

Important information from South Eastern NSW PHN

COORDINARE, as the Australian Government's **Primary Health Network (PHN) for South Eastern NSW**, has a support role in the immediate response to the bushfires and a growing role as the region moves into recovery.

We have bushfire support information available on our website, through the special link bushfiresupport.info, and this has been summarised below:

Coping with the stress of bushfires

The devastating bushfires over the past few months have proven to be an upsetting and stressful time for many people. Anyone directly or indirectly affected by the fires can have these feelings and for the majority of people, these feelings will begin to disappear after a short period of time.

With thanks to Lifeline, here is a list of things you can do to take care of yourself and your wellbeing, or that of someone you care about:

- **Recovery takes time.** It is important to allow yourself time to process your circumstances and regain a sense of normality. There are things you can do to heal and rebuild.
- **Recognise when it's getting too much.** Watch out for signs of stress and get extra support when things become overwhelming. Allow yourself extra time to get things done.
- **Talk.** Release your emotions and tension by talking to someone you trust. This can help put things into perspective. It's likely your neighbours, friends and family are experiencing similar feelings.
- **Develop an action plan.** Decide who's going to do what and when. Summarise your financial situation and discuss your options with your bank to alleviate stress of any financial concerns.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat well, exercise and sleep. Try to get back to your normal routine when you feel ready. Wherever possible, schedule extra time for things you enjoy and find relaxing.
- **Get help - lean on family and friends.** Strong support networks can provide emotional or practical support. Explain your needs and tell them how they can help. Make a list of places to go to for help e.g. financial assistance, emotional support, your GP, counselling services.
- **Consider professional help.** If you don't feel some return to normal after four weeks, seek professional help.
- **Support children.** Provide comfort, limit children's exposure to media coverage of the fires, allow them to talk or ask questions, but do not force them. Return to normal activities as soon as possible.

Medicare bushfire recovery counselling

Individuals and families impacted by the bushfires can access **up to 10 sessions of counselling**. Many of these are at no cost (100% billed to Medicare) and others have co-payments. You **do not need a mental health plan** from a GP or a diagnosed mental illness to obtain these services. You can view a list of services at <http://bit.ly/medicarebushfirecounselling>

COORDINARE's commissioned mental health and suicide prevention programs in South Eastern NSW

COORDINARE funds a number of no-cost mental health services in the region, including:

- **Royal Far West:** video counselling services for **0-15 year olds and their families**. Call 02 8966 8500.
- **headspace:** service for **12-25 year olds**. Bega 1800 959 844, Goulburn (02) 4824 4944, Queanbeyan (02) 6298 0300, Nowra (02) 4446 7300, Wollongong (02) 4220 7660 or e-headspace (on line web chat) call 1800 650 890.
- **Grand Pacific Health:** face-to-face or phone counselling available to South Eastern NSW residents. Call 1800 228 987.

View the **full service list** at <http://bit.ly/MHsupportSENSW>. We will continue to update this list as services change.

Training options:

- Community members and small business owners wanting to support others who are experiencing difficulty and emotional stress, can register for FREE one day **accidental counsellor workshops**. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/accidentalcounsellorworkshops>

Other no-cost mental health support options

- **Call an existing helpline:**
 - If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call **Triple Zero (000)** or visit your nearest hospital emergency department.
 - **Lifeline:** 13 11 14 also have dedicated bushfire recovery support line on 13 43 57 <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
 - **Beyond Blue:** 1300 224 636 <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
 - **MensLine Australia:** 1300 78 9978 www.mensline.org.au/
 - **Kids Helpline** (for 5-25 years): 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
 - **NSW Mental Health Line:** 1800 011 511 farmers and business owners in bushfire-affected areas can access Farm Gate counsellors and peer support workers on the Mental Health Line.
 - **GriefLine:** 1300 845 745 <https://griefline.org.au/>
 - **Qlife:** 1800 184 527 <https://qlife.org.au/>

- **Remote Psych telehealth:** video counselling for anyone impacted by bushfires. Call 03 5222 4789.
- **Anglicare:** face-to-face, telephone or skype counselling across Illawarra, Shoalhaven, South Coast, Southern Highlands for children and adults. Call 1300 651 728 or email counselling@anglicare.org.au
- **Relationships Australia:** individual and family counselling is available in Relationship Australia's Bega and Moruya offices. Call 6122 7100 to book.
- **Lifeline:** tool kits and information on recovering after a bushfire at www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/recovering-after-a-natural-disaster
- **Red Cross:** disaster recovery information available at <http://bit.ly/3cosYUM>. Tips for taking care of yourself and helping other's when there's a crisis, as well as advice on managing distress available in seven languages at www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/looking-after-yourself
- **Australian Government's Head to Health website** for online and phone supports, resources and treatment options. Go to www.headtohealth.gov.au
- **Black Dog Institute:** resources to help cope at <https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/bushfire-support>

Other support services

- **Service NSW Bushfire Customer Care** is designed to help people impacted by bushfires to navigate the support. Call Service NSW on 13 77 88, or for assistance go to <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/bushfire-customer-care-service>
- The Office of Emergency Management has released a **Bushfire Recovery Assistance Guide** for people impacted by bushfires. Download a copy at <https://bit.ly/38qO7uD>
- **NSW Health** has a range of useful bushfire response and recovery links on their website at www.health.nsw.gov.au/bushfire-smoke
- Other support lines:
 - **Healthdirect after-hours GP helpline:** 1800 022 222
 - **Housing Contact Centre:** 1800 422 322
 - **Disaster Welfare Assistance Line:** 1800 018 444
 - **Law Access NSW Disaster Response Hotline:** 1800 801 529