

North Coast NSW Floods Recovery Information

This newsletter contains information for residents and businesses impacted by the recent NSW North Coast floods.

A natural disaster area has been declared in six local government areas including Lismore, Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Richmond Valley and the Tweed.

You may be eligible for financial assistance from the NSW or Australian Government, depending on your circumstances. This newsletter provides information on the assistance available and contact details for agencies that can assist with your recovery.

Are you insured?

If you are insured, you should talk to your insurance company as soon as possible about how to make a claim. You can start cleaning up immediately but first take pictures or video of damage to your property and possessions as evidence for your claim.

The Insurance Council of Australia can be contacted with any questions, complaints or concerns about your insurance on **1800 734 621**

Recovery Centres

Recovery Centres will open in Lismore and Murwillumbah from 12 noon on Thursday 6 April 2017. From Friday 7 April they will be open every day 9am – 6pm.

Recovery Centres provide a one stop shop for affected residents, businesses and farmers to access recovery assistance from a range of agencies and organisations.

Agencies based at the Recovery Centres will include: NSW Health, Disaster Welfare, Primary Industries, Insurance Agencies, Family and Community Services, Business Connect, Legal Aid, Environment protection Authority, Centrelink, Red Cross and Safe Work NSW.

Murwillumbah Recovery Centre

Murwillumbah Community Centre,
Nullum Street, Murwillumbah

Lismore Recovery Centre

Public Works Facility, 120 Dalley Street
East Lismore, entry via Military Road

From Friday 7 April both centres will be open every day 9am – 6pm.

A shuttle bus will run from the Lismore Transit Centre to the Recovery Centre every 30 minutes on the hour and half hour from 9am to 5pm.

Disaster Relief Grants for Individuals

The Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Management can provide disaster relief grants to 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
- lodge the application within four months of the disaster occurring

Applying for a disaster relief grant:

To apply for financial assistance call Disaster Welfare Services on **1800 018 444**.

A Disaster Welfare Officer will assist you to assess your eligibility and provide you with an application form. This will include a home visit.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Assistance

The Australian Government has activated both the Disaster Recovery Payment and the Disaster Recovery Allowance for eligible disaster affected residents in the local government areas of Lismore and Tweed.

Further information on Australian Government assistance is available online at www.disasterassist.gov.au.

Or contact the Australian Government Emergency Information Line: **1800 018 444**.

Small Business Assistance

The NSW Government provides practical support to businesses affected by the recent storms and floods.

Tax Help

If you have been affected by the floods you don't need to worry about your tax affairs right away. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will give you time to deal with your more immediate problems first and can help you to sort out your tax affairs later.

Depending on your circumstance, the following assistance may be available to you:

- more time to lodge, pay and respond
- early access to your money
- assistance payments
- help with damaged or destroyed property
- reconstructing your tax records
- fuel tax credits for individuals, businesses and others

Business Advice

Business Connect can provide you with two free independent and confidential business advice sessions. An advisor can meet you at a

convenient place and discuss your business needs.

Advice is offered about managing cash flow, planning the next steps, accessing financial support schemes and connecting to additional support.

Call **1300 134 359** to speak to your local advisor or visit www.industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect

Business Financial Support Packages

Loans of up to \$130,000 are available at a concessional rate to small businesses affected by disasters which meet the eligibility criteria and are unable to obtain assistance through normal channels.

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority administers this program. Enquiries should be directed to 1800 678 593.

Small Business Survey

The Small Business Connect Office is conducting a survey of businesses affected by the floods. Businesses are encouraged to do our survey to help assess the impact for small businesses.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NorthCoastFloodsBusinessSurvey>

Assistance for Primary Producers

Loans and transport subsidies

The Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) Natural Disaster Relief Scheme assists primary producers (including commercial fishers and oyster growers), small business operators, non-profit organisations and sporting and recreational clubs affected by declared natural disasters. Assistance available includes: Disaster relief loans of up to \$130,000 are available, subject to certain eligibility criteria, at a concessional interest rate for those in urgent need.

These loans may be used for essential working capital, replacement and repair of damage caused to the property and associated improvements not covered by insurance.

Transport subsidies of up to 50 per cent of the cost of transporting fodder and/or water to an affected property and stock to/from agistment are available. These rebates apply to primary

producers in areas affected by the floods, subject to eligibility criteria. Maximum subsidy available is \$15,000 per annum.. Submit all claim forms to the RAA with invoices, receipts and other documentation.

For more information contact the Rural Assistance Authority: **1800 678 593**.

Local Land Services

For any lost or found stock, stranded livestock, emergency fodder, deceased stock or flood-related agricultural issues, contact the Local Land Services on **1300 795 299**

Health and Wellbeing

Having someone to listen and support you at times like this is important. Talking to family and trusted friends about your concerns can help.

Lifeline is available 24 hours on **13 11 14**

You can also talk to your local GP or call the NSW Mental Health Line on **1800 011 511** for information and referral information.

Support will also be available at the Recovery Centres.

Other Assistance

Legal Assistance

Legal Aid NSW helps people with their legal problems. Legal Aid NSW lawyers can provide free legal advice and minor assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues including insurance, tenancy and credit and debt problems.

You can call LawAccess NSW in the first instance to discuss any legal problems and what assistance may be available from Legal Aid NSW, Community Legal Centres and other free legal assistance services in your area.

Law Access NSW: **1300 888 529**

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Motor Vehicle Assistance

Motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of a natural disaster may be eligible for a stamp duty refund on their replacement vehicle.

Contact the Office of State Revenue via the website www.osr.nsw.gov.au

State Revenue: **1300 139 814**

Services NSW will replace certificates and drivers licences at no cost to those affected by the floods.

Services NSW: **137 788**

For more information

Visit our website at
www.emergency.nsw.gov.au