Emergency Management, we're establishing a case management service so that personalised support can be provided for residents with more complex needs. We'll have more information to share once this service is established.

Housing assistance

The Bushfire Housing Assistance Service can help with:

- emergency temporary accommodation
- private rental bond and advance rent costs
- sourcing accommodation options where you have family or local networks

To get housing support, phone the Disaster Welfare Assistance line on 1800 018 444 or visit www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/contact/housing

Financial assistance

Everyone whose home was destroyed or badly damaged by the 2019-20 bushfires is eligible for financial assistance.

- To apply, phone the Service NSW bushfire customer care service on 13 77 88 or visit www.service.nsw.gov.au
- Use the disaster assistance finder and answer a few questions to find assistance most relevant to your circumstances: disasterassistance.service.nsw.gov.au
- Apply for \$1,000 from the Eurobodalla Disaster Relief Fund – first round closes 30 April www.esc.nsw.gov.au/recovery
- The NSW Government is providing six months of council rates relief for residents whose properties were damaged beyond repair. If you haven't received notification of eligibility from Service NSW, phone them on 13 77 88.
- Grants available to Indigenous Australians can be found at www.niaa.gov.au

NSW Government clean-up program

The free NSW Government clean-up for eligible properties began in Eurobodalla on Thursday 20 February and will be in full swing a few weeks after Easter. If you haven't already, you need to opt-in by registering for the clean-up with Service NSW – call 13 77 88 or www.service.nsw.gov.au Once registered, managing contractor Laing O'Rourke will contact you about what happens next and when. If you have already registered and would like to contact Laing O'Rourke, call 1800 007 539.

Rebuilding

While the clean-up program takes place, you can start plans to rebuild if you choose to. We've worked with the NSW Government to introduce new measures to make this as easy as possible, including not needing Council approval to set up temporary accommodation or store belongings on your property. We're also fast-tracking DAs and offering to complete bushfire attack level assessments for bushfire-impacted residents. You can find more information about rebuilding at www.esc.nsw.gov.au/recovery or contact our bushfire recovery helpdesk on 4474 7434 or recovery@esc.nsw.gov.au

Free legal services

Legal Aid NSW can provide free legal help to those affected by the bushfires. You can get help for insurance, credit hardship, housing, employment and document replacement.

- Phone Legal Aid NSW's Disaster Response Helpline on 1800 801 529 or visit disasterhelp.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Looking after your mental health

Everyone's experience and response to the bushfires is different. Losing your home is a traumatic experience, and having feelings and challenges related to loss and grief is normal.

Working with a mental health professional is the best way to take care of your mental wellbeing. There is support available in person and over the phone.

- Find a recovery counsellor near you on Coordinare's website www.bushfiresupport.info
- Phone Lifeline's dedicated bushfire recovery support line on 13 11 44
- Phone the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or visit kidshelpline.com.au
- Phone MensLine Australia on 1300 78 9987 or visit www.mensline.org.au
- Phone GriefLine on 1300 845 745 or [visit griefline.org.au](http://visit.griefline.org.au)
- Farmers and business owners can contact the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 to access Farm Gate counsellors and peer support workers

Get regular updates

We've had to stop our outreach meetings because of COVID-19, but if you would like to receive updates about bushfire recovery support and information that becomes available, please visit www.esc.nsw.gov.au/recovery and sign up for our email recovery newsletter. If you don't have internet access at the moment, call our helpdesk and we'll find a way to keep you up to date.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Liz Innes
Eurobodalla Mayor