



News and information

Backyard burning restrictions lifted for bushfire affected residents

In late March Councillors granted special approval for bushfire affected residents to burn dry and dead vegetation on smaller properties for this year.

Council recognises that residents directly impacted by both blazes are still cleaning up a huge amount of fire affected vegetation that may be difficult to dispose of through the regular green bin or by composting.

This special approval means that as long as certain conditions are met, residents that have been affected by fire in parts of Wingello and Bundanoon can burn dry and dead vegetation on their properties. This approval is regardless of the size of the property, but only until the Bush Fire Danger Period recommences later this year.

Previously, under Council's *Urban Backyard Burning of Vegetation Policy*, only landholders with properties larger than 4,000 square metres could burn off after the end of the Bushfire Danger Period.

This special provision only applies to residents of the Shire directly impacted by the bushfires of the 2019/20 summer. These properties have been sent an Individual Approval and they're also mapped on Council's website.

Before you burn, check the interactive property map for all the conditions by visiting www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/backyard-burning or phoning Council on 4868 0888.



Community Recovery Meetings



Community Recovery Meetings were held at Wingello and Balmoral in late February. These were live-streamed and are available to watch on Council's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Future meetings will feature representatives from multiple disaster welfare agencies who will be able to help with your recovery questions.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis and need for social distancing is now limiting how public meetings are hosted.

We're currently in discussion with our welfare partners on how best to hold future meetings and ensure you still receive the latest news and information. Stay tuned!



Bushfire Recovery Wingecarribee Southern Villages

Council's Recovery Plan

Recovery after a bushfire means rebuilding more than just physical infrastructure.

Council recognises that we also have an important role to play in helping to restore the emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing of our bushfire affected villages.

With this in mind we're in the process of developing a *Local Recovery Plan* (LRP). Our LRP will be used in conjunction with the State Government's Regional Recovery Plan to implement a Recovery Program.

Social, Built, Economic, Natural Resources and Communications are the five focus areas of our LRP.

Our plan will be overseen by a Local Recovery Committee comprising of representatives from Council, relevant State and Federal agencies as well as community members where required.

Bushfire Recovery Hotline

We've created a dedicated 1800 Bushfire Recovery phone number to help bushfire affected residents quickly access information and assistance.

Residents can phone this number and speak to staff who can provide a range of advice on bushfire specific queries including:

- Planning matters surrounding bushfire recovery
- Bushfire related waste management requests
- Financial assistance queries
- Infrastructure maintenance requests from bushfire damaged communities
- Coordinating and arranging multi-agency requests, and
- General bushfire recovery requests.

Wingecarribee Shire Council's Bushfire Recovery phone number is **1800 316 500** and is operational 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Fridays.

Calls to the number after these hours will be attended to the next working day.



Health and wellbeing

Support services available

The emotional impacts of bushfire can continue long after the fires have passed. You might also be feeling additional distress or anxiety around the COVID-19 situation.

Having someone to listen to and support you through this is very important.

Check in on your friends and neighbours, and if you or someone you know needs help, reach out.

The following are free services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- *Mental Health Line* – 1800 011 511
- *Lifeline Bushfire Recovery* - 13 43 57
- *Mensline* - 1300 789 978
- *Kids Helpline* - 1800 55 1800
- *Beyond Blue* - 1300 22 4636
- *ReFrame/You in Mind* – 0455 104 104

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call 000.





Bushfire Recovery Wingecarribee Southern Villages



Waste and clean-up

NSW Government clean-up program is underway

The government-led bushfire clean-up program continues across the state, despite the uncertainty around COVID-19.

While free, this is an opt-in program. Impacted property owners who would like their property cleared **MUST** register with Service NSW as soon as possible.

Call **13 77 88** or register online at www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/register-opt-nsw-bushfire-clean.

The State Government is working towards a 30 June 2020 deadline to have most residential properties cleared.

Be aware that any tradespeople asking for payments are **NOT** part of the scheme.

Bushfire recovery clean-up in six steps

1. Opt-in for clean-up: register at Service NSW, www.service.nsw.gov.au, or call **13 77 88**
2. Laing O'Rourke will contact registered property owners to discuss damage and assess eligibility
3. Laing O'Rourke will meet property owners on site
4. Owners will approve scope of works
5. Clean-up of agreed work starts
6. Owners confirm completion of the agreed scope of works.

Remember: Bushfire-impacted property owners will not have to pay for clean-up costs if they opt-in to the NSW Government clean-up program.

Any tradespeople asking for payments are **NOT** part of the scheme.

Clean-up safety

The State Government has appointed Laing O'Rourke to coordinate the State-wide clean-up.

Where possible Laing O'Rourke may sub-contract work to local contractors and suppliers. They understand that local knowledge and expertise will help the clean-up run as smooth as possible and at the same time give the local economy a helping hand.

Safety however is the number one priority and before any clearing work begins, they need to ensure hazardous materials, such as asbestos, are identified and contained. Clearing work will only begin after properties have been made safe.

Due to occupational health and safety concerns, owners will not be able to access their property to remove any items once the clean-up process has begun.

When Laing O'Rourke contacts property owners about access, they'll discuss how uncovered personal items are to be managed, as well as which structures will be retained and which will be removed. This will be documented in property access agreements for the owner's records.



Financial assistance

Council financial assistance

Council has waived all Council-related fees for bushfire affected residents wishing to rebuild. This includes Development Application (DA) and Pre-Lodgement fees, Construction and Complying Development Certificates, Final Occupation Certificates and all plumbing and drainage inspection costs.

If you're experiencing financial difficulties due to the bushfires, contact Council on **1800 316 500** to discuss payment arrangement options which may be available to you.



Bushfire Recovery Wingecarribee Southern Villages

State and Federal Grants

Aside from Council assistance, there are also a number of State and Federal grants that bushfire affected residents may be eligible for.

They include:

Commonwealth Government Disaster Recovery Payment

\$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child is available for people severely affected by bushfires. An additional \$400 will also be provided for children.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

Commonwealth Government Disaster Recovery Allowance

This allowance provides short-term income assistance for bushfire affected residents.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

NSW Government Disaster Relief Grants

This grant is open to eligible individuals and families whose homes and household contents have been damaged or destroyed. Conditions apply.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

Volunteer Firefighters Financial Support

Payments are available for eligible firefighters who are self-employed or employed by a small/medium business and have lost income.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries Grants program

\$75,000 recovery grants, concessional loans and transport subsidies for eligible primary producers.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

Small Business Support

If your business has been impacted by the NSW bushfires, is feeling the impact of the measures to control COVID-19 (or is impacted by both), contact the Service NSW Business Concierge.

They'll identify the specific support and services available to your business, including relevant grants.

To be connected to the Service NSW Business Concierge call **13 77 88** or request a call back via their website at mybusiness.service.nsw.gov.au/concierge.

Bushfire Working Capital Loan

Offers up to \$50,000 to help businesses cover salaries and wages, rebuild infrastructure and purchase goods and services.

The Bushfire Recovery Loans of up to \$500,000 is also available for eligible businesses.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

Motor vehicle stamp duty relief

Financial assistance is available for eligible motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of the bushfires.

Call the NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service on phone **13 77 88**.

Red Cross Grants

Immediate assistance is available for bushfire-affected people in financial hardship.

Visit www.redcross.org.au/grants.