



Hawkesbury City Council

Attachment 2
to
item 1

Recovery Action Plan Greater Sydney
Region – NSW Bushfires 2019/2020

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Recovery Action Plan

Greater Sydney Region

NSW Bushfires – 2019/2020

Author: Alison Morgan
Director, Greater Sydney Region
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Resilience
NSW

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land encompassed in the Greater Sydney bushfire recovery region. We acknowledge the trauma that has resulted from the significant destruction of the land and natural environment because of the bushfires. We pay our respect to elder past and present. We commit ourselves to working with Aboriginal people on bushfire recovery in the region.

Table of Aboriginal traditional lands to be competed.

Purpose

This Recovery Action Plan (the Plan) documents the arrangements to manage and coordinate the recovery from the bushfires that destroyed significant area in the Greater Sydney Region of New South Wales between December 2019 and February 2020. The Plan identifies the scope, impact, objectives, strategies, priorities and actions that will drive ongoing recovery operations, and documents the recovery structure and considerations which underpin recovery efforts.

Scope of the Fires

Bushfires in northern NSW began in September 2019 and were quickly followed by significant fires in southern NSW. The Greater Sydney Region had fires come through in early December.

The Greater Sydney Region was hardest hit to the south as the Green Wattle Fire in the Nattai forest fire reached Balmoral, Bargo and Buxton. In the north west of the region fires from the Gospers Mountain fire crossed the Bells Line of Road in Bilpin and reached Lithgow in late December. In mid-late December the Gospers Mountain fires also made their way towards Blackheath, Bilpin, Hawkesbury and the Central Coast areas. In the Central West the Kerry's Ridge and Upper Turon Road fires burned between November 2019 and January 2020.

Other fires in and around Sydney from early December 2019 impacted the Lane Cove National Park, Voyager Point and other south-western suburbs of Sydney. While these areas experienced significant loss of national park, green space, no homes or lives were lost in these areas.

Over the 2019/20 Fire season the Greater Sydney Region saw almost 800,000 hectares of land burned and the following LGAs were severely impacted from both direct and indirect fire damage.

Blue Mountains City Council

Mid-Western Regional Council

Central Coast Council

Oberon Council

Cessnock City Council

Singleton Council

Hawkesbury City Council

Wollondilly Shire Council

Lithgow City Council

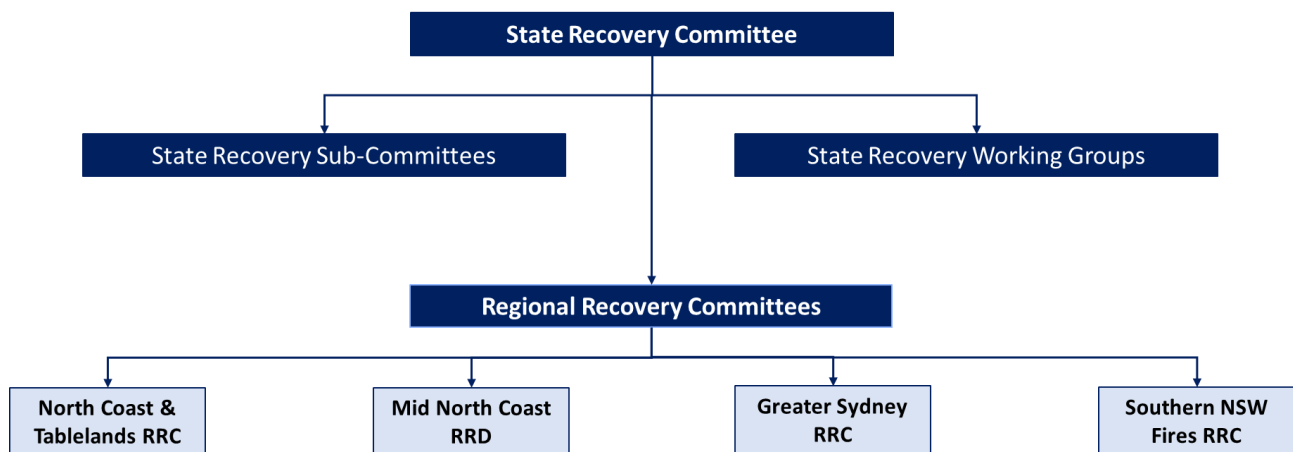
Detailed impact assessment information is included in each of the Sub Committee reports however below indicates the summary of building destroyed and damaged.

Greater Sydney Region	Destroyed	Damaged
Residence	149	92
Facility	35	31
Outbuilding	389	224
Rural Landholders		3,768

State and Regional Recovery Governance Structures

The NSW Recovery Plan

NSW Recovery Plan provides a framework for recovery operations that can be tailored to support the affected community, taking into account the specific circumstances of each disaster or emergency. It informs the general community, business, government, emergency services, functional areas and those working in disaster recovery. It also provides for a State Recovery Committee to oversee a whole of government response to a disaster event.



Greater Sydney Bushfire Recovery Coordinator

Euon Ferguson was appointed as the Greater Sydney Region Recovery Coordinator from January to April 2020. Mr Ferguson has more than 40 years of experience in emergency services and was Recovery Coordinator for the North Coast Floods in 2017 and Bega Valley Bush Fires in 2018. He has previously led the Victorian Country Fire Authority and South Australian Country Fire Service

The GSSR Recovery Coordinator ensured recovery efforts met the needs of impacted communities and that everything necessary was done to enable affected communities to quickly return to an adequate level of functioning after the bushfire emergency.

Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee and Subcommittees

The Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee (GSRRC) was established in January 2020 to drive and coordinate the bushfire recovery efforts in the nine most impacted LGAs across the Sydney, Central Coast, Hunter and Central West of NSW. This broad recovery region was titled the Greater Sydney Region for the purposes of the bushfire recovery.

The GSRRC is Chaired by Alison Morgan (Resilience NSW) and has representatives from the 3 levels of government, industry and not-for-profit bodies, and focusses on recovery with a regional lens. The GSRRC's work is centred around work with Local Governments to achieve local and regional outcomes, and acts as an interface with State agencies and the National Bushfire Recovery Agency on the recovery effort. The structure and membership of the Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee and Sub Committees can be found at *Annexure B*.

The GSRRC is committed to ensuring that the bushfire recovery operations are:

- Inclusive and collaborative;
- Integrated and coordinated;
- Adaptable to changing community needs;
- Empowering and supportive of community self-determination; and
- Sharing the responsibility of recovery actions.

Key priorities for the GSRRC have been to:

- Ensure visibility, strategic planning and alignment of the recovery effort
- Provide detailed regional and local intelligence to the State Recovery Committee
- Develop and coordinate a consistent approach to the implementation of the Regional Recovery Action Plan (this Plan)
- Identify priorities and resources required to assist with recovery operations across the short, medium and long term
- Ensure that relevant stakeholders, especially the communities affected, are involved in the development and implementation of recovery objectives and strategies and are consistently informed of the progress made
- Identify and manage regional and local recovery issues and trends
- Ensure that regional recovery activities align with the NSW Government State Recovery Plan

The GSRRC established five Subcommittees:

- Animals and Agriculture (Chaired by Graeme Wilson, LLS)
- Business, Industry and Tourism (Chaired by Sanket Purohit, NSW Treasury)
- Health & Wellbeing (Chaired by Peter Nash, Department of Communities)
- Infrastructure, Waste & Environment (Chaired by James Goodwin EPA)
- Hunter & Central Coast (Chaired by Glenda Briggs, Regional NSW)

The work of the Subcommittees is detailed later in this report and forms the basis of the regional recovery strategies going forward.

Given the broad geographic spread of impacted LGAs the GSRRC established a separate Subcommittee to focus on the recovery work in the Hunter and Central Coast areas. This Subcommittees work has been included as a separate report.

GSRRC Working Groups

The GSRRC established two Working Groups to assist with the regional bushfire recovery effort:

General Managers' Working Group. This Group brought together the General Managers of the nine impacted Councils to share information, ideas and support. It provided advice to the Recovery Coordinator and Chair to inform state wide development of recovery strategies.

Elected Representatives Reference Group. This group provided a forum for Federal and NSW local Members of Parliament to receive advice about recovery efforts and provide feedback from constituents. Separate briefing sessions were also held for local Mayors and the Chair of the GSRRC also attended and briefed some local Councils and Councilors. From June 2020 the Mayors have been invited to join the local members of Parliament in a combined Elected Representatives Forum.

Local Recovery Committees

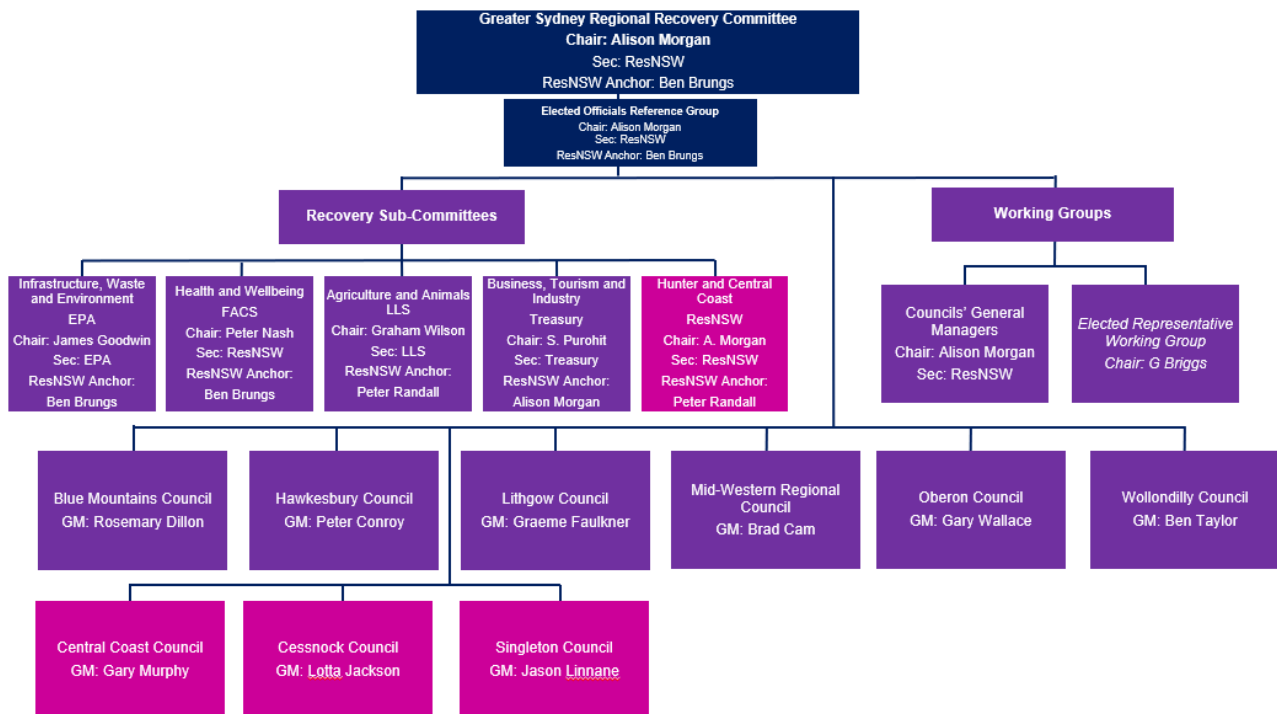
Nine Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the region were directly affected by fire and each of them established a Local Recovery Committee or similar mechanism to drive local recovery efforts.

The Local Recovery Plans have provided the Regional Recovery Committee and Subcommittees with detailed local information, and the work of local Councils to support community led recovery efforts have provided the foundation of all recovery efforts across the region.

Representation on the Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee and Sub Committees

Wollondilly Shire Council	Lithgow City Council
Central Coast Council	Mid-Western Regional Council
Hawkesbury City Council	Cessnock City Council
Oberon Council	Blue Mountains City Council
Singleton Council	PHN Health
Rural Adversity Mental Health Program	Mental Health Centre Nepean
Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District	Community Links Recovery Support Service
Step by Step Recovery Support Service	Service NSW
Department of Education	Department of Communities and Justice
Mountains Community Resource Network	National Indigenous Australians Agency
DCJ - Housing Services	Community Services
Lifeline Central West	Red Cross
Resilience NSW	Department of Primary Industries – Rural Resilience Program
NSW Department of Primary Industries	Local Land Services – South West Sydney
Local Land Services	Department of Premier and Cabinet
Rural Assistance Authority	NSW Public Works
Destination NSW	NSW Business Chamber
Regional Development Australia – NSW/Regional	NSW Police REOCON & REMOs
Small Business Commission	NSW Public Works Advisory
Regional Development Australia – NSW/Regional	NSW Environment Protection Authority
NSW Transport	NSW SES
Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications	SafeWork NSW
NSW Fire and Rescue	NSW Forestry Corporation
National Parks and Wildlife Service	NSW Rural Fire Service
National Bushfire Recovery Agency	Australian Insurance Council

Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee and Sub Committees organisation chart



Key Recovery Challenges in the Greater Sydney Region

Impacts in the Greater Sydney Region

The Greater Sydney Region impacts varied across the LGAs. The table below identifies the impacts to residences, facilities and out buildings by Local Government Area.

Damage overview

Type	Destroyed	Damaged
Mid-Western		
Residence	10	3
Facility	0	0
Outbuilding	13	4
Rural Landholders		1,531
Central Coast		
Residence	4	7
Facility	1	0
Outbuilding	15	13
Rural Landholders		144
Hawkesbury		
Residence	19	13
Facility	7	5
Outbuilding	65	29
Rural landholders		539
Lithgow		
Residence	54	21
Facility	3	10
Outbuilding	122	64
Rural Landholders		332
Cessnock		
Residence	21	7
Facility	0	3

Outbuildings	63	25
Rural Landholders		342
Singleton		
Residence	1	6
Facility	0	0
Outbuilding	5	7
Rural Landholders		348
Oberon		
Residence	4	2
Facility	1	4
Outbuilding	5	0
Rural Landholders		62
Blue Mountains		
Residence	22	10
Facility	13	3
Outbuilding	36	30
Rural Landholders		122
Wollondilly		
Residence	16	17
Facility	8	5
Outbuilding	69	48
Rural Landholders		348

The table below identifies the key recovery challenges faced in the period immediately after the bushfire operations were completed.

Issues and challenges overview

Issue	Challenge
Cumulative impacts	<p>Many LGAs in the Greater Sydney Region had been significantly impacted by prolonged drought prior to the bushfire event. Following the bushfires several LGAs, particularly Hawkesbury and the Central Coast, suffered major damage from storms and floods. The arrival of COVID-19 and associated lock-down has resulted in financial and social disruption across the region.</p> <p>The cumulative impact of drought, fires, floods and COVID-19 has had a proven a constant challenge for the design and implementation of community recovery activities.</p>
Community health and wellbeing	<p>Ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communities are given the opportunity to voice their needs through informal and formal community networks and forums • community strengths and assets are supported to enable communities to lead their own recovery • wellbeing and social recovery activities are coordinated and collaborative • communities receive the information they need to assist their recovery process. Keeping this relevant, clear and targeted • social connectedness is promoted through community events, activities and story telling • communities in recovery (including people working in the formal and informal roles) have access to the psychosocial supports needed • the building of disaster resilience in individuals, communities and service providers
Financial support and services – government & non-government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing financial assistance to fire affected residents through access to a wide variety of grants • Disaster recovery packages • Support for community resilience, wellbeing, business and industry • Clean up costs • Employment and volunteer stimulus packages • Temporary/transitional housing • Employee wages and payments for bushfire fighting activities • Hardship impacts
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to buy local – prioritising local business
Business and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous, tourism, business, small business, non-profit organisations • Media, promotional activities, community renewal • The need for building resilience through professional advisory

- Retraining locals due to job losses

Restoring essential services and utilities

- Loss of power and utilities, including gas, water and sewerage
- Timeliness of restoration of infrastructure
- Timeliness due to restricted access related to crime scene considerations
- Restoration of transport services and routes or implementation of replacement services.

Accessing essential community infrastructure and public buildings

- Returning or restoration of community assets such as schools, public buildings etc.
- Restricted access due to the disaster and/or access to the facilities due to location within a restricted zone
- Psychosocial impact on the community due to damage iconic assets.

Temporary/transitional housing

- Availability of temporary/transitional housing options and associated support for people with destroyed or damaged properties.

Communications

Ensuring:

- The public and community are kept informed of recovery process
- A Communication Strategy is implemented to provide information to community and businesses on arrangements to restore damaged and destroyed infrastructure and what temporary arrangements are in place
- A need for a coordinated channel with one voice
- A wide range of agencies providing information in different format
- A wide range of grants available presenting difficulty in finding the best assistance available

Clean-up

Ensuring:

- A plan for the clean-up and permanent construction/rebuild and restoration of damaged and destroyed infrastructure is implemented
- Hazardous materials are identified and remediated to ensure clean-up of affected areas can be undertaken without impacting public health and safety
- Ongoing issues with damaged and burnt trees and the cost of removal on both public and private land
- Waste management procedures are coordinated and communicated, and the community is aware of the process and likely timeframe for clean-up
- Community exposure to environmental health risks and public health risks are minimised
- The environment has returned to pre-disaster state or to a state that is acceptable to the community.

Fodder and water allocation

- Urgent requests for fodder and water

Fencing and horticulture

- Damaged fencing needing full or partial clearing of fence lines, removal of material and assembly of new fence material over 3 boundary classes:
 - Private-Private boundary 1436km
 - National Park-Private boundary 657km
 - Crown Land Private boundary 793km
- Landholder property access due to fallen trees and subsequent flood damage to roads
- Damage to horticulture production such as protective netting, fruit trees and cut flower and Chinese market gardens
- Supply of large quantities of water for horticulture production
- Fruit trees tainted by smoke, heat damage and missed market opportunities
- Flood impacts in the lower Hawkesbury and Central Coast
- Flood waters caused erosion and toxins such as lead and arsenic from burnt buildings and fences
- Machinery, chemicals/fertilisers, shed damage, greenhouse structures, pumps/irrigation, loss of income and loss of topsoil

Government fees

- Government costs, charges and fees

Gaps

- Councils such as Camden and Oberon with damage but not included in the natural disaster declaration zone
- Slow dissemination of information between Agencies, councils and service providers

A Recovery Model for the Greater Sydney Region

The Recovery Model for Greater Sydney – mobile outreach

From the commencement of the bushfire recovery it was decided that a mobile recovery model would be most appropriate for the Greater Sydney Region, rather than larger fixed recovery centres. This was primarily because impacted communities were generally small, far from each other and larger towns or support centres and some were very remote.

There were also a number of separate and distinct communities of interest across the Region, including Wollindilly in the south of the region being aligned with the Southern Highlands, the Hunter & Central Coast area, the Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Lithgow community and the two rural communities in Oberon and Mid-Western.

Each community has different needs and recovery responses needed to be targeted and flexible. To get reach into the community, multiple mobile strategies were implemented. These strategies included:

- **Community Outreach teams**

Community outreach teams were coordinated by ResNSW and involved Red Cross and Council staff. The aim of these outreach drives was to travel into more remote communities that previously had not had any community meetings or mobile recovery team visits. The teams met with community members to get intel around impacts and needs, and identified social hubs to organise future mobile recovery team visits or community meetings.

- **Community meetings and Mobile Recovery Teams**

Community Meetings and Mobile Recovery teams provided face-to-face engagement and detailed information directly from support services and agencies to members of impacted communities. There were 31 community meetings/mobile recovery teams that were organised across the Greater Sydney Region.

Through these meetings and mobile recovery teams, bushfire impacted residents were able to resolve issues directly with agencies representatives. By basing these meetings and teams within local community hubs, they provided an accessible and a safe place for those affected by the disaster to meet and discuss their experience, giving impacted residents an opportunity to share and socialise with other members of the community.

Issues raised by community members were fed back to the regional recovery subcommittees to assist in determining emerging needs and contribute to an ongoing and sustainable recovery. Agencies represented on Mobile Recovery Teams vary due to community needs and agency capacity. Potential agency representatives at community meetings/Mobile Recovery Teams were:

- Service NSW
- Local Council
- Resilience NSW field staff
- Public Works Advisory
- Environmental Protection Authority
- Local Lands Services
- Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP),
- Primary Health Network
- Red Cross
- Disaster Chaplains
- Recovery Support Service staff
- Insurance Council of Australia
- Legal Aid

- **Mobile Recovery teams attending social events**

Mobile teams attended events, such as Australia Day celebrations, in order to get reach into local communities and provide psychosocial and practical support.

- **Local recovery hubs**

Local leaders also established community led local recovery hubs. These hubs distributed donated goods and provided local support for bushfire impacted residents.

Due to the success of the above mobile recovery strategies, it was determined that centralised Recovery Centres were not required. This is because they would not have been assessable to majority of the impacted areas, and they would be resource intensive and limit the ability to operate the mobile recovery strategies.

Bushfire Recovery Support Services

An important aspect of the mobile recovery models was the establishment of three Bushfire Recovery Support Services (RSS) across the Greater Sydney Region. These three RSS were:

- Step by Step Recovery Support Service –Operational in April
- Community Links Recovery Support Service – Operational in May
- DPI Rural Recovery Support Service – Currently recruiting for position. Expected to be operational in late June or early July

The RSS is a temporary case management service to help households and rural landholders recover from disasters. RSSs are embedded in disaster affected communities and offer free long term personalised case management support.

Agriculture and Animal Sub-Committee Recovery Report

Background

The Agriculture and Animals sub-committee has been established by the Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee (GSRRC) in response to the recent fires and flood impacts across the Greater Sydney Region of NSW.

The purpose of the sub-committee is to provide specialised advice and gather relevant data in relation to agriculture and animal recovery issues impacting the primary industries sector across the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Wollondilly and more broadly any Local Government Areas (LGA) which have been impacted by either fires or flood. These impacts include, but are not limited to domestic animals, livestock, cropping, horticulture, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry management.

Impact Assessment

Fire Impacts – fodder and water allocation

There were two main fires in the Greater Sydney region: Green Wattle Fire started on 17th November 2019 in the Wollondilly LGA in Sydney's south west that burnt 278,722Ha. Additionally, the Gospers Mountain Fire which burnt across the Lithgow, Hawkesbury and Central Coast areas burnt in excess of 512,000ha. Both fires were contained in January 2020. Damage was also sustained from the Kerry's Ridge and Upper Turon Road fires in the Central West of NSW.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Local Land Services (LLS) provided support to affected landholders through an established 1800 Agricultural and Animal Services Hotline and completed on-ground assessments. All urgent requests for fodder and water were dealt with.

Data from the hotline indicated 1100 properties were within the combined fire scar area of Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Wollondilly LGAs and 133 requests for assistance via the 1800 hotline were made. Approximately 38,600kgs of fodder and 1.38M litres of water were supplied to affected landholders.

Widespread rain has since fallen in the fire impacted areas, causing significant run-off to flow into dams, with pasture growth also evident. Therefore the need for urgent water allocation or emergency fodder has now ceased.

Fire Impacts – Fencing and Horticulture

In the Greater Sydney region, approximately 451,000Ha have been burnt from July 2019 – Mid February 2020. A large amount of fencing has been damaged either entirely or partially requiring clearing of fence lines, removal of material and assembly of new fence material. Internal GIS mapping of boundary length of private lands within the GS LLS region fire scar is calculated at 2886 km's below. It is further subdivided into 3 classes as follows:

1. Private-Private boundary 1436km
2. National Park-Private boundary 657km
3. Crown Land Private boundary 793km

An estimated 60% of fences within the fire scar have been burnt or severely damaged by fires requiring replacement, with an estimated total cost of \$20.8 million (Appendix 1).

Landholders in the Megalong Valley fire scar were personally contacted over telephone by GS LLS Officers, with 2-3 landholders losing 6840km, 4915M and another landholder significantly impacted, but unable to access large proportions of his property due to fallen trees and flood damage to roads.

Assessments of fire damage to horticulture production in the Bilpin area were assessed by GS LLS (10 properties assessed) and NSW DPI Officers. An impact assessment report prepared by NSW DPI (Appendix 2) estimated 51Ha of damage to horticulture around Bilpin at \$2,072,000, with damage to protective netting at \$1.5 M, damage to fruit trees \$472,500 and damage to cut flowers \$100,000 the main components. As part of delivering immediate fire assistance, GS LLS also undertook an assessment of this area resulting in the supply of 1M litres of water to a single enterprise to prevent large losses of nursery plants.

Other issues to note is fruit bearing trees tainted by smoke or heat damage and missed market opportunities for growers due to interruptions to product delivery e.g. cut flowers for Valentine's Day and damage to mature foliage/flowering trees grown for Mother's Day.

Based on the information from on-ground assessments and damage reported to fruit trees, hail and bird netting, irrigation equipment and other infrastructure with a likely cost of about \$5 million.

Flood Impacts – Horticulture

As a result of 300-600mls of rain across most parts of the GS region and very widespread flooding of the lower Hawkesbury and Central Coast there has been substantial new impact both to previously fire impacted areas and other nearby low lying areas. A significant benefit of the rain is that it has filled water storages (both dams and watercourses) and has also produced abundant pasture growth across the region. However, it is also likely to have produced significant erosion and moved toxic fire products (e.g. lead and arsenic from burnt buildings and fences) to new sites where they may pose a risk to livestock. Animal deaths have been minimal in this region.

In regards to vegetable growers, 15-20 Chinese market gardeners have been affected, with up to 150 acres of production lost in affected areas – Shane's Park, Pitt Town, Badgery's Creek, Kemp's Creek and Cornwallis. Reported impacts include machinery, chemicals/fertilisers, shed damage, greenhouse structures, pumps/irrigation, loss of income and loss of topsoil.

Over 400 hectares of turf was conservatively inundated. It is estimated that there is 1800 hectares of turf in the Hawkesbury, with Kikuyu unlikely to survive. The most significant economic loss is the 385 hectares of turfs growth rates have been slowed and this will delay harvest between 4-8 months. This equates to a short-term loss of income of \$23 million dollars.

The Viticulture industry also sustained significant indirect damage with a reduction in the tonnage of grapes produced and an estimated 90% of them impacted by smoke taint. This will result in a direct economic loss to local grape producers of \$4,167,000. Further direct impacts of the loss of this vintage also include reduced employment of staff for picking, harvesting and cellar door activities.

Recovery Actions

Recovery Grants are available to directly affected primary producers for help with impacts from bushfires and floods. Grants are available for up to \$75,000. This grant is to be spent on cleaning up and harvesting damaged crops, fodder, water, sheds, fencing and agricultural equipment, where those needs are not covered by existing insurance policies. This grant is administered by Rural Assistance Authority NSW. Follow the link for more details and to apply on-line.

<https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance>

“Supporting our neighbours – public land boundary fencing program”.

Support for private landholders to rebuild essential boundary fences destroyed by 2019-20 bushfires.

The NSW Government has committed \$209M to help bushfire-affected landholders with the cost of rebuilding boundary fences adjoining public lands.

Private landholders who share a boundary with public land and were impacted by the bush fires of late 2019 and early 2020 are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per kilometre to contribute to the replacement of damaged boundary fences.

Local Land Services will administer the grants, ensuring assets are protected through fences securing livestock, managing biosecurity, minimising environmental damage and protecting against pests.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Disaster Recovery, John Barilaro said the funds were part of the Government’s \$2.3B health boost and economic stimulus package and were welcomed by private landholders who share a fence with public land.

Note that for the purposes of this grant, public lands include:

- National parks
- Forestry Corporation land
- Traveling stock reserves
- Crown reserves, tenured roads and leases
- Roads managed by Roads and Maritime Services or Local Government.

Grants can be issued retrospectively to cover costs already incurred by landholders replacing fire damaged fencing where a boundary is shared with public lands.

To apply for the grant simply complete the form in the link provided or call the team on 1300 778 080. Follow the link for more information on this program.

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/our-major-projects/supporting-our-neighbours-public-land-boundary-fencing-program>

Appendix 1 - Agriculture and Animal Sub-Committee Recovery Report

Calculation of Fencing Loss and Cost for Bushfires - November 2019 to Jan 2020 Greater Sydney Local Land Services Region

SUMMARY

Boundary length of private lands within the GS LLS region within Fire Scars is calculated at 2886 kms below. It is further subdivided into 3 classes as follows:

1. Private-Private boundary 1436 km
2. National Park-Private boundary 657 km
3. Crown Land Private boundary 793 km

In order to determine the length of fences destroyed due to fire the following assumptions are made based on field observations –

- 80% of boundary is fenced.
- 60% of fence has been burnt or severely damaged by fires requiring replacement,
- internal fences are about 50% of length of boundary fences.

Table 1 gives an estimate of fencing lost due to fire and a damage cost estimate as follows.

Table 1

Item	Length (kms)	Fenced (80%)	Burnt	Cost (\$10,000/km)
Private Boundary Total	2886	2309	1385	\$13.85M
Private-Private Boundary	1436	1149	689	\$6.89M
Private-Crown Land	657	526	315	\$3.15M
Private-National Park	793	634	381	\$3.81M
Private Internal Fence		1155	693	\$6.93M

Total Cost Estimate of Private Property Fence Damage is \$20.8M (approx.)

The paper below provides a map and shows the detailed methodology for these calculations.

Title: Perimeter of private and non-government owned land within fire scares as a rough estimate of fences affected by fire.

Purpose:

In Greater Sydney region, about 451,000 Ha area have been burnt from July 2019 – Mid February 2020. There are many private and non-government organisation owned property affected by this fire.

Greater Sydney LLS aims to estimate a total length of boundary fences that may have been affected by the 2019/2020 fire.

Approach:

It is acknowledged that an accurate estimate of actual length fence affected by the bush fire may require a comprehensive field assessment.

This GIS analysis of property boundary within fire scares will provide a rough estimate boundary fence based on an assumption that all properties boundaries were fenced during the fire.

For this analysis, the “Lot Owner Polygon” data were accessed on 20 February 2020 via DPIE’s GIS101 feature services. All Private and Non-government Organisation owned lots were marked following “Owner Name” field in the Lot Owner data (see appendix 1).

Results:

Perimeter of all the polygon features of the Private and Non-government organisation owned lots were measure in kilometre using GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56 projection systems inbuilt in ArcGIS 10.3.1 software.

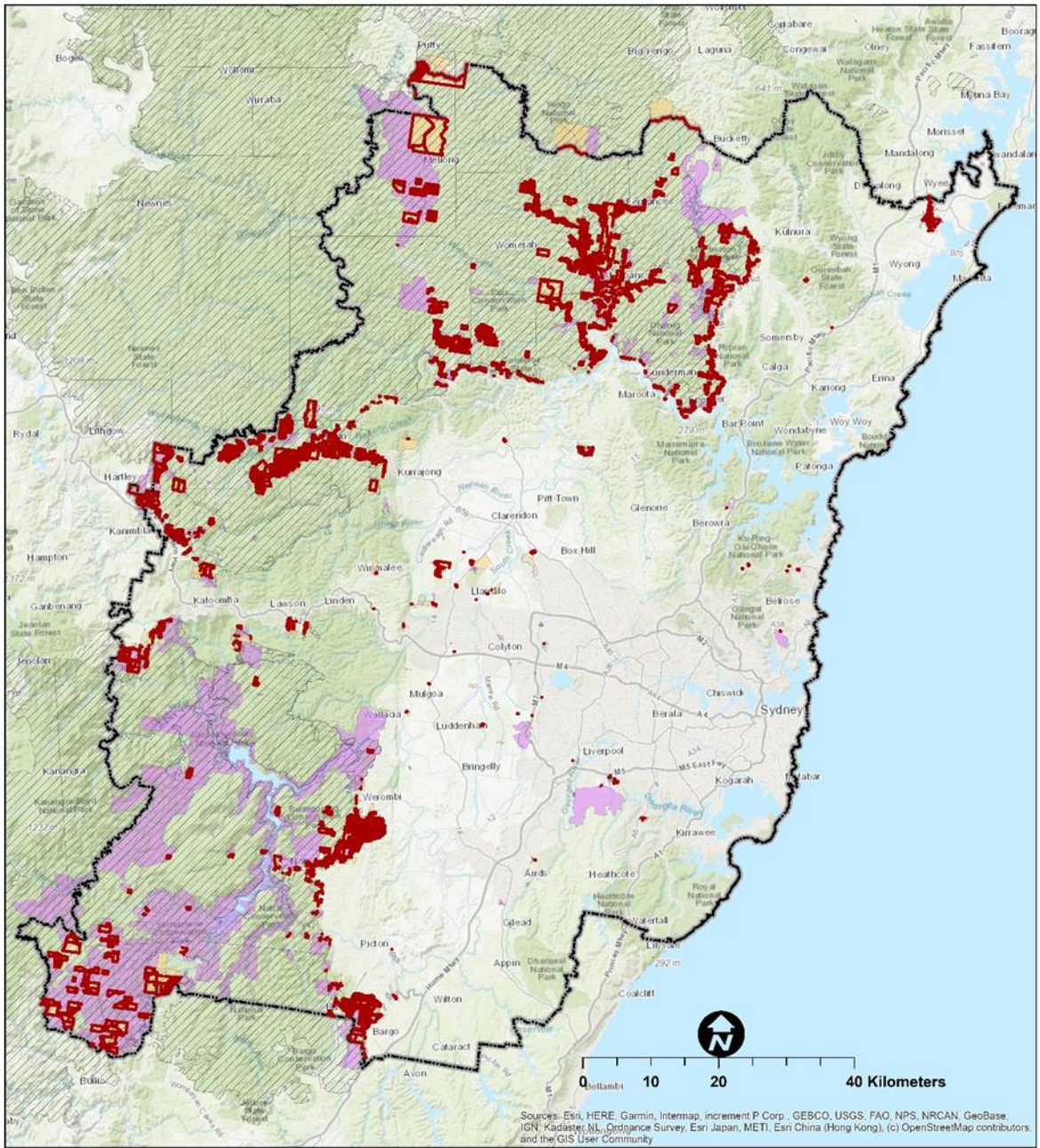
Total length of private and non-government owned property boundary is about **2886km** within the burnt area from July 2019 to 10 February 2020 (see Map 1). Out of which about **793km** shared with National Parks & State Conservation Area; about **657km** shared with Crown Lands.

Limitations:

Many properties in the “Lot Owner” data are categorised as Individual Type with Lot Owner name “The Owner”. Those lots need further review.

Among the Organisation owned property, the separation of Government and non Government owned property has been carried out manually with an educated guess based on owner name field.

Figure 1. Map showing the boundaries of private and non-government owned properties within fire scars



REFERENCE

- Private and Non Government Organisation Owned Property Boundary
 - FireScars_1July_10Feb2020
 - Greater Sydney LLS
- Lot Owner Type**
- Government owned
 - Private & Non Government Organisation owned

Appendix 2- Agriculture and Animal Sub-Committee Recovery Report

Horticulture Damage Assessment Information compiled by GS LLS

For vegetables, the Chinese growers affected are between 15-20 growers. This could be up to 16Ha of production lost.

Returns are estimated to be \$1,000Ha for brassica crops (Bok Choy, Asian Greens etc). However, some crops are harvested within 6 weeks making these return losses higher. For instance, some crops are 6 week turn around whereas traditional cabbage and cauliflower crops are 12-16 week crops. Hence the figure of lost production could be as high as \$6,000Ha.

Losses reported include;

1. Machinery including tractors
2. Chemicals and Fertilisers
3. Shed damage
4. Greenhouse structures
5. Pumps and irrigation system
6. Loss of income
7. Loss of topsoil

Cleanup is difficult due to the heavy nature of the soils, particularly south of the M4 motorway around Badgerys Creek.

Areas badly affected for veg production include Shane's Park, Pitt Town, Badgerys Creek, Kemp's Creek and Cornwallis. I believe a number of houses were also flooded in Badgerys Creek.

Flood Turf Impact Information

Over 400 hectares of turf was conservatively inundated. It is estimated that there is 1800 hectares of turf in the Hawkesbury.

Turf sells on average for \$6 per m² and as high as \$25 per m². Let's take \$6 per m² as an average x 10,000m² in 1 hectare = \$60kHa gross return

15 hectares of turf has been reported to me as being written off. Hence \$900,000 of turf lost. This is very conservative.

The other 385Ha may be okay. It depends on the variety. Kikuyu is unlikely to survive, and many growers will have to replant. However, it is still too early to say what further losses may occur and this would need ground truthing to confirm.

The most significant economic loss is the 385 hectares of turfs growth rates have been slowed and this will delay harvest between 4-8 months. This equates to a short term loss of income of \$23 million dollars. Particularly given water restrictions have now eased and business conditions are improving.

Bilpin Fire - Horticulture Damage Assessment

A report prepared by Jessica Fearnly (DPI) estimated damage to horticultural business in and around Bilpin covering 51Ha of land at \$2,072,000 with damage to protective netting at \$1.5M, damage to fruit trees \$472, 500 and damage to cut flowers \$100,000 the main components.

As part of delivering immediate fire assistance LLS also did an assessment of this area resulting in it supplying 1 million litres of water to a single enterprise to prevent large losses of nursery plants.

As part of this 4 LLS officers inspected damage to six horticulture properties and, in addition to inspection reports on each property, a short summary was prepared as per below.

Summary of Bilpin Horticultural Damage

- Replacement of water for dams extracted (2/6 properties)
- Bore water substitution problematic due to high iron levels so needs to be aerated to precipitate iron oxides
- Bird/hail netting damage – not insured, premiums too high or uninsurable
- Timber support posts for bird/hail netting require replacement
- Poly irrigation piping, sprinklers and drippers melted/damaged
- Power surges and fire damaged pumps
- Aged fruit (7-8 years) and cut flower industry trees damaged or killed
- Damage to equipment e.g. trail bikes, collection baskets, tarps
- Adjacent fruit bearing trees tainted by smoke or heat damaged
- Casual labour forces put off
- Market opportunities missed due to interruptions to product delivery e.g. Cut flowers Valentine Day (Feb) and damaged mature foliage/flowering trees beyond Mother's Day (May)
- Tourist industry – losses
- Inability to pile debris rendered by fire – RFS advice. Businesses required to hire a skip incurring further expense.

Aggregate Horticulture Damage Estimate for Bilpin Fire

Based on information supplied by Nerida Gill the damage over and above that identified by Jessica Fearnley is likely to be of the order of \$2-3M giving an estimate of total damage to horticulture assets (excluding fencing) of about \$5M.

Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan

Context

Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee

The Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee was established by the Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee (GSRRC) in response to the recent bushfires and floods across the Greater Sydney Region of NSW.

The purpose of the Subcommittee is to provide specialised advice to the GSRRC and support the coordination of health and wellbeing agencies to deliver recovery services to the communities across the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Wollondilly, Mid-Western and Oberon Local Government Areas. A key function of the Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee is to prioritise and progress issues related to health and wellbeing impacts and develop a regional Recovery Action Plan.

Chair: Peter Nash, Family and Community Services.

Subcommittee members: ACON, Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre, Blue Mountains City Council, Community Links (Wollondilly), Department of Communities and Justice (Family and Community Services / Housing Services), Department of Education, Gateway Family Services / Step by Step, Hawkesbury City Council, Lifeline Central West, Lithgow City Council, Mid-Western Regional Council, Mountains Community Resource Network, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, NSW Health (Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District / Mental Health Nepean), Red Cross, Resilience NSW, Rural Adversity Mental Health Program, Service NSW, Wollondilly Shire Council.

Recovery Action Plan

The goal of the Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan is to describe and support the transition from immediate relief to early and longer-term recovery. The plan will outline the systems and processes required for the ongoing provision of recovery support to fire-affected residents, and describe the priorities, considerations and actions that underpin recovery efforts.

Guiding principles

The development of this Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan is guided by the National Principles for Disaster Recovery:

- **Understand the context** – Successful recovery is based on an understanding community context, with each community having its own history, values and dynamics
- **Recognise complexity** – Successful recovery is responsive to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.
- **Use community-led approaches** – Successful recovery is community- centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with community and supporting them to move forward.
- **Coordinate all activities** – Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.
- **Communicate effectively** – Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.
- **Recognise and build capacity** – Successful recovery recognises, supports, and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.

Greater Sydney Region Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee: Recovery Action Plan						
No.	Community need	Recovery action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Intended outcomes	Status
1.	<p>Communities are given the opportunity to voice their own needs through informal and formal community networks and forums.</p> <p>Feedback from the community is also gathered; this feedback is</p>	<p>Undertake assessments of community recovery needs / impacts and service capabilities to inform planning for the transition from early to longer-term recovery.</p> <p>Draft impact statement working document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subcommittee input to a 'draft impact statement working document'. Provided preliminary sense of H&WB impacts from the bushfires and how they were being addressed. <p>Impact analysis workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participatory workshop with 	<p>Subcommittee formed 03/02/20</p> <p>Impact assessment activities ongoing Feb to Apr 2020; RAP development Apr to May 2020</p>	<p>Resilience NSW</p> <p>H&WB Subcommittee</p>	<p>Inform H&WB Subcommittee's RAP: recovery needs, priorities, resources.</p> <p>Recovery actions are responsive to the community context</p> <p>Community feedback supports the development and ongoing adaptation of a longer term recovery support plan (capable of addressing</p>	<p>Impact and service assessment report completed Apr 2020</p> <p>RAP development ongoing Apr to May 2020.</p>

	<p>shared with stakeholders.</p> <p>Guiding principles:</p> <p><u>Understand the context</u></p> <p><u>Recognise complexity</u></p>	<p>Subcommittee to review working document input and develop a set of 'impact themes'. Key themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community /social connectedness ○ Destroyed or damaged homes, properties or businesses (and accommodation) ○ Mental health for community members, young people and frontline staff ○ Recovery assistance access and service delivery ○ Local services and community sector fatigue <p>Impact and service assessment report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report describes development of evidence base for H&WB Recovery Action Plan. It includes outputs of impact analysis workshop and input by subcommittee to draft impact statement working document. • Report outlines: H&WB impacts, existing services (to address impacts); emerging initiatives; gaps; next steps in developing the RAP. <p>Data collected from engagement activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobile recovery team units / meetings • field visits • Local Recovery Committees (community leader representation). 			emerging community needs)	
		<p>Identify plans for community needs and capacities assessments / surveys to further inform understanding of community recovery</p>	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee (regional)		Ongoing

		<p>needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGA-based health and wellbeing sub-committees (where established) undertake local impact assessments, identify key issues and trends, and develop local Recovery Action Plans to meet identified need. 		<p>Councils</p> <p>LGA-based H&WB sub-committees (where established)</p> <p>NGO outreach</p> <p>Recovery support services</p>		
		<p>Develop mechanisms for supporting uniform data collection through outreach activities</p> <p>Outreach Support Proposal for Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience NSW has identified an opportunity to support councils to conduct phone outreach by developing recommended questions for use by councils designed to further recovery purposes common across LGAs, and by providing access to Service NSW's digital platform into which data can be collected and analysed. 	<p>TBC – discussion with councils, Service NSW and Red Cross planned May-June 2020 to scope LGA outreach project</p>	<p>Resilience NSW</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Service NSW</p> <p>Red Cross</p> <p>Recovery support services</p>	<p>LGA outreach project</p> <p>in-principle outcomes:</p> <p>Establish partnerships between councils / Red Cross and Service NSW to gain access to the CRM platform to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain permission and link clients to appropriate services Identify and address the immediate needs/issues and recovery priorities Obtain more accurate data on affected people (creating a single record of interactions and issues) Identify the best means of recovery communications Evaluate 	<p>TBC</p> <p>Contingent on scoping, resourcing etc</p>

					engagement activities.	
		Data collection from the field Recovery Support Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering data from phone and face-to-face engagement activities. NGO outreach support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field teams working in partnership with councils and other services to collect data around community sentiment (e.g. Red Cross). Mobile recovery teams / meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-agency (Resilience NSW coordination) Local H&W members undertake ongoing needs analysis e.g. via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community forums/formal consultations Community Advisory Groups Surveys Feedback from recovery support services or NGO outreach (e.g. Red Cross) on emerging trends Focus groups/community conversations Data on service utilisation (i.e. increased demand for services or referrals including: DV; emergency relief; support for loneliness/social isolation; psychosocial support or counselling, incl. children). Council 'your say' consultations. 	Ongoing	Recovery Support Services Local CSOs NGO outreach (e.g. Red Cross) Councils (via Community Recovery Officers, where relevant)	Provide feedback from communities in recovery from a range of data points (feedback to include both lead and lag indicators).	Ongoing

		<p>Provide opportunities for direct community participation in recovery action planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Recovery Committees / working groups / governance structures Community Advisory Group (or equivalent) Focus groups / workshops Surveys Debriefing sessions 	Ongoing	Councils Community organisations	<p>Community members have access to and participate in, local recovery governance arrangements.</p> <p>Community feedback supports the development and ongoing adaptation of a longer term recovery support plan.</p>	
2.	<p>Community strengths and assets are supported to enable communities to lead their own recovery</p> <p>Guiding principles:</p> <p><u>Use community-led approaches</u></p> <p><u>Recognise and build capacity</u></p>	<p>Identify examples of communities self-mobilising and describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes available for continuing to support them in identifying / addressing their own recovery needs. Elements of these initiatives that could be shared / replicated in other communities (and mechanisms to enable this). <p>Map / define engagement processes, principles and competencies required to facilitate community-led approaches</p> <p>Identify capacity building needs to support effective community participation in recovery planning processes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative and partnership approaches Collective impact / asset-based community development Working in complexity Communicating in recovery <p>Define the attributes of community-led</p>	Ongoing	<p>Councils</p> <p>Recovery support services</p> <p>Red Cross</p> <p>Resilience NSW</p> <p>H&WB Subcommittee</p> <p>Community organisations</p> <p>Community representatives</p>	<p>Effective support and advocacy across H&W and recovery services for community led recovery.</p> <p>Identify and support local leadership through appropriate support mechanisms (resourcing, coaching, mentoring etc).</p> <p>Communities supported to review and identify their strengths and needs to enable them to become active participants in their own recovery journeys, and plan for their recovery.</p> <p>Recovery stories collected and shared.</p> <p>Locally-initiated projects (by council /</p>	Ongoing

	<p>approaches and the processes required to realise them, i.e. how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and empower community leaders (with capacity to represent) Create an authorising environment Enable independent governance structures Sustain the recovery effort over the long-term. 			community) with bushfire-affected communities, including:	
	<p>Document community development projects to help to build a picture of community recovery and inform ongoing community development efforts</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community-led, grass roots activities Local CSOs – working collaboratively with other recovery organisations & gov agencies 	
	<p>Enable and sustain community participation in local recovery governance arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council recovery committees to recruit community representatives Councils to establish internal recovery committees with representation from the Community Development/ Partnership team Local Health and Wellbeing committees to be established with membership that reflects key local community and recovery organisations 	Ongoing	<p>Councils</p> <p>Local H&WB committees</p> <p>Community organisations</p> <p>Community representatives</p>	Community members have access to and participate in, local recovery governance arrangements.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Mid-Western Council Recovery Committee includes community representatives</p> <p>Blue Mountains Resilience and Preparedness Group includes local community organisations</p>

		Identify priorities to inform funding applications to Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ENTER DATES for projects / priorities to be identified to enable applications to be lodged Phase 2 and 3 funding) 	Ongoing	Resilience NSW NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (Regional NSW Group) Councils	Ongoing support for working towards key Disaster Recovery Outcomes	Ongoing Assumed that BCRERF Phase 2 and 3 delivery to be developed in consultation with councils and other key local stakeholders involved in bushfire recovery.
		Deliver grants programs to facilitate a range of local events and activities to address identified recovery needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local health and wellbeing initiatives enabled through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Grants Federal Government Bushfire Recovery and Support to councils Mayoral Relief Funds 	Ongoing	Councils Local H&W committees	Implement activities through grants which councils / H&W committees (and their communities) identify as important to their recovery Grant expenditure and activity progress documented through regular reporting by councils.	Ongoing – extensions to expenditure deadline approved to December 2020 (Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Grants)
	3. Wellbeing and social recovery activities are coordinated and collaborative Guiding principles:	Continued engagement with all community partners, organisations, community groups and networks.	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee	Remain informed of (and responsive to) community recovery status. Facilitate timely and targeted sharing of relevant information across networks.	Ongoing

<p><u>Coordinate all activities</u></p> <p><u>Communicate effectively</u></p> <p><u>Recognise and build capacity</u></p>				To provide a web of support for our communities.	
	<p>Actively participate in various recovery committees and collaborate with agencies at a state, regional and national level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a scan of recovery committees and governance structures that Subcommittee members are involved in (local, state, national etc). 	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee Councils	<p>Committees are adequately networked and have supportive governance.</p> <p>Maintenance of subcommittee structure to enable agencies to feed back through and learn from each other.</p>	Recovery governance arrangements established in January 2020.
	<p>Leverage the health and wellbeing planning undertaken by existing interagency networks that subcommittee members are involved in</p>	Ongoing	<p>H&WB subcommittee</p> <p>Interagency networks (e.g. Hawkesbury Connect)</p> <p>Peak organisations (e.g. Mountains Community Resource Network)</p>	H&W and disaster recovery programs working effectively across local services, all levels of governments and community groups.	Ongoing
	<p>Review existing and planned recovery positions against identified recovery needs to ensure position's activities align with local recovery need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recovery roles within councils / local peak orgs / interagency groups and future funding. 	May-June 2020	<p>Resilience NSW Councils</p> <p>NBRA</p> <p>H&WB Subcommittee</p>	<p>Sustained delivery of recovery activities by appropriately qualified staff.</p> <p>Ongoing recovery support, engagement and community development opportunities for bushfire affected</p>	<p>Current resourcing to be mapped against recovery needs</p> <p>Existing and new positions to be monitored for ongoing status.</p> <p>Council-based Community</p>

					<p>communities (e.g. via Flexible Community Grants programs to allow local community to have agency in their own recovery).</p> <p>New projects resourced, e.g. Outreach Support Proposal for Councils; back-filling of positions in CSOs; additional support for CDWs in CSOs; CDW position attached to local councils/H&W committees</p>	Recovery Officers and NBRA positions due to come online mid-2020 in significantly impacted LGAs
		<p>Support effective, coordinated communications between agencies and with communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&WB Subcommittee meetings provide a platform for sharing strategic communications and engagement approaches (collateral, platforms etc). Strategic communications support and advice is available from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience NSW Comms Team (e.g. for delivering effective recovery communications during COVID-19) 	Ongoing	<p>Resilience NSW (as anchor for H&WB Subcommittee)</p> <p>H&WB Subcommittee members</p>	<p>Communication is ongoing and connects all players.</p> <p>Tools and training are identified and provided to support effective communications.</p>	Ongoing
		<p>Identify capacity building needs and opportunities to support coordinated delivery of recovery actions and effective participation</p>	<p><u>March 2020:</u> sessions delivered by Anne</p>	<p>H&WB Subcommittee members (and their</p>	<p>Capability uplift across participating organisations and</p>	<p>Sessions run on: community recovery,</p>

	<p>in recovery planning activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative and partnership approaches • Working with complexity • Red Cross Disaster Recovery Mentor Australia (DRMA) network; AWE Network mentoring program • Community recovery principles (Anne Leadbeater) • Psycho-social recovery (David Younger / Rob Gordon) • Supporting children and young people (e.g. Lyn Page) 	<p>Leadbeater (community recovery) and David Younger (psycho-social recovery).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing sessions scheduled as required. <p><u>April 2020:</u></p> <p>Red Cross webinars with Rob Gordon (recovery during COVID) and Lyn Page (supporting children and young people).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Cross are planning further webinars 	<p>colleagues)</p> <p>Partner organisations</p> <p>Red Cross</p> <p>Communities</p>	<p>communities leading to more effective and sustained delivery of recovery actions.</p>	<p>psycho-social recovery, recovery during COVID, supporting children and young people.</p> <p>Red Cross are planning further webinars</p> <p>Capacity building needs and opportunities to be discussed at H&WB Subcommittee meetings</p>
	<p>Provide advice / coordination on issues requiring multi agency response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • donations • public appeals • spontaneous volunteers • Flexible Community Grants program 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>H&WB Subcommittee</p> <p>Issue-specific organisations (e.g. Givit)</p> <p>Impacted organisations (e.g. neighbourhood</p>	<p>Processes for responding to recovery issues documented and lessons learned register established</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

				centres)		
4.	<p>Communities receive the information they need to assist the recovery process; this information is relevant, clear and targeted.</p> <p>Guiding principles:</p> <p><u>Understand context</u></p> <p><u>Coordinate all activities</u></p> <p><u>Communicate effectively</u></p>	<p>Access to recovery services – ensure people have ready access to recovery services through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service (shopfronts, mobile, website, phone) for supported access to all Govt agencies and community services. Mobile Recovery Teams (multi organisation activity) Recovery support services (NGO and Dept of Primary Industries) Councils (customer services and / or outreach) Outreach (RAMHP, Red Cross) Primary Health Networks and aligned Local Health Districts Regular communications channels (newsletters, websites, social media, newspapers, radio) and formats (community meetings, coffee and chat, listening posts) 	Ongoing	Service NSW Recovery support services (NGO and DPI / RAA) Councils RAMHP Red Cross PHN Resilience NSW H&WB Subcommittee	Ongoing access to relevant and timely recovery information via a range of channels and formats. Address diverse and geographically dispersed communities' recovery needs. Information is contextualised to locales / regions.	COVID-19 has led to a pause in face-to-face activities. Recovery support services are commencing limited field engagement activities (May 2020)
		<p>Establish Recovery Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step by Step – Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Hawkesbury, Mid-Western Community Links – Wollondilly DPI – Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Blue Mountains LGAs 	Complete	Resilience NSW Step by Step Community Links DPI	Individual case work recovery support, provided to people who have been impacted by the bushfires	Work commenced; constrained by COVID-19 restrictions

	<p>Map Recovery Support Services referral pathways process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery Support Service planning workshop series focusing on developing: program logic, factsheet, referral pathways (incl to mental health support), Terms of Reference. Develop five-tier recovery support model 	<p>April to May 2020: planning workshops</p> <p>February 2020: recovery support model developed</p>	<p>Resilience NSW (five-tier recovery support model)</p> <p>Recovery support services</p> <p>Local Health Districts (mental health)</p>	<p>Support individuals' and households' recovery.</p> <p>Effective referral process to recovery support services from across all services involved recovery.</p>	<p>Referral pathways process mapped (May 2020)</p> <p>Development of five-tier recovery support model complete.</p> <p>Establishment of (and recruitment to) recovery support services complete (May 2020).</p>
	<p>Support the coordination of relevant, clear and targeted recovery communications with communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communications and engagement framework to support the strategic planning of activities within and across LGAs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base communications on insights gained from outreach, recovery support service engagements, feedback. Identify existing communications channels and formats* to promote localised and general recovery information and processes for getting support (i.e. Service NSW, local recovery support service). Develop key messages to deliver consistent communication across the region for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recovery support services (input to monthly 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>H&WB Subcommittee</p> <p>Council-Resilience NSW fortnightly catch-ups (incl comms teams, Step by Step, Red Cross)</p> <p>Inter-council fortnightly forums (councils, Step by Step, R-NSW, Red Cross)</p>	<p>Communities receiving relevant, clear and targeted recovery communications that address their information needs.</p> <p>Partners coordinating communications activities to achieve efficiencies and collective impact (i.e. minimal duplication around shared outcomes)</p> <p>Communications activities are adaptive to an evolving recovery environment (i.e. utilise multiple channels and formats – face-to-face, online, written – and combine low and high</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

		<p>newsletters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coordinated clean-up ▪ access to Service NSW Bushfire Customer Care Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to best practice principles for communicating in recovery (Red Cross), e.g. build on local assets, respect people, acknowledge the impacts, ask how people want to receive info, repeat info, remember the 'unaffected'. • Share communications plans, approaches and insights via H&WB Subcommittee to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensure consistent and coordinated activities ○ build capacity of recovery services to effectively share information via a range of channels and formats ○ document innovative approaches for promoting psychosocial support services (e.g. regular talks with local radio stations [RAMHP, Lifeline] • Adapt communications in response to changing community needs and operating environment (see Resilience NSW Guide to Communicating During COVID-19). <p>* <u>Communications channels / formats:</u> Newsletters, council Bushfire Recovery Guides, websites, online 'your say' platforms, social media, newspapers, noticeboards, radio, community meetings, coffee and chat, listening posts etc.</p>			tech).	
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	<p>Map opportunities to promote H&WB support services via 'normal' services, e.g. seniors' lunches, kids / youth activities, meals on wheels, coffee and chat, carers' respite activities.</p> <p>(NB: check continuity of services in COVID setting; people attending these activities may be identified as "at risk and vulnerable" and in need of these scheduled activities.)</p>	Ongoing	Community services Councils H&W Subcommittee	Support communities and individuals at risk of mental health issues.	Ongoing
	<p>Support psychosocial recovery and growth of community leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify community leadership and mentoring opportunities (or existing initiatives to adapt), such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Cross Disaster Recovery Mentors Network Include opportunities for schools, children and young people. 	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee Red Cross RAMHP Dept of Education Youth groups / agencies AIDR Disaster Resilience Education Network (DRANZSEN)	Promote sustainability of community leadership and community led initiatives.	Ongoing
	<p>Provide learning opportunities about recovery and self-help across a range of topics and formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community forums with recovery experts (e.g. Anne Leadbeater) and clinical psychologists (e.g. David Younger, Rob Gordon). Workshops targeting frontline staff working with / around fire affected communities (GPs, community organisations, volunteers). Training options include 	<p>Ongoing – sessions scheduled as required.</p> <p>Anne Leadbeater and David Younger ran sessions in March with recovery stakeholders.</p> <p>Red Cross / Rob Gordon webinar</p>	<p>H&WB Subcommittee Resilience NSW Councils Red Cross RAMHP PHN Lifeline</p>	<p>Bushfire affected people able to better navigate the psychological effects of the grief and recovery process to support themselves and their communities.</p> <p>Frontline workers able to monitor their own wellbeing and provide peer support.</p>	<p>Anne Leadbeater and David Younger ran sessions in March with recovery stakeholders.</p> <p>Red Cross / Rob Gordon webinar delivered in April</p> <p>Community-focused events</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Cross Recovery Basics and Self Care training RAMHP: Wellbeing and You, Mental Health First Aid Step by Step: Walk With Lifeline: Accidental Counsellor 	delivered in April. Red Cross Recovery Basics and Self Care training (x4 sessions for Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains council staff delivered in May)			TBC. All other training TBC pending needs / capacity analysis
		Ongoing delivery of counselling and support services to bushfire-impacted schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselling and psychological support available for staff, students and families in impacted schools. Provide additional support resources and programs through a variety of options (including online) to assist staff and students to recover and build resilience. Confirm how recovery initiatives connect with Catholic and Independent schools (possibly via NSW Health school link role – TBC) 	Ongoing	Dept of Education Non-gov schools: NSW Health school link role (TBC); Catholic Schools NSW; Association of Independent Schools of NSW	To provide appropriate levels of psychosocial support for students and staff that have been impacted by bushfire and build skills and resilience to manage their own recovery.	Ongoing
5.	Availability of temporary / transitional housing options and associated support for people with destroyed or damaged properties	Temporary accommodation Identify residents living in substandard conditions (on blocks with damaged or destroyed buildings, or in off-site accommodation) and liaise with Natural Disaster Housing Assistance Service Collate data on issues and situations being experienced by residents in substandard	Immediate and ongoing	Recovery Support Services Councils Natural Disaster Housing Assistance Service NGO outreach	Residents in substandard conditions / urgent housing situations have alternative accommodation options appropriate to their recovery needs (i.e. to be near their	Immediate and ongoing

	<p>Guiding principles:</p> <p><u>Understand context</u></p> <p><u>Recognise complexity</u></p> <p><u>Coordinate all activities</u></p> <p><u>Communicate effectively</u></p>	<p>conditions / urgent housing situations and assess the need for additional responses (e.g. for situations where residents potentially exposed to severe weather conditions in winter, or where conditions are compounding existing health issues)</p> <p>Identify support mechanisms for impacted residents living in informal or unapproved dwellings</p>		H&WB Subcommittee Resilience NSW	work, school, animals/livestock, friends and families).	
		<p>Transitional housing options</p> <p>Minderoo Foundation transitional housing pods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote availability of housing pods and support application processes <p>Habitat for Humanity mobile homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for transporting homes to site 	Ongoing May 2020: Minderoo phase one complete with several pods deployed across the region in Wollondilly, Lithgow and Mid-Western LGAs	Minderoo Foundation / Resilience NSW Councils Recovery support services Habitat for Humanity	Residents with strong affinity to the land able to live in safe conditions on-site during re-build.	May 2020: Minderoo phase one complete with several pods deployed across the region in Wollondilly, Lithgow and Mid-Western LGAs Potential for further phases and additional providers (e.g. Habitat for Humanity)
		<p>Support for renters with informal leases</p> <p>Identify tenants in rental properties without formal lease agreements that are experiencing issues with: landlords implementing clean-up</p>	Immediate and ongoing	Community legal centre / Office of Fair Trading Recovery support	Clear understanding of the range of recovery issues affecting informal tenants, and identification of	Immediate and ongoing

		<p>activities; accessing recovery support.</p> <p>Develop approaches to support tenants experiencing clean-up related issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery support services connect tenants with legal aid / Office of Fair Trading. Promote available support, e.g. Red Cross Re-establishment grant Explore opportunities to engage with real estate agencies and landlords about availability of clean-up support and how to access. 		<p>services</p> <p>Service NSW</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>NGO outreach</p> <p>H&WB Subcommittee</p>	<p>appropriate responses.</p> <p>Informal tenants' recovery needs being effectively addressed.</p> <p>Landlords / estate agencies supported in understanding the range of recovery support services available for their properties and tenants.</p>	
		<p>Co-ordinated clean-up registrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate clean-up information to impacted communities (eligibility, timing etc) immediately and regularly in accordance with communications guide for working with communities post-disaster Register impacted properties for clean-up via various mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing data between councils and agencies (with appropriate permissions) Work with community leaders. TBC potential link to Outreach Support Proposal for Councils. 	Immediate and ongoing	<p>Councils</p> <p>Service NSW</p> <p>Resilience NSW</p> <p>Laing O'Rourke</p>	<p>Properties eligible for LO'R clean-up are registered and scheduled for clean-up work.</p>	<p>Clean-up underway: planned completion mid-2020.</p>
		<p>Support for re-building, repairs and remediation for properties ineligible for coordinated clean-up:</p> <p>Explore (and communicate) support for residents on properties ineligible for clean-up (e.g. council support for dangerous tree</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 2020: H&WB Subcommittee presentation from Habitat for Humanity.</p>	<p>Councils</p> <p>NGOs supporting restoration and repairs (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, Landcare /</p>	<p>Clear understanding (and communication) of restoration support services available to owners of properties ineligible for clean-up.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 2020: H&WB Subcommittee presentation from Habitat for</p>

		removal, access to fencing grants, NGO support) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat for Humanity Council plant giveaways to fire-damaged properties Local Landcare / Bushcare groups 		Bushcare) Recovery support services H&WB Subcommittee		Humanity. Discussions ongoing re. supports for residents ineligible for clean-up.
		Training for clean-up and restoration staff to deal effectively with clients experiencing stress and to look after their own mental wellbeing	TBC	Laing O'Rourke / sub-contractors Organisations supporting restoration / remediation RAMHP (Workplace Support Skills training)	Support the health and well-being of workers and volunteers operating in clean-up environment.	TBC
6.	Social connectedness is promoted through community events, activities, and story-telling Guiding principles: <u>Use community-led approaches</u> <u>Coordinate all activities</u> <u>Recognise and build capacity</u>	Initiate community activities from a community development perspective. Use a strengths-based approach to recovery to re-establish connections and develop new linkages within / between communities. Identify suitable types of events with communities that promote connectedness and community development, and address identified recovery needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet Your Street BBQs 'Creative Recovery' art and music workshops / events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photographic and art exhibitions Local arts & crafts, creative activities, community choirs etc Tech workshops (e.g. Blackheath 	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee Councils Resilience NSW (Cat C funding) Red Cross PHN RAMHP Peak organisations (e.g. MCRN) Interagency networks	Social engagement activities provide opportunities for people to link back into their support networks, share experiences, address issues arising from the disaster, build a greater sense of future safety and accommodate stages of healing.	Ongoing Early 2020: Gardens project established in Upper Mountains; Restoring Our Backyard mini-Expo delivered; Blue Mountains Cultural Centre community photography exhibition run

		<p>Cyber Shed one-to-one training on smart phone, tablet or laptop)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cooking workshops • Community thankyou events for first responders and their families • Online pop-ups using Zoom meetings (e.g. Be & Co. online social events in Hawkesbury) • Group physical activities (walking, yoga) to improve physical & mental health • Landscape restoration / bush regeneration workshops • Mental health initiatives • Memorial and anniversary events <p>Map delivery mechanisms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Grants • Federal Government Bushfire Recovery and Support to councils • Mayoral Relief Funds <p>Leverage existing community capacity and other partner events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community members who can share time and expertise: artists, bakers, bushcare members. <p>Provide appropriate psychosocial support at community events</p>				
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Cross volunteers trained in psychological first aid Members of Red Cross Disaster Recovery Mentors Network may be available to advise and participate Red Cross can advise on psychosocial aspects of memorial management 				
7.	<p>Communities in recovery (including people working in formal and informal roles) have access to the psychosocial supports they need</p> <p>Many people have experienced feeling: unsafe, anxiety, fear, and in extreme cases trauma from their bushfire experiences.</p> <p>Workers and volunteers are working long hours and facing an extensive work program for the recovery period of years ahead.</p> <p>Need to consider children and young people</p>	<p>Ensuring access to increased levels of support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of mental health workers (project officers, Bushfire Recovery Trauma Counsellors etc), and delivery of associated initiatives. Support for GPs Respite for staff and volunteers in CSOs, and first-responders Professional supervision & EAP services for frontline workers exposed to vicarious trauma (e.g. council customer service staff, all managers/workers/volunteers in CSOs, workers involved in co-ordinated clean-up and restoration activities) Promote access to: gateways to mental health / crisis support online and phone services (e.g. NSW Mental Health services, Head to Health, Health Direct, Lifeline 13HELP); tailored services (e.g. YouGotThisMate.com.au). Red Cross Recovery Basics and Self Care training 	Ongoing	PHN Health / LHD RAMHP H&WB Subcommittee Training organisations (Red Cross, Lifeline etc) EAP services	<p>The psychosocial recovery needs of individuals and communities affected by bushfires (and recovery workers / volunteers) are understood and effectively supported – people and workers feel safe and supported.</p> <p>Mental health services are available for those directly seeking, or referred to these services.</p>	Recruitment of workers ongoing
		Facilitate referrals to relevant	Ongoing	Recovery support	Clear referral	Ongoing

	Guiding principles: <u>Understand the context</u> <u>Recognise complexity</u> <u>Recognise and build capacity</u>	services via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery support services Outreach (NGO, council etc) 		services RAMHP Outreach NGOs (e.g. Red Cross) Councils (outreach) Service NSW Resilience NSW	pathways enabling timely and appropriate referrals.	Recovery support service referral pathways process mapped (May 2020)
		Provide learning opportunities for workers / volunteers to monitor their own wellbeing and provide peer support. Promote the availability of training packages and educational forums / workshops (and facilitate delivery of learning activities in response to needs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAMHP: Community Support Skills, Wellbeing and You, Workplace Support Skills, Volunteer Wellbeing, Mental Health First Aid Vicarious Trauma Training Step by Step: Walk With Red Cross training e.g. Recovery Basics and Self Care, Mental Health Matters Lifeline: Psychological First Aid, SafeTalk Suicide Awareness, Accidental Counsellor, Mental Health Chats Raw Mind Coach: building psychological resilience amongst emergency services workers Forums with recovery experts (e.g. Anne Leadbeater) and Australian Psychological Society (APS) recovery-focused psychologists (e.g. Rob Gordon, David 	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee Training providers (e.g. RAMHP, Red Cross, Lifeline, Step by Step etc)	Through appropriate training and support, frontline workers /volunteers able to monitor their own wellbeing and provide peer support.	Ongoing

		<p>Younger).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops targeting frontline staff working with / around fire affected communities (GPs, community organisations, volunteers). 				
		<p>Promote the availability of Employee Assistance Programs (e.g. Converge, Benestar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore extension of schemes to disaster-affected community members 	TBC	H&WB Subcommittee Councils	EAPs responsive to needs of people in recovery and being accessed in an appropriate and timely manner.	Ongoing Extension of EAP schemes TBD
8.	<p>Building disaster resilience in individuals, communities and service providers</p> <p>Disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities</p> <p>Guiding principles:</p> <p><i>Understand the context</i></p> <p><i>Use community-led approaches</i></p> <p><i>Recognise and build capacity</i></p>	<p>Development of community continuity plans through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research projects Annual <i>Get Ready!</i> programs of preparedness and community connection activities 	Ongoing	Councils Research partners Peak organisations Communities	<p>Assist in increasing community resilience towards future disasters and develop future protection actions.</p> <p>Promote sustainability of community leadership and community led initiatives.</p>	<p>Hawkesbury City Council research project ongoing (tracking individual recovery of fire and flood-impacted communities to assist development of community continuity plans)</p> <p>Blue Mountains Resilience and Preparedness Group's <i>Get Ready! BM</i> program run annually (Aug-Dec)</p>

		<p>Support the growth of emerging community leaders</p> <p>Identify community leadership and mentoring opportunities (or existing initiatives to adapt), such as: Red Cross Disaster Recovery Mentor Australia (DRMA) network; AWE Network mentoring program.</p>	TBC	<p>Councils</p> <p>Red Cross</p>		TBC
		<p>Support household and community initiatives to practically and psychologically prepare for emergencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider adaptation and amplification of existing preparedness, community development, local emergency services and community continuity plan development programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Mountains Resilience & Preparedness Group: More Than a Fire Plan community forums, Heads Up For Fire and other emergencies (HUFF), Meet Your Street, Preparedness Clinics. Katoomba/Leura Rural Fire Brigade 'Get Ready' 6 Week Challenge. Street Connect (Hawkesbury / North Richmond – school community-led project). Hawkesbury Council research project tracking communities in recovery to assist development of community continuity plans. Deliver other recovery and resilience-related training and community preparedness workshops: 	TBC	<p>H&WB Subcommittee</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Peak organisations (e.g. MCRN)</p> <p>RFS brigades, SES units and other local emergency services</p>		TBC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anne Leadbeater / David Younger ○ Red Cross training e.g. Recovery Basics and Self Care 				
		<p>Identify service support and initiatives to meet the needs of specific groups, e.g. elderly, Aboriginal, youth, children, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, social housing tenants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster resilience education initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Red Cross Pillowcase Project to assist children in preparedness and resilience ○ Red Cross RediPlan disaster preparedness guide ○ NSW RFS Project Firestorm (curriculum-aligned STEM-based Stage 3 online initiative) ○ NSW SES 'For Schools' resources (focused on Hawkesbury-Nepean flooding but provides broad resilience frame) • Evidence-based mental health programs and professional learning for teachers (Dept of Education) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and deliver mental health prevention and early intervention programs and resources in collaboration with external service providers, e.g. Smiling Mind, Headspace. • Collaborating 4 Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Person Centred Emergency Preparedness 	Ongoing	H&WB Subcommittee Dept of Education Red Cross RFS / SES Centre for Disability Research and Policy (Uni of Sydney)		Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability inclusive disaster risk reduction 				
		Build back better Provide support and education about rebuilding with more resilience , retro-fitting homes, fire protection landscaping and reconstruction etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Mountains Bushfire Building Expo and Community Forum Explore opportunities to implement recovery activities within a Building Back Better (BBB) framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BBB is an approach to post-disaster recovery that reduces vulnerability to future disasters and builds community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks. (www.unisdr.org/files/53213_bbb.pdf) 	TBC	H&W Subcommittee Councils RFS and other local emergency services		Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise 2020 Bushfire Building Expo TBC Potential plans for similar expo in Lithgow LGA in 2020 TBC
		Coordinate bushfire response / recovery debriefs for impacted communities (with approaches to be informed and supported by local health and wellbeing recovery committees)	TBC	Councils Emergency services (RFS) Local H&W committees		TBC
		Community services – debrief and future planning Forum to develop understanding of different agencies' perspectives about individual and community needs in recovery and preparedness.	TBC	H&WB Subcommittee Recovery partners		TBC
9.	Financial support	Promote Service NSW Bushfire Customer	Ongoing	Service NSW	Communities and	

<p>and services – government & non-government</p> <p>Financial assistance can be provided to fire affected residents through access to a wide variety of grants</p> <p>Guiding principles:</p> <p><u>Communicate effectively</u></p> <p><u>Coordinate all activities</u></p>	<p>Care Service as one-stop-shop to navigate and register for recovery support services.</p> <p>Facilitate access to grants: communicate via existing recovery communications channels</p> <p>Facilitate access to financial counseling: referrals via recovery support services (and other outreach) and Service NSW Bushfire Customer Care</p>		<p>DPI / RAA</p> <p>Rural Financial Counselling Service</p> <p>DWS</p> <p>Recovery support services</p> <p>RAMHP</p> <p>Red Cross</p> <p>Salvation Army</p> <p>Anglicare</p> <p>Lions</p> <p>Rotary</p>	<p>individuals access finance and financial counselling to support rebuilding their facilities, lives and properties.</p>	
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Infrastructure, Waste, and Environment Sub-Committee Recovery Action Plan

Chair:

James Goodwin, NSW Environment Protection Authority

Sub Committee Agency Members:

NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), SafeWork NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Public Works Advisory (PWA), Department of Premier and Cabinet, Transport for NSW, Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications, Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW), Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

Blue Mountains City Council, Hawkesbury Council, Lithgow City Council, Mid-Western Council, Oberon Council, Wollondilly Council

Goals

Infrastructure, Waste and Environment Recovery Actions will ensure:

- that health and safety risks and hazards remediation is carried out in a timely and efficient manner by experts in the respective fields
- that a comprehensive recovery plan is in place to address the impacts on the environment
- the distribution of relevant waste management and disposal information
- the timely clean-up of properties

Greater Sydney and Hunter Central Coast 2019/20 Bushfires Regional Infrastructure, Waste, and Environment Subcommittee Recovery Action Plan						
#	Community need	Recovery actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	Intended outcomes	Status
	What are the priority recovery needs of the community that you need to achieve?	List the actions and resources needed to achieve the recovery priorities.	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Assign an agency to each task</i>	<i>These are the desired outcomes for the community through implementing the recovery actions</i>	<i>Completed / Ongoing</i>

<p>1 Essential services and utilities are restored as soon as possible</p> <p>Loss of power and/ or other utilities, (gas, water, sewerage) that has occurred due to damage. Restoration of infrastructure may take more time due to restricted access related to crime scene considerations.</p>	<p>1. Impacts are identified, and restoration works are coordinated and implemented.</p> <p>2. Activate coordination between government and industry.</p> <p>3. Activate business continuity arrangements. Consider use of generators to provide temporary power, telecommunication COWS (Cell on Wheels), stand pipes and water trucks/carts, and portable toilets.</p>		<p>1. <i>Utilities – energy and telecommunication companies implement emergency works</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely restoration of water, gas, electricity, sewerage and telecommunication services. • Provide infrastructure that delivers essential services to the community • Public information through utilities service providers and council communications 	<p>1. Complete</p> <p>2. Complete</p> <p>3. Complete</p>
<p>2 Transport services and routes are restored as soon as possible, or replacement services are implemented</p>	<p>1. Impacts are identified and restoration works are coordinated and implemented.</p> <p>a. Rail damaged between Lithgow and Mt Victoria due to bushfires, and landslip at Katoomba due to floods</p> <p>b. Some local bridges damaged in Hawkesbury and Oberon LGAs</p> <p>2. Identify and implement designated routes for essential restoration works (eg heavy vehicle transport routes)</p> <p>3. Identify and implement alternate public vehicle routes where possible.</p>		<p>1. <i>Councils, Transport for NSW</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential restoration works can commence. • Emergency repairs are made to critical road, bridge, rail, air and marine transport routes and facilities. • Movement of goods can continue. 	<p>1. Ongoing – councils leading outstanding works. Rail services between Lithgow and Mt Victoria reopened on 25/5/20. Local bridge repair works underway.</p> <p>2. Complete</p> <p>3. Complete</p>

<p>3 Access to essential community infrastructure and public buildings is returned or restoration underway if damaged. Community assets, such as schools, public buildings etc, might be damaged in a disaster and/or access to such facilities might be restricted for a period of time if they are within a restricted zone. Damage to iconic assets can have a psychosocial impact on the community.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct rapid assessment and reconstruction of community infrastructure to restore community functioning and counter the psychological impacts. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 59 facilities affected in the Greater Sydney Region (27 damaged and 32 destroyed) 2. Consult with communities on the restoration of community assets. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Councils, OEM</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide infrastructure that delivers essential services to the community. • Confidence in use of public buildings is re-established. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete 2. Complete
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<p>4. Public and community are kept informed of recovery progress. Implement a Communication Strategy to provide information to community and businesses on arrangements to restore damaged and destroyed infrastructure and what temporary arrangements are in place.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Communications Working Group to prepare a communications strategy to inform communities and business of what works are being undertaken, what temporary arrangements are in place, what the timeframes are and where to get further information. 2. Communications need to include persons being responsible for their own assets and insurance. 3. Communications regarding funding between Treasury and Governments are vital and need to be clearly translated to the community. 4. Communications to include information about available disaster relief funding for eligible affected people and businesses. 		<p>3. <i>Councils, EPA, OEM, PWA in relation to the government funded clean up and Laing O'Rourke contract only</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is aware of the disaster recovery process and what arrangements are in place • Community has access to information and support services. • Community has avenues to seek further information and provide feedback. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing – OEM leading. 2. Complete 3. Complete 4. Ongoing – OEM leading
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<p>5 Plans are implemented for the clean-up and permanent construction/rebuild and restoration of damaged and destroyed infrastructure.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify damaged infrastructure. Work with Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) where necessary to coordinate residential clean-up effort. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 735 buildings impacted, including 191 residences (66 damaged and 125 destroyed) b. Internal and external fencing has been damaged at properties in many LGAs 2. Local councils and state government agencies work together to prioritise reconstruction and restoration. 3. Consider establishing rebuilding advisory service. 4. Coordinate with councils on issuing safety orders and building permits. 5. Issues may arise with people being unable to rebuild. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>ICA, PWA, Council, EPA, Local Land Services (LLS) for properties bordering public land</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure is built in accord with changing recovery needs. • Infrastructure is built with regard to local disaster risks. • Infrastructure is built in accordance with current knowledge and practices for mitigating disaster impact. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete. Funding available to reconstruct boundary fences adjoining public lands. 2. Ongoing – councils leading 3. Complete 4. Ongoing – councils leading 5. Ongoing – councils leading
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<p>6 Hazardous materials are identified and remediated to ensure clean-up of affected areas can be undertaken without impacting public health and safety</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Asbestos assessments undertaken on residences and other buildings <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37,000 tonne of bushfire impacted waste in the GSR (13,400 tonne of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) and 23,600 of non ACM) Identify other hazardous materials contamination e.g. CCA-treated timbers, chemical stores. Coordinate the safe removal of hazardous materials. Assess level of contamination and insurance coverage. Consider public information about managing health risks and managing clean-up of damaged buildings containing asbestos. Clarify whether any regulations are impacted as recovery progresses. Assess whether protection measures are required for the waterways. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>FRNSW, Council, EPA, PWA, and Laing O'Rourke (LOR) for buildings within the scope of the government funded clean up.</i> <i>PWA, FRNSW, Council</i> <i>PWA and LOR for buildings within the scope of the government funded clean up only</i> <i>OEM, PWA</i> <i>Recovery Centres and Comms, Council, Factsheets</i> <i>EPA, Council, Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE) Planning</i> <i>Council, PWA, Soil Conservation, DPIE Biodiversity and Conservation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properties with ACM are assessed and identified. Contaminated properties are cleaned up and remediated with clearance certificates issued for DA approvals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Multiagency building impact assessments complete for most properties. LOR leading on remaining remote and rural properties. Ongoing in the field – PWA and LOR leading Ongoing – PWA and LOR leading Complete Complete. Factsheet published to outline precautions put in place, and risks associated with, removal of ACM from neighbouring properties Complete Complete
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<p>7 Waste management procedures are coordinated and communicated, the community is aware of the process and likely timeframe for clean-up</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councils to activate waste levy exemption if required from EPA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 6 councils in GSR eligible for levy relief; 3 councils in GSR (all those in the regulated area) have activated as at 10/3/20. 2. Coordinate green waste clean-up, and identification and removal or in-situ treatment of dangerous trees 3. Coordinate household and commercial or industrial waste management 4. Keep the community informed about clean-up plans and progress <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. landholders who have been directly impacted (1,616 in the GSR) b. residents living in the vicinity of properties with ACM. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EPA, Council 2. RFS, Council, PWA, Transport 3. EPA, Council 4. Councils, PWA, LOR EPA, OEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to local council / regional landfill facility is coordinated and managed in line with environment and human health protection • All councils listed under Disaster Declaration with levy exemptions are extended as needed • Councils / PWA / Transport to coordinate identification and clean-up of green waste and dangerous trees • EPA coordinates with councils for chemical clean-up 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete 2. Ongoing – PWA and LOR leading on trees that are in the scope of the clean-up contract, and councils leading on other trees. Where possible, councils seek to coordinate dangerous tree identification and removal with the LOR clean-up works 3. Ongoing – councils leading 4. Ongoing - PWA and LOR leading
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<p>8 The community's exposure to environmental health risks and public health risks is minimised</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications including fact sheets and advice for community on exposure risks and safety measures provided through established recovery communications including council websites, social media, community meetings, agency websites 2. Update factsheets as needed 3. Tape and signage for hazardous structures put in place as identified during building impact assessments 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>EPA, PWA, SafeWork, DPIE, OEM, Council collaboration on Fact sheets development. Distribution through established Recovery channels</i> 2. <i>as above</i> 3. <i>PWA, LOR</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls are in place to minimise environment and human health impacts from contaminants including asbestos and hazardous chemicals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing – OEM and EPA leading 2. Ongoing – OEM and EPA leading 3. Short term measures complete: e.g. make safe measures (glue spray, notifications, samplings). Longer term measures ongoing through clean-up via licensed asbestos assessors e.g. further spray, air monitoring regulatory controls for transporting asbestos. PWA managing through LOR contract for government-funded clean up. EPA and Safework NSW have ongoing regulatory role
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<p>9. The environment has returned to pre-disaster state or to a state that is acceptable to the community</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify damage to natural assets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> more than 1 million Ha of public land across 27 national parks, reserves and state forests has been affected in GSR 81% of world heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains affected ambient air quality appears back to normal range water quality – more info may become available erosion risk for GSR is 3t/ha/yr some vulnerable and endangered species likely to be significantly affected Assess type and extent of waste and debris and coordinate clean-up with responsible agencies, including public communications plan Develop plan for land management and prevention of secondary damage to assets, public and private land with initial short, medium and longer actions. Determine available funding options. Implement and install works on a priority basis. Consider potential impacts (s87A(a) NPW Act) on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in conjunction with all works carried out. Communicate with community re environmental restoration progress. Consider damage to parks and riparian rehabilitation areas. Utilise appropriate volunteers and other community groups to 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> DPIE, Council Council, PWA, EPA, NPWS, Transport for NSW, Local Land Services, NPWS OEM, EPA all all NPWS Council, PWA, LOR, EPA, NPWS NPWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The natural environment operates to maintain healthy biodiversity and ecosystems. Cultural heritage sites or assets of importance are restored, where possible. Waterways and agricultural land free of hazardous and non-hazardous non-natural debris. Risks of subsequent impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems is minimised. Land management program and erosion controls for impacted land are in place. Local, state and national actions are integrated where possible, and opportunities identified for local government to support state government recovery initiatives and vice versa 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Initial impact assessment complete Ongoing – councils leading Ongoing – OEM leading Ongoing - all Ongoing – all Where possible, councils seek opportunities to link in with state conservation initiatives in specific areas e.g. Blue Mountains Ongoing – All agencies to consider impact on cultural heritage as part of recovery Ongoing – councils and NPWS leading Ongoing – NPWS leading for NPWS reserves
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Draft Hunter Central Coast Bushfire Recovery Report

Bushfire Events

The first bushfires in the Cessnock LGA started in early October 2019 near North Rothbury. Multiple other bushfires subsequently burnt from November 2019 to mid-February 2020 including the Gospers Mountain fire that spread from the Wollombi Valley in Cessnock LGA westwards to the Central West LGA, southwards to Hawkesbury LGA and Lithgow LGA and from Putty in Singleton LGA east to Mangrove Mountain in Central Coast LGA (see table 1).

Table 1- Summary of Bushfires across 3 Hunter and Central Coast LGAs

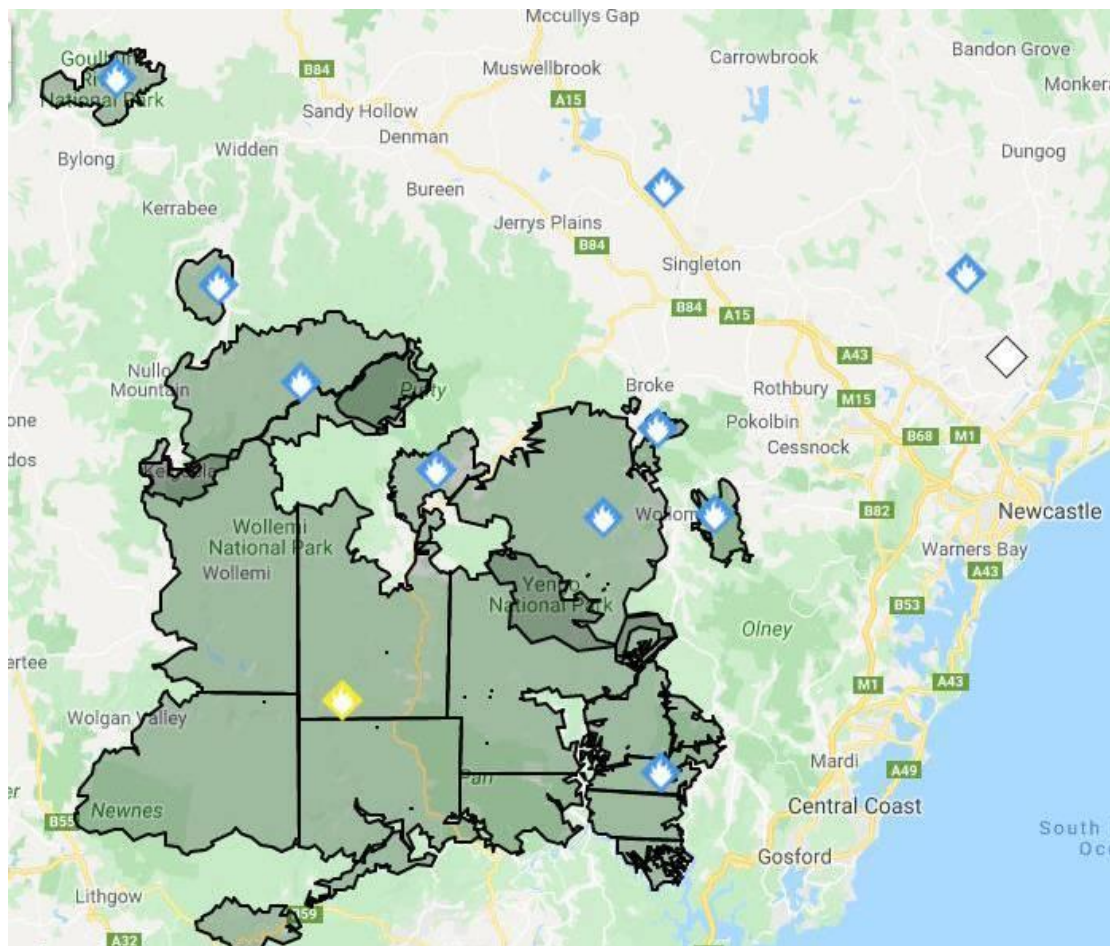
	Singleton LGA	Cessnock LGA	Central Coast LGA
Duration	26 Oct 19 – 4 Feb 2020	Nov 19 – Jan 20	Nov10 – Jan 20
Active fires	Little L Complex, Gospers Mountain, Owendale, Kerry Ridge, Mt Royal 1 Paddock Run fires	Little L Complex, Corrabare Fire, Gospers Mountain, Kerry Ridge, Paddock Run fires	Gospers Mountain, Three Mile, Charmhaven
Area burnt	Over 714,000Ha		

The total extent of area burnt by declared emergency bushfires across these 3 Hunter LGAs during December to January was estimated to be over 1 million Hectares. These bushfires largely burnt within bushland areas within National Parks/State Forests and the immediately adjoining sparsely populated private bushland retreat properties (see Figures 1 & 2) and relatively undeveloped farmlands remote from major population centres and facilities. This helped to limit the impacts on structures, industries and communities.

Figure 1 - Bushfires in Putty Area (NBN News 16 December 2019)



Figure 2 - Multiple fires merged spanning 3 LGAs at 16 December 2019 (mid-point)



Severe Weather and Flood Event

When bushfire recovery actions were still in planning the Central Coast LGA suffered a severe storm and rainfall event on 1 February coincided with King tides. This caused extensive and prolonged local flooding in low lying coastal areas lasting over 10 days (see Figure 3). This event further disrupted traffic and business activity, damaged dwellings and required local evacuations and support for vulnerable community members.

Residents and businesses in the Mangrove Mountain area previously impacted by smoke and the Gospers Mountain Fire were further impacted by storm damage and fallen debris and emergency response efforts were required to make buildings safe and re open public roads.

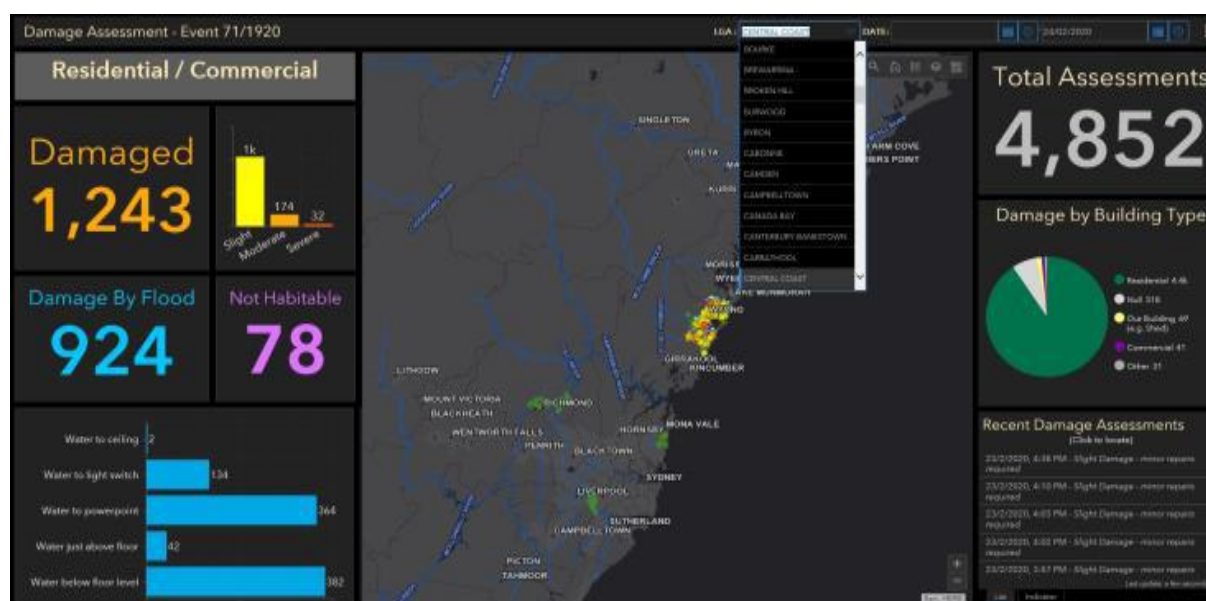
Rapid Assessment teams completed a total of 4,852 assessments to support the SES flood operation. This identified 78 buildings were rendered uninhabitable by the storms and 1,243 properties were damaged (924 from flooding) (see Figure 4)

Coordination of the flood Recovery Efforts and reporting was driven by the Central Coast Joint Local Recovery Committee and is not otherwise included in this Bushfire report.

Figure 3: Flooding on the Central Coast 20 April 2020 (Central Coast News)



Figure 4- Damages dashboard for Coastal Floods from Central Coast Recovery Committee - 25 February 2020



Waste, Infrastructure and Environment Impacts

Buildings Damaged

Public Works Advisory provided data on Building Impact Assessment in relation to all declared bushfires over the summer along with a summary of formal Registrations for Assistance (*see Tables 2 and 3*). This was accurate as at 27 March 2020. Table 2 includes a more extensive list of localities as it includes all localities impacted by bushfires regardless of whether any buildings were damaged.

A total of identified 111 properties across the 3 Local Government Areas (LGAs) were assessed as having suffered damage to, and or, the destruction of building structures due to bushfires. Across all 3 LGA's, 101 residential structures were confirmed as having been impacted with 22 assessed as destroyed (17 within Cessnock, 4 within the Central Coast and 1 within Singleton).

Cessnock LGA suffered the highest level of impact to buildings with **69 properties impacted**, mostly in the Laguna and Paynes Crossing areas due to the Gaspers Mountain fires. A total of 17 residential structures were assessed as having been destroyed and a further 57 outbuildings were destroyed. The areas impacted were remote and it remains unclear how many were primary places of residence and how many were legal constructed structures.

Data on registrations for clean-up assistance to date (*see Table 3*) identifies 14 registrations in the Laguna area which was impacted by two bushfires, but whether these comprise residential buildings and other structures eligible for clean up support is yet to be confirmed.

Across the **Central Coast LGA**, a total of **24 properties were impacted** by multiple bushfires the flared at differing times. Formal assessments identified that 4 residential structures were destroyed, and 14 further residential structures were damaged by the summer bushfires. Blue Haven was individual locality with the highest number of properties impacted (9). Four residential structures were damaged, but no residences were destroyed during the bush fire emergency on New Year's Eve. This fire was quickly brought under control and only one property in that locality had registered for clean up support as of 27 March 2020 (*see Table 2*).

The Gaspers Mountain bushfire created impacts over a much longer period and affected a much bigger area on the western edge of the Central Coast LGA (Kulnura, Mangrove Creek, Mangrove Mountain, Gunderman and Spencer localities). A total of 12 properties were impacted with 3 homes destroyed and 4 outbuildings destroyed. 6 properties in that location had registered for clean up support.

Singleton LGA was also impacted by multiple bushfires, the largest and most damaging of which was the Gaspers Mountain Fire that ran for multiple weeks and impacted buildings **on 18 properties** in total.

In the Paynes Crossing area (bordering Cessnock LGA), one residential structure was destroyed, 6 outbuildings damaged, and 4 properties had registered for assistance as of 27 March 2020. In the remote Howes Valley and nearby Putty areas, 8 properties also suffered building impacts, but no residential structures were assessed as being destroyed. Of note is that only 1 residential structure was assessed as being damaged in the Putty area, but 5 properties have registered for assistance. Feedback from a Community Meeting held in the locality by Singleton Council suggests the registrations may reflect the reported level of damages to farmland and fences rather than un-assessed building damages.

Table 2: RFS and Multi Agency Building Impact Assessments

Locality	Properties impacted	Destroyed Residential Structure	Damaged Residential structure	Destroyed Outbuilding	Damaged Outbuilding
3 LGAs Totals	111	22	79	24	40
Central Coast Totals	24	4	7	14	13
BLUE HAVEN	9	0	4	5	0
GUNDERMAN	1	0	1	0	2
DOYALSON	2	1	0	3	0
KULNURA	3	1	0	2	0
MANGROVE CREEK	1	1	0	0	0
MANGROVE MOUNTAIN	2	0	1	2	9
SPENCER	6	1	1	2	2
Cessnock Totals	69	17	10	57	21
GRETA	2	0	0	0	1
LAGUNA	38	11	2	41	8
NORTH ROTHBURY	6	0	5	0	1
OLNEY	1	0	0	0	0
PAYNES CROSSING	14	1	3	10	5
WOLLOMBI	4	1	0	3	1
YENGO NATIONAL PARK	4	4	0	3	5
Singleton Totals	18	1	7	8	6
BRANXTON	1	0	0	0	1
HOWES VALLEY	6	0	4	1	1
PAYNES CROSSING	9	1	2	6	1
PUTTY	2	0	1	1	3

Current as at 3pm, 27 March 2020

Data Source: RFS Building Impact Assessments & Multi Agency Building Impact Assessments (lead by PWA),
Extracted from Laing O'Rourke Scope Analysis Dashboard

Table 3: Registrations for Assistance

LGA	Locality	No. of Registrations	No. of Registered Properties
CENTRAL COAST	Totals	14	14
	BLACKWALL	1	1
	BLUE HAVEN	1	1
	BUDGEWOI	1	1
	CHARMHAVEN	0	0
	DOYALSON	0	0
	GUNDERMAN	0	0
	KARIONG	1	1
	KULNURA	1	1
	LAKE HAVEN	1	1
	LOWER MANGROVE	1	1
	MANGROVE CREEK	1	1
	MANGROVE MOUNTAIN	3	3
	SPENCER	1	1
	TERRIGAL	1	1
	WOONGARRAH	0	0
	WYONG	1	1
CESSNOCK	Totals	26	22
	ABERDARE	1	1
	CONGEWAI	0	0
	CORRABARE	0	0
	GRETA	2	1
	LAGUNA	16	14
	MILLFIELD	0	0
	NORTH ROTHBURY	0	0
	OLNEY	0	0
	PAYNES CROSSING	5	4
	WOLLOMBI	2	2
	YENGO NATIONAL PARK	0	0
SINGLETON	Totals	7	7
	BRANXTON	0	0
	DARLINGTON	1	1
	FORDWICH	1	1
	GARLAND VALLEY	0	0
	HOWES VALLEY	0	0
	MILBRODALE	0	0
	PAYNES CROSSING	0	0
	PUTTY	5	5

Current as at 3pm 27 March 2020

Data Source: Extracted from Laing O'Rourke Prioritisation Dashboard

Telecommunication and Infrastructure Impacts

Within the Central Coast, Cessnock and Singleton LGA's the bushfires largely burnt within bushland areas within National Parks/State Forests and the immediately adjoining private properties and farms. Damages to local infrastructure such as roads and bridges was reported as minimal with no major road or bridge impacts. There were also no reported risks to public safety resulting from damaged trees on private property adjoining roads/public areas.

The only significant impacts to infrastructure was consequently to telecommunication on private properties. The locations impacted by the bushfires were typically remote from major population centres and internet and mobile phone access, were limited due to the terrain and limited mobile towers. The loss of fixed overhead phone lines due to fire damage consequently had a major impact on communication especially in the valleys around Bucketty, Wollombi, Laguna and Putty. This limited the capacity of residents to seek advice, learn about the support available to them and to register for longer term support.

The scale of the bushfires over this summer subsequently limited the capacity of service providers to effect immediate/timely repairs, a national shortage of critical cable and poles was also reported and added to the delay in repairs. Once the coordinated response efforts ceased in late January, the low scale of overall impact to the communities to regional communities and the overwhelming response and recovery needs in other regions, meant that no formal processes were established to engage with impacted communities, to identify any loss in telecommunications or to document repair delays. By the end of March, no ongoing issues were being reported to local authorities or to Service NSW.

Central Coast Council also noted concerns about impacts of bushfire ash and run off on the catchment of Mangrove Mountain Dam, their primary water supply catchment, and had applied for grant funds to help minimise erosion and run-off impacts.

Business and Industry Impacts

Tourism impacts - lost visitation and trade due to perceived risks and smoke haze

a) Hunter Wine Country impacts

Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association advised that Hunter Valley Wine Country is Australia's oldest wine region at 192 years old, it is a national and state significant destination and economy that needs protection and assistance. It is the most visited wine destination in Australia and the second most visited destination in NSW outside of Sydney. Prior to the bushfires, the Hunter Valley was NSW's number one regional destination for domestic day trips and number two for domestic overnight visitation.

Hunter Wine Country attracts 1.4m visitors annually and the Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association (HVWTA) represents over 130 wine producers with 2,300Ha of vineyards, 27 restaurants and bars, 57 tourism attractions and over 128 accommodation and conferencing facilities. In Cessnock LGA tourism employs 15.2% of the local workforce (2,354 jobs) and is the largest economic sector.

- Wine making and wine tourism in the Hunter is valued at \$557m per annum and employs 2,800 people, representing \$104m in wages annually. Wine tourism represents 63% and wine making and viticulture 37%.
- Wine Country is also known for high profile entertainment, concerts and events with a range of attractions and activities that bring non wine visitors into the area, such as the Elton John Concert at Hope Estate on 11 and 12 January.

- Wine Country in turn creates opportunities for tourism ventures in the surrounding more rural and remote areas – including Wollombi and Laguna. For instance, the winding, scenic roads that connect Kulnurra and Bucketty on the Central Coast with Wollombi (Cessnock LGA) and Broke (Singleton LGA) is a popular route for bike riders. Coastal based tourism is also an important sector for the Central Coast LGAs.

Summer is an important period for visitors to Wine Country and surrounding areas, but for most of the summer of 2019/20 the key wine areas of Pokolbin and Broke-Fordwich were ringed by bushfire and shrouded in smoke. This had a profound impact on both visitation numbers and sales and forward bookings across the region.

On the weekend the Elton John concert was held in Hunter Valley (11 and 12 January) numerous last-minute tickets were available for sale on resale platforms and last-minute accommodation became available. This indicates bookings were being cancelled at short notice. In a much needed reprieve, the smoke haze lifted the event went ahead and generated massive support for bushfire recovery efforts.

The Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre was bombarded by inquiries over summer from concerned visitors seeking to avoid the area and cancelling their intended visit to Hunter Valley due to fears about the risks (even though Wine Country was not directly at risk). Tourism operators received similar inquiries prompted by the combination of extreme weather, prolonged smoke haze, the size and active nature of the fires shown on the *Fires Near Me* App, media stories about the Gospers Mountain fire and the government's advice for holiday makers to avoid areas with active bushfires.

The Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association (HVWTA) surveyed visitation from November 2019 and forward bookings of June 2020.

- By January 2020: 43% of respondents said their visitation was down by more than 30%, with 16% of these saying they were down by more than 60% for the same period.
- By February 2020: 56% of respondents said their visitation was down by more than 30%, with 20% of these saying they were down by more than 60% for the same period.
- For March 2020 (projected prior to COVID-19): 57% of respondents said their bookings were down by more than 30%, with 13% of these saying they were down by more than 60% for the same period.
- When compared to the same period in 2018/2019 the survey identified the Hunter Valley economy had suffered a \$76M loss in tourism revenue from November 2019 to the start of March 2020 due to the impacts of the bushfires and smoke haze.
- If this decline continues as predicted based on decreased forward bookings (prior to COVID), the predicted revenue loss will be **approximately \$122M** for the period from November 2019 to June 2020 and could impact up to 670 regional jobs (REMPLAN Impact Analysis).

NSW Business Chamber (Hunter) also asked **Local Business Chambers** across the region about the impacts of bushfires on their operations and this included chambers operating in Singleton, Cessnock and the Central Coast LGAs.

Tourism operators in the Lovedale, Pokolbin and Broke Road areas all reported significant decline in visitation numbers due to perceptions that visitors would be unable to access the Hunter viticultural or that was unsafe to visit the Hunter vineyards areas. Many enquiries were reported to have been based on concerns raised by the *Fires Near Me* App which showed the whole of the mega Gospers Mountain fire as at Emergency Alert (Red) Level for most of the summer.

Dominic Roche, Exec Chairman of the Roche Group that owns the Hunter Valley Gardens, confirmed that their Hunter Valley Gardens flagship Christmas Lights Spectacular had suffered a 20% drop in visitation compared to previous years. The event has been running for 12 years and normally attracts 120,000 people. It also provides a significant stimulus for other tourism operators (e.g. accommodation and food providers).

Tourism association CEO Jessica Sullivan advised that the bushfires had compounded the effects of the drought and affected visitor numbers for months. *"Local cellar doors, including Hope Estate, are experiencing very low foot traffic and receiving many calls regarding the likelihood of bushfires and air quality in the region cancelling the Elton John concert,"*. (Hunter Valley News 20 January 2020)

In the end, two big concert events by Elton John and Cold Chisel in the vineyards in January went ahead and provided a much needed tourism boost. However, the (Hope Estate) vineyard reported that the threat and effects of fires had *"directly caused a lull in tourism"* and many travellers had cancelled accommodation bookings due to fear of travelling to the Hunter.

b) Central Coast Business Impacts

Central Hunter Business Chambers similarly reported that the core issue was the severe decline in the visitor numbers to the region and the resultant reduction in their annual income due to perceived threats of bushfires, government recommendations for tourists to stay home and concerns about the extended smoke haze and health risks.

Many businesses also faced added cost pressures. As a gesture of goodwill most accommodation providers and catering firms refunded booking deposits for clients who were unable or unwilling to travel to stay on the Central Coast during the bushfire emergency and last minute cancellation of NYE events (no fireworks and carnival meant no visitors).

Accommodation and hospitality providers also needed to pay to clean their business premises much more frequently to repeatedly remove soot and debris blown in from the fires. Businesses who still had bookings also faced increased power-costs due to the extreme weather and smoke haze due to the increased need for air-conditioning. They also reported lingering supply chain impacts due to the impacts of the bushfires on their supplier's businesses.

Whilst the Pet Boarding services sector is small potentially in comparison to others, the impact of bushfires and the long hot summer was particularly severe. Christmas and summer are traditionally high season for Pet boarding as owners book their pets into a local pet care facility whilst they travel to NSW beachside destinations such as the MidCoast, South Coast and North Coast of NSW. The influx of boarded dogs and cats also enables the sector to employ many casual staff.

The owner of Hunter Pet Motel, Brett Wild, identified that elevated trade over summer generates a large proportion of their yearly income. This year however, pet owners cancelled their coastal holiday plans and stayed home in droves. The severe summer weather conditions also resulted in a substantial increase in power usage (and operating costs) as he struggled to maintain suitable kennel temperatures.

Road closures and evacuation impacted jobs, workers, businesses and sales

Putty Road links Singleton and Broke to Western Sydney and was closed for six weeks from 22 November 2019 to 4 January 2020, isolating the residents of Howes Valley, Garland Valley, Paynes Crossing and Putty. It also prevented normal business activity and employment and led to further cancellations of accommodation and event/wedding venues in these more rural locations.

The *Australian Business Register* shows that **99 businesses operate within the Howes Valley, Garland Valley, Paynes Crossing, Putty and Milbrodale areas** alone. Labour force statistics from the 2016 Census show that this region has 134 employees (82 full time and 52 part-time workers) who were unable to undertake their normal employment activities during the period of the road closures.

Under the expanded Australian Government Bushfire Recovery support packages viticultural businesses that experienced smoke taint damage are eligible, but other businesses that lost trade or where unable to open due to road closures are not be eligible. Whilst these businesses did not sustain direct damage to their premises or equipment, ember damage was minimal and there was no minimal damage to produce, buildings or premises, however their loss of income was significant. Others incurred significant costs due to being unable to operate or being unable to get to work.

Data was not available on the number of businesses and workers impacted by Road Closures in other locations (Wollombi, Laguna, Bucketty, Kulnurra, and Mangrove Mountain) but the impacts are expected to be similar.

Wildlife, Animal Hospitals and Veterinarian Services Impacts

Singleton Council reported in early January that over 714,000ha of native vegetation had burnt in and around Wollemi and Yengo National Parks. ***The area burnt within Cessnock and Central Coast LGAs was not available for this report.***

The ferocity of the fires and total area burnt had profound and long-lasting impacts on native animals and vegetation that are still being assessed. This led to a large increase in the number of native animals requiring specialised veterinary care during and after the bushfire response.

In areas where no active wildlife carer groups operate (such as Singleton LGA), emergency care for wildlife is typically undertaken by local veterinarians who prioritise the care of injured animals over their paying customers. Veterinarians also typically offer their services to Wildlife rescue organisations at one third of the usual rate, plus medicines and materials at cost. Whilst normally sustainable practice is sustainable in the short-term, however this years' bushfire crisis resulted in Hunter Valley veterinary services **suffering a \$20,000 per month losses in income over several months.**

Singleton Council identified the need for:

- a well-planned, adequately resourced and expertly coordinated recovery program across all bushfire-affected areas (not just readily accessible/popular areas).
- additional financial support for private Veterinary services to care for injured by way of tax deductibility and/or grants.

Agriculture and Animals (Livestock) Impacts

Lost viticultural production due to Smoke taint

When grapes are exposed to smoke towards the latter stages of the growing season (November - December in the Hunter), they can absorb compounds from smoke and burnt wood that produce unwanted flavours in the grapes and resulting wine, making it unsaleable.

When surveyed by the Hunter Business Chamber on 15 January 2020 Christina Tulloch the CEO of Tulloch Wines and President of Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association advised that fortunately, the fires were not that close to much of the Hunter Valley vineyards. Vineyards in the Broke-Fordwich area, however, were covered in thick smoke haze for much of November to December due to back burning to contain the Gospers Mountain fire (See Figure 5).

Figure 5- Smoke generated by Pokolbin Mountain backburn created smoke taint in surrounding vineyards



Bushfire recovery support enabled vignerons to test grapes and conduct micro ferments to check for smoke taint. The HVWTA reported that guided by the smoke taint results many growers were able to harvest. However, smoke taint is a reasonably new and inexact body of science and a level of risk and uncertainty remains around the quality of the final product. The \$916 million Hunter wine and tourism industry is built on reputation, and the perception of the winemaker's commitment to quality are important sales factors. Consequently, some companies (such as Tullochs) decided not to invest in harvesting their 2020 crop and risk their reputation for producing superior, high quality wines. The costs of removing uncommercial grapes from vines was covered by NSW Government recovery support, but there will be longer term impacts on the volumes and types of wine available for sale that could still be felt up to 10 years hence.

A further complicating factor is that the drought had already reduced grape harvest volumes levels, hence the HVWTA survey of the impacts on regional wine production and wine tourism jointly addressed the combined impacts of drought and bushfires. They reported that:

- The annual tonnage of grapes harvested and made into wine in the Hunter Valley in 2020 is down significantly due to smoke taint, with **80%** of industry saying they **had picked less than 50% of their crop** compared to the previous vintage, with a further **43% picking less than 80%** compared to last year. This reduction in product will have significant and long-lasting economic impacts not addressed by existing bushfire recovery support options.
- The combined economic loss due to recent bushfires, smoke haze and smoke taint to the Hunter Valley Wine Country visitor economy (wines plus wine tourism) is conservatively calculated at **\$76M for the period from November 2019 to the end of February 2020**.

Due to the scale of these impacts, the economic recovery support planned by Cessnock and Singleton Councils using the NSW Government grants focused almost entirely on promotions, events and infrastructure upgrades to support Wine country businesses. This investment is now on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions and the severe negative impacts on tourist operators and local jobs, that started with the drought and were much aggravated by the bushfires, which are now further compounded.

Agriculture (fencing damages)

Across the 3 LGAs the bushfires burnt largely in remote timbered areas and predominantly within National Park areas, hence there were no significantly reported direct losses of livestock or agricultural crops. During the response efforts firefighting authorities needed access to water, and NSW DPI and Hunter LLS supported the emergency response by providing critical alternative water supplies to prevent animal welfare risks, this was localised and many properties had already destocked due to the drought so the water take only had a short term impact.

The bush fires, however, resulted in significant damages and loss of boundary fencing for properties that adjoined the National Parks, State Forests and Crown Lands. The number of properties impacted and the extent of fencing damaged has been estimated by Local Land Services GIS teams based on known private property boundaries to various Crown land tenures within the fire scar areas (*see Table 4 below*).

Table 4: Estimated Area of fencing burnt by Bushfires (from Greater Sydney & Hunter LLS 23/4/2020)

Council	Total Burnt Boundary Fence (kms)	Burnt Boundary Fence with Public Land (kms)	Crown Parcel / Road/ other	National Park / State Cons'n	State of NSW	Other
Central Coast LGA	280	113	42%	41%	4%	14%
Cessnock LGA	768	485	46%	42%	11%	2%
Singleton LGA	1,419	923	51%	39%	9%	1%
Totals for 3 LGAs	2,467	1,522	46%	37%	9%	8%

Health and Wellbeing Impacts

Health and wellbeing impacts from the bushfires can result from multiple and often compounding sources. Direct impacts include the social disruption, changed routines and loss arising from:

- emergency warnings and evacuation;
- changed routines and social opportunities resulting from closed schools, extended road closures, cancelled or changed social events and changed holiday plans;
- potentially having one or more parents or family members absent for extended periods due to their work in responding to the fires that impacted so much of NSW; and/or
- for some it may also include lost or damaged homes and buildings.

Health impacts can also result from:

- prolonged exposure to bushfire smoke (especially for asthmatics);
- anxiety about the saturation media coverage about bushfire threats and the perceived and / or real threats to their personal safety posed by the rapidly evolving bushfire situation;
- worries about the risks to and impacts on other people, wildlife, farm animals and pets;
- stress due to financial concerns including income and job security when many workers and trades people were unable to get to work due to, or about the viability of businesses due to significantly reduced business turn over, and operating costs increased and the viability of businesses; and/or
- extreme weather events associated with the bushfires (e.g. catastrophic fire weather days).

Cessnock Council reported that some residents in the Wollombi Valley had vacated from their homes for periods lasting weeks due to emergency evacuations, and concerns about the health impact of smoke including respiratory issues. They also noted media reports of over 600 emergency presentations for breathing and asthma related conditions in December 2019 by Hunter New England Health. It was also reported that many people felt depressed because of the prolonged smoke effects.

Impacts on Individuals

The reporting level of community and wellbeing impacts was relatively low across the Singleton, Cessnock and Central Coast LGAs. Councils and state government agencies report limited individual approaches and registrations with Services NSW were also modest.

This low level of reporting in part reflects the limited direct impacts of the bushfires in this region compared to others. The bushfires were also confined to more remote and sparsely populated locations where residents and businesses that typically have limited prior engagement with local or state government services and generally have a high degree of resilience.

Recognising the potential reluctance of remote community members to approach more urban based government agencies, a series of community recovery events were held (6 - 8 weeks after the bushfire emergency peak) - see *Figure 6 below*. This included: Spencer (15 January), Kulnorra (14 January) within the Central Coast LGA, Broke (30 January), Bulga (18 February) and Putty (late February) within the Singleton LGA. Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff also undertook follow up outreach visits to fire impacted locations and were working with Cessnock Council to organise a meeting at Wollombi, but this was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings.

Figure 6 - Facebook post for Community Drop in Session



Levels of attendance at the community meetings were low, and the issues raised focused on local preparedness and the physical and business losses, rather than social or wellbeing impacts. This may partly reflect the lack of representation of welfare organisations and counsellors at most of those meetings.

Welfare services and NGOs anecdotally reported that the demand for mental health and emergency support groups increased significantly post the bushfires due to the compounding impact of the bushfires on already drought challenged families and business owners. During December and January, Neighbourhood Centres, NGOs and Rural Aid counsellors variously reported:

- increased requests for essentials, including food hampers as families struggled to provide a Christmas meal and gifts;
- an increase in demand for financial counselling, homelessness support, emergency relief and general support demands;
- tourism operators and farming-related suppliers were increasingly forced to laying off staff due to the business downturn and were unable to further extend credit to drought struck farmers; and
- farmers facing the drought and fires had little money for anything besides keeping the farms and families going. Many have no surplus funds for a social life, and many have no interaction with anyone outside their immediate families. This brings with it the risk of isolation and as a result, children having no support from their peers.

Business Stress

Cessnock Council and Wollombi Business Chamber noted concerns for the wellbeing of the owners of bushfire impacted businesses. In response to a survey of its members by Wollombi Valley Chamber of Commerce 60% of respondents cited mental health as a concern to their business.

The Lovedale Chamber of Commerce also cited: *“great concern for our wine grape growers”*. Many have dealt with a protracted drought already and then faced the prolonged uncertainty about whether they could harvest their crops and if the wine would be marketable. This risk to their entire income for the year comes after massive costs outlays on extra water to keep their crops growing.

Workers who were forced to reduce their hours, suffer stand-downs and take forced leave due to the downturn in trade and temporary business closures also experienced high levels of stress.

Impacts on School Children

The NSW Department of Education advised that across the 3 LGAs there were 26 instances where schools were closed during December 2019 due to bushfire smoke and/or imminent threat of fire. This comprised a combination of multiple schools closed on multiple occasions (see Table 5).

Table 5 - Public School Closures due to Bushfires in December 2019

LGA	Number of Schools impacted in December	Total Days where school was closed due to bushfires in December
Central Coast	4 schools	26
Cessnock	6 schools	20
Singleton	2 schools	8

The Principal of Laguna School advised OEM recovery support team members that the school had experienced 9 consecutive days of closure due to the bushfires, but students demonstrated a high level of resilience. This was attributed to the high level of preparedness of the students' families.

To help offset the impacts of these closures and the disruption to normal routines, the Department of Education also put in place additional counselling services for the students.

Planned Recovery Actions

On 9 January 2020, Central Coast Council, Cessnock and Singleton councils were included in a list of 42 bushfire affected Councils that would receive \$1million from the Federal Government to expend on *'projects and activities that they deem essential for the recovery and renewal of their communities'*.

On 12 February 2020 the National Bushfire Recovery Agency advised that all 3 Councils had also been granted an *'additional payment of \$275,000 to support recovery from the Black Summer bushfire season'*.

The specific expenditure items identified by each of the Councils was informed by consultation with Business Chambers and Tourism Associations, community members impacted by the fires, and Council staff directly involved in Council's response and recovery activities. Central Coast Council additionally consulted with members of their Joint Local Recovery Teams.

Central Coast Council Recovery Actions

Recovery	<p>Upgrade Oyster Shell Road Bridge</p> <p>Replace and repair signage damaged by fires</p> <p>Community tree give away</p>
Community resilience	<p>Form a Disaster Resilience Working group to develop a Disaster Resilience Strategy.</p> <p>Examples of works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community mental health resilience initiatives • All hazards emergency preparedness workshops • Cultural Cool Burn Forum • \$100,000 to local RFS to support their community activities • An analysis of social networks to assist in the development of community disaster resilience networks
Preparedness	<p>Upgrade fire trails in Mangrove Mountain areas</p> <p>Establish multiple fixed water supply tanks, to provide reliable accessible water supplies for fire fighting vehicles</p> <p>Upgrade bushfire protection around RFS stations and equipment</p> <p>Upgrade bushfire protection for 5 community halls (e.g. install gutter guards and water tanks)</p>
Coordination	<p>Fund a part time coordinator for 18 months (3 days/week) to coordinate project delivery and develop a Central Coast Local Recovery Plan</p>

Singleton Council Recovery Actions

Recovery	<p>Paynes Crossing Bridge replacement in partnership with Cessnock City Council</p> <p>Investigation and design for replacement of Putty Valley Road Bridge/Culvert</p> <p>Ratepayer assistance subsidy towards rates for affected properties in line with Council's adopted Hardship Policy</p> <p>Financial support to be provided to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Alliance for Destination Marketing Program • Broke Fordwich Wine Tourism Association for Tourism Marketing Program • Around Hermitage Association for Tourism Marketing Program • Singleton Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders for Economic Development Programs
Community resilience	<p>\$225,00 to upgrade Community Facilities (Council and non-council managed)</p> <p>\$125,000 for Social Work Programs in partnership with local community organisations</p>
Preparedness	<p>\$100,000 to local RFS to support asset provision and management</p>

Whilst specific details are not included in this report, Cessnock Council has determined a package of recovery actions in consultation with local Business groups. This has a strong focus on supporting local tourism recovery and minor infrastructure upgrades in the impacted areas.

The Business Centre have additional funding to provide free practical, timely and pragmatic advice to assist small businesses to help them recovery from the combined impacts of drought, bushfires, floods and drought over the next 12 months. The capacity to provide detailed one on one support is currently limited but they are developing innovating approaches including free webcasts.

TAFE NSW has also recently announced a range of free online training course to help impacted communities and business owners to gain new skills and build resilience.

Gaps/Ongoing Recovery Needs

Business and Industry Support

Business and Industry sectors were particularly impacted in the region and the impact was compounded by the stresses and reduced business incomes due to the prior drought and the restricted opportunities to promote regional tourism and visitation and to prolonged loss of business due to the Covid-19 response.

Multiple small businesses in the area were unable to open and trade due to prolonged road closures due to bushfire response efforts, but still incurred operating costs and/or suffered significant lost trade over the 6 weeks of road closures. This indirect impact is not currently covered by Bushfire Recovery Support.

In their January 2020 reports to the National Roundtable on Bushfires both Cessnock and Singleton Council identified the critical importance of further promoting the Wine Country tourism in order to rebuild the 25% plus drop-in visitation. Tourism promotion was consequently a key component of the funded bushfire recovery support programs proposed by both Cessnock and Singleton Councils.

The capacity to delivery such initiatives, however, was stalled by the Covid-19 response and local tourism-based businesses are now experiencing a 100% decline in business. Even with the substantial additional financial and business advice support, some businesses will be unable to recover from the combined triple impact of drought, bushfires and Covid-19.

Many components of the planned industry bushfire recovery measures are also restricted by the current Covid-19 response restrictions. Consequently, tourism recovery will need to be a very significant and early adopted part of the Covid-19 recovery strategies.

Cessnock Council additionally recommended a longitudinal study be undertaken in 12 months to gain further understanding of businesses impacted over the medium and long term to provide a more comprehensive insight into the full impact of natural disasters on businesses, particularly in regional Australia. The longer term 3-5-year impact may also require to be followed up and addressed particularly for regions relying on their visitor economy, such as Cessnock.

Agriculture

The major impact to agriculture (excluding Viticulture and wine tourism losses) was to fences adjoining crown land, particularly National Parks. The recently announced financial support to fund materials for replacement fencing addresses the cost of repair. The capacity to secure fencing materials, remove damaged fencing and reconstruct new boundary fencing still rests with the land-owner. A possible support option for this could be to establish Blaze Aid Camps, however, the extent of overall losses and the urgency of repairing fences on

properties that have limited stocking capacity is far less pressing in this region than in others. Hence the viability of establishing such a camp is limited.

Waste and Infrastructure

Government funded clean-up activities for private properties and engagement by Laing O'Rourke contractors with impacted residents is yet to commence in the Hunter LGAs, and may not happen till after July 2020, especially now there are additional complicating factors due to Covid-19 responses. By that stage many property owners may have already commenced their own clean up and rebuilding operations. Due to the larger rural properties involved and remoteness from Council waste management facilities many may opt to bury debris on site. This may create long term contamination issues if asbestos or other toxic waste products are involved.

Meanwhile Councils continue to support ongoing preparation for Government supported clean up of buildings destroyed by the bushfires (22 residential buildings identified by RFS/PWA inspections). This includes:

- advising Laing O'Rourke teams on available waste disposal options;
- providing contact data for fire-impacted properties to facilitate contact with those registered/assessed as having lost building structures;
- encouraging local businesses to submit Expressions of Interest to work as subcontractors for the Laing O'Rourke led clean-up.

Impacts of the bushfires on public infrastructure (e.g. roads, bridges and community equipment) were limited. Hence there no specific recovery requirements were identified. Both Cessnock and Singleton Council, however, have expended some of their allocated bushfire relief funds to repair roads in the impacted areas.

Singleton Council identified 3 community rebuilding infrastructure projects to help with overall economic recovery. Their priority projects focused on improving water security to support: drought and bushfire preparedness, provide jobs, support key industries and help businesses build resilience.

Their recommended projects included the Glennies Creek to Lostock Dam water pipeline and the Singleton Water and Hunter Water Connection project. Both are identified as State Significant Infrastructure development projects for which the NSW Government is currently developing a detailed Business Case.

Singleton Council also identified the Bulga and Milbrodale Water Supply Scheme as a critical project. Providing safe and reliable water supplies to these villages that were highly impacted by recent bushfires was identified as important for community wellbeing, supporting key industry and local economic development and for enabling greater bushfire preparedness and response capacity. Preliminary investigations have been completed and Council can provide a co-contribution but needs grant funding to enable the water supply scheme to be delivered.

Wildlife and Natural Environment

Recovery support for the natural environment seems to have largely been left to the existing resources of National Parks and Wildlife Services, the Forestry Corporation and not for profit wildlife carer groups. Additional support needed to enable them to continue to care for wildlife across the vast areas of burnt bushland has not been assessed at this stage.

Singleton Council identified the additional strain put on the resources of local Veterinary practices and carers and recommended:

- Funding, expertise and specialised equipment to support regeneration efforts
- Ensure that localised wildlife recovery activities support jobs in areas most affected.

- Fund one-third of veterinary costs to treat animals injured in bushfires (veterinarians to pay one third and wildlife groups the other third).
- Allow Veterinary businesses to claim a tax deduction for discounts they provide to treat injured wildlife.

Health and Wellbeing

The \$75 million mental health support package provided by the Australian Government, includes additional counselling support. Additional arrangements and capacity have also been created for one on one case management via NSW local area health districts and Office of Emergency Management.

In January 2020, Singleton Council noted scope for further measures to address underlying root causes of the stress families and businesses are facing and to increase community resilience, including:

- Additional funding for homeless and community centres to enable them to provide localised emergency support including food hampers, paying for essential services and school activities; and
- Greater certainty for homeless and community groups by providing 3 years of additional funding to give homeless and community care groups allow them to budget and plan beyond their current 12-month time frames. This will be critical to for them to help the community develop great resilience to cope with disasters.

Cessnock Council recommended a Social Impact Study to examine sociological issues, particularly relating to the stress on business owners and employees. Such a study could investigate how residents and business owners coped under the enormous stress of the bushfire, over a time series with any trends located within regions.

This approach could provide evidence towards development of a higher-level disaster recovery strategies that governments could implement to support communities in the aftermath of such events. Government funding can be strategically targeted following the studies to ensure the impacted regions receive appropriate compensation.

Business Industry and Tourism Regional Recovery Action Plan

Chair: Sanket Purohit, and Yasmin Parekh,
NSW Treasury

Subcommittee Agency Members: Western Sydney Investment Attraction Office (NSW Treasury)
Blue Mountains City Council
Hawkesbury City Council
Lithgow City Council
Mid-Western Regional Council
Oberon Council
Wollondilly Shire Council
AusIndustry
Business Connect (NSW Treasury)
Destination NSW
Destination Sydney Surrounds North
Destination Sydney Surrounds South
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSW Regional Assistance Authority
NSW Small Business Commission (NSW Treasury)
Office of Emergency Management
Regional NSW
Service NSW
Training Services NSW

Purpose

The Greater Sydney Region Business, Tourism and Industry Subcommittee has been established by the Greater Sydney Regional Recovery Committee (GSRRC) in response to the bush fire, storm and flood events which occurred over the 2019 / 2020 spring and summer.

The Greater Sydney Region Business, Industry and Tourism Subcommittee provides specialised support and advice to the GSRRC via the Subcommittee Chair in relation to the impacts and recovery issues for businesses, industries and tourism within the LGAs covered by the GSRRC (Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Oberon & Wollondilly). **The Greater Sydney Region Business, Tourism & Industry Subcommittee was established to:**

- Gain an understanding of the issues and needs of business, tourism and primary industry sectors across Greater Sydney's fire affected LGAs
- Share information on the impacts of the fires on businesses, industries and tourism
- Identify priority issues that require attention or elevating in a Regional Recovery Action Plan
- Liaise with the NSW State Recovery Committee's Business, Tourism and Industry Subcommittee to provide intelligence and coordinate state-wide initiatives
- Ensure the dissemination of up to date information to the business community in relation to support and tools to aid in business recovery
- Report regularly and make recommendations to the GSRRC.

Introduction

The Regional Recovery Action Plan (Action Plan) aims to respond to business, industry and tourism impacts for the Greater Sydney region, including the local government areas of Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Oberon and Wollondilly.

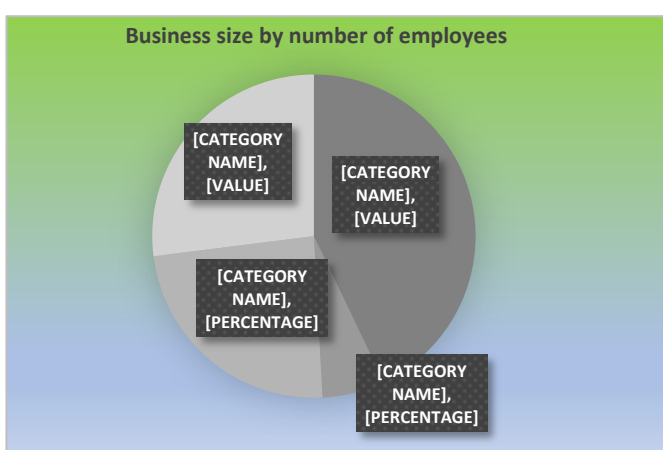
The Action Plan has strong links to the various key government strategies which underpin future actions and initiatives across NSW. Global NSW at a state level and Regional Economic Development Plans and the Western Sydney City Deal at a regional level foster collaboration across government to implement strategies to aid ongoing recovery.

The NSW government continues to support affected LGAs in recovery through the provision of the Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund. It supports council initiatives toward community resilience and wellbeing, as well as supporting business and industry. Multiple NSW agencies continue to assist in recovery across the state, including Service NSW, Family & Community Services, NSW Police Service, Destination NSW, Resilience NSW and Office of Emergency Management and NSW Treasury's Business Connect and Small Business Commission teams (SBC).

Impact Analysis

The 2019/20 bushfires and subsequent storms & floods continue to have significant impact across multiple industries and businesses throughout the Greater Sydney region. The visitor economy has been disproportionately impacted with many operators and indirect suppliers facing closure due to dramatically reduced visitation numbers and loss of trade. Impacts across the region are diverse and include damage to essential infrastructure such as roads and signage, rail connectivity to Western NSW, power and telecommunication connectivity. There were also significant indirect impacts on businesses as a result of the bushfires and smoke blanketing the state.

In addition, recent global developments relating to COVID--19 have now amplified the impacts and have impaired recovery efforts due to social distancing requirements, ceasing any planned community events or gatherings and multiplying the effects on already struggling businesses and industries.



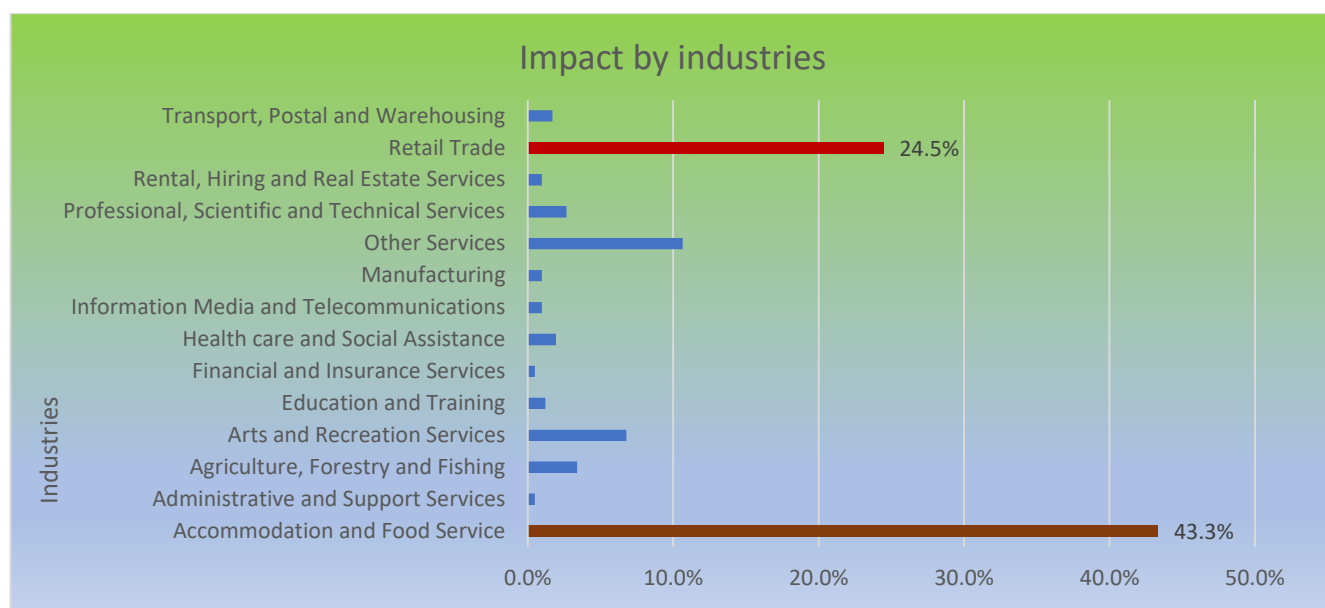
Across the Greater Sydney region, 90.9 per cent of businesses have been indirectly impacted by the bushfires, with their business premises and equipment surviving and 6.7 per cent either damaged or destroyed.

The indirect effects, however, have resulted in significant loss of income for many businesses over an extended length of time, especially in the tourism sector. This is resulting in loss of employment for many people across a number of industries and regions.

Tourism Industry

In the Greater Sydney region, especially around the Blue Mountains, the rolling impact of fires, floods and COVID-19 on the local economy provides a unique glimpse of severe and sustained impacts on a key engine industry. Both day and night visitation drive a significant portion of the Blue Mountains economy, a region where seasonal fluctuation are not severe as other regional locations in NSW.

Research commissioned by the City of Blue Mountains estimated a loss of \$558 million in gross turnover, and an estimated loss of 2,586 jobs. The SBC survey shows that industry impact in the Greater Sydney region is concentrated in the visitor economy, with accommodation and food services and retail sectors hardest hit.



Through the natural disasters and now with evolving impacts of COVID-19, some businesses are revisiting their businesses models, assisted by information and advisory facilitated by government, but delivered by industry. It is expected that businesses will consider the concentration of demand, supply and other critical business inputs to build resilience within their businesses with benefits to jobs and communities in the GSRRC. An acceleration of restaurants and hospitality businesses operating “takeaway kitchens” illustrates the agility and resilience of GSRRC businesses in response to public health orders directing communities and people quarantine, which can be further supported by all three levels of government. Business advisory and support to businesses in formulating business continuity plans is adding to business resilience as part of community and government recovery efforts.

Small business has both leveraged and seen disruption as a result of digital Innovation; however, with significant loss of revenue on the back of the bushfires and floods, a digital strategy where appropriate should be considered by businesses, e.g. leveraging shared digital models to move goods in instances when customers are unable to get to their place of business or traditional delivery channels are disrupted. Business advisory, facilitated by NSW and Australian government is delivering value to businesses, in line with government goal of innovation supported growth shared by the Western Sydney City Deal and Global NSW Strategy.

The impacts report provided an overview of the impacts on the businesses and industries across the Greater Sydney region, resulting from the 2019/2020 bushfires and storms & floods, which has informed the development of this Regional Recovery Action Plan. A summary of its findings follows below.

Summary of Impacts Report – Greater Sydney

The six impacted Greater Sydney Councils covered in this report, have all reported significant loss of income across their local tourism industry as a whole, over the 2019/20 summer. The main impacts being cancelled bookings and loss of customers over the peak summer period, with the added loss of the peak Easter break and beyond, due to COVID-19 restrictions. These include anchor businesses such as accommodation and wedding venues, adventure and nature tourism, as well as tourist attractions and activities. It is having a lasting effect on the local supply chain including local linen services, cleaners, florists, photographers, caterers, local cafes and retail shops which rely on these industries and the visitation they generate. There has also been significant indirect impacts from the bushfires including the impacts from the smoke across Sydney and NSW in general as well as road and area closures.

The bushfires also had severe impact on the NSW wine industry across the region over summer, particularly relevant in the Mid-Western region and beyond into areas such as Bathurst, Orange and Cowra, damaging just over 90 per cent of the 2020 vintage.

Across NSW, the forestry industry witnessed damage through destruction of more than 1 million hectares of public land and timber plantations across 27 national parks, reserves and state forests in the Greater Sydney region including 81 per cent of world heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains. Work is underway to salvage timber from plantations, after which they will be replanted. However, less timber will be available going forward affecting sawmills and Harvest and Haulage companies who will be impacted due to the shortfall with no future harvest after the timber salvage is complete.

Infrastructure too, was severely affected with the main railway line connecting Sydney ports to Western NSW cut for a significant period over summer, firstly due to bushfires, then landslide from severe storm events having significant impact on freight movements. Some freight trains made twice the normal length journey to meet export ships, in-turn reducing the number of available cycles and significantly increasing costs. Other businesses moved to using trucks to transport goods to port or sale, but as a result their output was reduced. The loss of this rail-line also reduced commuter and visitor (tourist) movements, contributing to the reduction in visitation/tourism in the Blue Mountains region. Local bus operators in the Blue Mountains assisted by transporting Indian-Pacific customers over this period. Road closures, smoke and directives from emergency services that people should not travel impacted visitation to all Greater Sydney Regional recovery Committee Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Telecommunications connectivity issues are still ongoing across a range of areas including Bell, Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine and Mt Tomah in the Blue Mountains, Bilpin and Bilpin heights in the Hawkesbury as well as in the Lithgow and Wollondilly regions.

The NSW Small Business Commission survey results for the Greater Sydney region illustrate demand side disruptions encountered by businesses, but also the general lack of awareness of ongoing government support measures.

The NSW Small Business Commission (SBC) survey received 420 responses in the Greater Sydney region;

- Business are largely concerned with attracting customers (72 per cent of respondents), cancelled bookings (54 per cent of respondents) and cash flow maintenance (55 per cent of respondents) relating to their ventures
 - 93 per cent of responses from businesses with less than 20 employees
 - 90.9 per cent of respondents reported no damage to business premises
 - 67.5 per cent reported a significant impact on their business, indicating impact is predominantly indirect for the GSRRC business community
 - Businesses reported an approximate average 26.5 per cent of loss in revenue (as a percentage of annual business revenue) from lower sales or trade
 - In general, businesses were unaware of various government support
 - 72 per cent were unaware of payroll support from Revenue NSW
 - 87 per cent were unaware of Small Business Rebate from SafeWork NSW
 - 76 per cent were unaware of business advisory services offered through NSW Treasury
 - 46 per cent were unaware of Small Business Grant from NSW Rural Assistance Authority
 - 76 per cent were unaware of mediation services offered by NSW Treasury

The following Action Plan for Greater Sydney has been developed in collaboration with the Greater Sydney Region Regional Recovery Committee – Business, Industry & Tourism members including the six GSRRC councils.

Funding and support activities already undertaken by government are outlined separately to future actions to encourage clarity for future response consideration. Recommendations are based on the impacts and lessons learnt from the natural disasters of bushfires and floods & storms across the in the GSRRC region over the 2019/2020 spring and summer.

R E S P O N D	Strategy	Government Support to Date	Future Actions / Next Steps
	Financial assistance and Grants funding		
	Category	Response	Recovery Actions
	1) Financial support	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base payment of \$1M to 5 of the 6 Greater Sydney councils, excluding Oberon, to undertake essential activities for bushfire recovery and community renewal Austrade - \$10M Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery grants, under the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Fund to support bespoke & varied events as well as social media promotional activities to encourage visitation Small Business Rebuild Package focused on local government areas (LGAs) includes a new \$10,000 grant to assist significantly impacted small businesses in specific LGAs (delivered by NSW govt). Small Business Rebuild Package focused on local government areas (LGAs) - the Commonwealth and states working together to make concessional loans for indirectly affected businesses easier to access and manage (delivered by NSW govt). <p>Dept Human Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster Recovery Payment begins when individuals and families are impacted by a disaster (one off payment of \$1K for adults and \$400 for children) <p>NSW Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund - for council initiatives that support community resilience and wellbeing, as well as supporting business and industry 	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work together with the State and Local Governments to assist significantly affected businesses in bushfire affected regions access financial support packages <p>NSW Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 2 of the Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund - Working with Local Government, Industry Sectors, DNSW and the Regional Destination Networks to develop a package of activity to support economic recovery and community resilience <p>Service NSW (SNSW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with NSW Small Business Commission and the Rural Assistance Authority to guide eligible businesses to relevant loans and grants Provide updates on volume of grant applications received, approved, and unsuccessful Provide regular updates to government agencies on additional financial assistance available as it is announced, to enable direct dissemination to businesses by councils, Business Connect, Small Business Commission and others Ensure any businesses that made initial enquiries but have not submitted an application are reminded that time is running out – prior to deadlines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Round 1 Immediate payments of \$100,000 received by 2 Greater Sydney councils and payments of \$250,000 to 4 Greater Sydney councils. ○ Due to COVID-19 restrictions, community events are unable to be held at this time • The Bushfire Recovery Grant of up to \$50K is to help pay for costs associated with the clean-up and reinstatement of a small business or non-profit organisation's operations • Appointed Laing O'Rourke to coordinate the NSW bushfire clean-up program • NSW Procurement direction for all NSW government agencies to use local businesses within communities impacted by bushfires where-ever possible for clean up, repair, rebuild, remediation and enhancement works • \$170 million NSW Drought Stimulus Package is to mitigate the employment and income effects of the current drought in regional NSW by delivering economic stimulus. The first focus will be on fast-tracking existing local infrastructure projects that will boost local economies, with a number of projects already announced. <p>Service NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering grants and loans on behalf of the Australian and NSW governments • Program recently expanded to include all 6 Greater Sydney bushfire declared councils (Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Oberon, Mid-Western and Wollondilly) • The Volunteer Firefighter payment • Small business bushfire support grant for those who have had a 40% decline in turnover over a 3 month period as a result of the bushfires, (directly affected to \$50K and indirectly affected \$10K) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide regular updates to government agencies on additional financial assistance and grants as they are announced to enable direct dissemination to businesses by councils, SNSW, Business Connect, Small Business Commission and others • Provide updates on volume of grant applications received, approved, and unsuccessful <p>NSW Small Business Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advocate for small businesses • Provide updates on insights from survey response information regarding business impacts of bushfires to inform member councils and assist recovery planning <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist SNSW & SBC connect to relevant business chambers and Indigenous & Regional organisations across the region • Assist in Oberon LGA with the Oberon Community Hub project • engage with non government organisations including Business Chambers, RDAs, Regional Organisation of Councils and other Indigenous and Regional organisations to ensure dissemination of information to local businesses via these channels • Use SBC survey responses and other evidence to inform policy in regard to financial assistance to businesses indirectly affected by the bushfires and floods & storms • Act as the conduit of information and assistance for councils and other sub committee members and roll out expanded support packages as they are developed • Facilitate workshops as required to assist in obtaining funding for recovery activities <p>Local Government</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding recently expanded to include all 6 Greater Sydney bushfire declared councils (Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, Oberon, Mid-Western and Wollondilly) <p>NSW Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-off payments of \$10K for eligible community preschool and mobile preschool services <p>Charity Organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large number of organisations and charities are working alongside government, providing support across the region to bushfire impacted communities, some include: Australian Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul Society, Salvation Army, Foodbank, Lifeline Australia, Save the Children Australia, The Australian Volunteer Support Trust, The Community Rebuilding Trust and many others assisting with Fire & Emergency, Health and Welfare, Rebuilding and Animal Welfare <p>Local Government</p> <p>Local Governments in the GSRRC responded swiftly to natural disasters based on local damage and impacts. Councils developed comprehensive Business Support Packages (BSP) for the business and general community including waiving and deferring a range of fees and charges, prioritising local businesses when planning council contracted service delivery and providing rebates for water usage charges during bushfire crisis. A more comprehensive set of measures delivered by councils are included in the subsequent section.</p> <p>Other support</p> <p>The Minderoo Foundation and the NSW Government are working closing with local councils, local recovery staff, charities and the Department of Housing to ensure the pods go to those in most need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build local business resilience, capacity and connectivity through targeted programs and initiatives <p>Councils and frontline agencies step up communications to local groups to ensure businesses that can claim have done so</p>
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<p>2) Assistance for Indigenous businesses</p>	<p>Indigenous Business Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) up to \$2K for immediate Assistance <p>Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency response grant for any Indigenous corporation whose property has been directly affected by the recent bushfires (up to \$20K) to immediately secure and clean up damaged properties 	<p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist making connections with relevant Indigenous business chambers and regional organisations across the regions and Western Parkland City Work with NSW Aboriginal Affairs, IBA and ILSC to ensure access to all avenues of funding and assistance across Australian and NSW Governments. Local Councils to work with Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) in their area to offer direct and local assistance to Aboriginal organisations and businesses in their LGA <p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils commit to providing assistance to local Businesses through its Economic Development Strategy Councils and frontline agencies to step up communications to local groups to ensure businesses that can claim have done so
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<p>3)Reducing Government costs and charges, including waiving local Government fees</p>	<p>Revenue NSW;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defer payment of fines and debt for people in natural disaster affected areas and can lift driving sanctions • Extend payment deadlines and place WDOs on hold if necessary • Provide more time to lodge any documents or returns • Extend payment deadlines and agree not to charge interest • Wages paid or payable to an employee for bushfire fighting activities or emergency operations are exempt from payroll tax • Assist both, directly and indirectly, impacted businesses and sole traders <p>Australian Taxation Office (ATO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatically deferring any lodgements or payments due for identified impacted postcodes • Automatically deferring lodgement and associated payments for income tax, activity statement, self-managed super funds and excise returns until 28 May 2020 • Automatically deferring lodgement and associated payments for fringe benefits tax returns until 25 June 2020 <p>Local Government</p> <p>Councils in the GSRRC undertook a range of initiatives, including rates relief to bushfire affected residents, and waiving of council development fees for residents with damaged homes or businesses. Councils undertook a range of diverse measures to support businesses in their LGAs. Actions by the Hawkesbury City Council, Wollondilly Shire Council and Lithgow City Council depict the diverse range of activities undertaken by GSRRC councils:</p> <p>Hawkesbury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigating opportunities to reduce and waive fees, promote grant opportunities and support through other organisations to business (i.e BizRebuild) • promotion of program support offers an opportunity provided by ATO and other government departments 	<p>Revenue NSW and Australian Tax Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to defer payments to assist residents and businesses across NSW and Australia • Provide updates on additional support assistance as it is announced to enable direct dissemination to businesses by councils, SNSW, Business Connect, Small Business Commission and others • Engage Western Sydney Business Chamber, Western Sydney Business Connect, regional Business Chambers, and other organisations and Indigenous organisations to enable widespread dissemination of information to businesses <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist RNSW and ATO connect to relevant business chambers and regional organisations across the region • Seek updates for councils from Revenue NSW on volume of take up of deferrals in each Greater Sydney LGA • Continue to promote to businesses of the deferral of any further Revenue NSW and ATO reporting and payments • Ongoing provision of up to date information on deferred payments upon any further announcements due to new policies in response to COVID-19 <p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to investigate opportunities to reduce and waive fees, promote grant opportunities and support through other organisations to business (i.e. BizRebuild) • Continue to promote program support offers and opportunities provided by ATO and other government departments
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	<p>Wollondilly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting payment terms in half for local businesses to help cash flow • Offering to defer commercial rates for businesses, subject to the landlords passing on this benefit to business tenants • Waiving of environmental health inspection fees for businesses • Waiving of fire safety inspection fees for businesses • Waiving of outdoor dining and advertising fees for business • Waiving of development application and assessment fees for businesses • Waiving of building compliance fees for businesses • Rent relief offered for businesses and community organisations using Council properties <p>Lithgow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The waiver of fees for Development Applications and associated charges for replacement dwellings if such costs are not covered by insurance or properties were not insured. • Hardship rates relief to extend the due date for payment without incurring interest. Extended payment terms will be offered to bush fire affected residents, self-employed RFS volunteers and affected small businesses upon application. • Relief from domestic waste charges for properties where dwellings were fire damaged 	
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Facilitation and Promotion		
Category	Response	Recovery Actions
4) Assistance through Local Procurement	<p>NSW Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy Regional promotional campaign PBD2020-01 Support for businesses affected by bushfires – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW government agencies must give first preference to an appropriate local business based in the local government area in which the work is to be done. If no appropriate local business can be identified, or if a local business cannot complete the work within a reasonable timeframe, then the work may be allocated to another regional supplier. In order to assist buyers to connect with possible regional suppliers, the bushfire-affected communities rebuild portal has been set up for suppliers to self-register as being regional. https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.scheme.show&RFTUID=B9A30F09-99EC-D33A-810D5B89C5B8A71C https://buy.nsw.gov.au/news/2020/bushfire-rebuild-services The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented demand for critical goods and services due to a rapidly changing situation, disrupted supply chains, overloaded markets and logistical breakdowns. Under COVID-19 Emergency Procurement arrangements, agency heads in NSW government agencies or their nominee can approve procurement up to a value sufficient to meet the immediate needs of the particular emergency, under cl.4 of the PWP Regulation. https://buy.nsw.gov.au/buyer-guidance/covid-19-emergency-procurement 	<p>Procurement NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence all government agencies to consider procuring local products first, to support local businesses affected by the bushfires and now COVID-19 Consider incentives for suppliers to maximise use of the local supply chain (i.e. targets / requirements / measurements) Consider local procurement and supply chains to support local economic growth and jobs Consider simplification of barriers for small business to procure with government agencies at all levels, through the use of technology and consistent EOIs Encourage all government agencies to consider the engagement of local businesses early in planning upcoming projects to enable participation Encourage all government to bring forward shovel ready projects to utilise government funding and support the local economy Consideration across neighbouring councils regionally (i.e. Western Parkland City) to collaborate in joint procurement <p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local councils' adoption of local procurement measures and work to align with state govt procurement strategies <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with government agencies and councils to identify local companies who can assist supply for necessary repairs from

	<p>Local Government Response has been quick; however, diverse based on local requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising local businesses when planning Council contracted service delivery 	<p>bushfire damage to infrastructure including fencing, road signage and barriers, paint for line marking, repair of buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Commonwealth in the co-development of Local Economic Recovery Plans and delivery of the Western Sydney City Deal • Work with local councils to ensure all local businesses in the regions are added to the “Buy Regional” promotional campaign • WSIAO to develop and coordinate input to a “Buy Western Parkland City” link and coordinate its addition to the “Buy Regional” website • Liaise with local councils and Business Chambers and other regional organisations to invite businesses to promote themselves on the site(s) • Work with regional Indigenous organisations to ensure Indigenous businesses are registered on these sites
5)Build business resilience through professional advisory	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Rebuild Package focused on local government areas (LGAs) includes extra support people in existing Bushfire Recovery Centres, including 21 new business advisers (BAs). (delivered via the Entrepreneurs’ Programme and Strengthening Business Programme). <p>NSW Government Business Connect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between January and May 2020, 95 business skills events were held across the Greater Sydney region attracting almost 1700 attendees (54- Western Sydney and 41 - Central West/Orana regions), and another four (87 attendees) to assist businesses in recovery and growth after the natural disasters • Due to COVID-19 restrictions, events have transitioned to online webinars and workshops to assist businesses, with over 60 currently available at business-connect-register.industry.nsw.gov.au 	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build business resilience through targeted mentorship and advisory via business advisor assistance • Support business sustainability through advisory support for innovation in business models and products/services where applicable <p>NSW Government Business Connect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue building business resilience through targeted provision of on-line webinars and workshops and provide councils and Resilience NSW with updated information in relation to events for dissemination • Provide information regarding post COVID-19 plans to re-establish events for business and advisory service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding announced for an additional 30 business advisors with one on one advisory sessions available via phone or video link <p>NSW Small Business Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy for small business, support with issues including red tape, unfair treatment, insurance or telecommunications Provision of space on various University campuses for businesses impacted by bushfires Undertook survey of impacted businesses to inform recovery needs across the state <p>Service NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established as front door to government for all bushfire related enquiries Business Concierge service connecting businesses with available help and guidance through the process Regional Roadshow established to disseminate information and provide a forum for businesses to seek advice. This service has moved on-line due to COVID-19 Dedicated phone line established - 13 77 88 A "One Stop Shop" portal for bushfire information created on Service NSW website Bushfire Customer Care service launched <p>Charity Organisations</p> <p>A large number of organisations and charities are working alongside government, providing support across the region to bushfire impacted communities, some include: Australian Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul Society, Salvation Army, Foodbank, Lifeline Australia, Save the Children Australia, The Australian Volunteer Support Trust, The Community Rebuilding Trust and many others assisting with Fire & Emergency, Health and Welfare, Rebuilding and Animal Welfare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide updates regarding uptake of advisory service and additional business advisors <p>Small Business Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide advocacy for small business Prioritise mediation activities for impacted businesses Advocate for business continuity training to build resilience <p>Service NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to assist those affected by bushfire and flood Provide updates to committee members regarding reestablishment of recovery centre and establishment of business concierge offices post COVID-19 restrictions Provide updates to Resilience NSW and councils on number and nature of business enquiries received via the recovery centres provide updates to Resilience NSW and councils on additional support assistance as it is announced to enable direct dissemination to businesses by councils, SNSW, Business Connect, Small Business Commission and others <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to liaise with councils to facilitate promotion of any future information sessions, roadshows, programs, financial assistance and workshops to local businesses, supporting long term business resilience and reform Disseminate SBC survey response information to agencies as appropriate to assist recovery assistance Coordinate assistance as appropriate in the regions for agencies to attend future roadshows held post COVID-19 restrictions, to assist in triage and guidance for impacted businesses Assist SNSW connect to relevant business chambers and regional organisations in each of the regions
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		<p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated across Australian and NSW Government agencies to deliver events, informing businesses and industries of government assistance and simultaneously providing a platform for agencies to engage directly with businesses damaged and impacted by natural disasters Councils leveraged Social Media Channels to engage and communicate with local businesses ensuring greater awareness of businesses support to their local business communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist SNSW in coordination of government agencies to assist delivery in each region <p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils continued support of all local businesses in accessing assistance and ongoing support in relation to rebuilding & re-establishing businesses and supply chains, contributing to business sustainability
<p>R E C O V E R & R E F O R M</p>	<p>6)Retraining and workforce planning</p>	<p>Training Services NSW (TSNSW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 months fee free training available for apprentices who have lost their jobs as a result of the bushfires Priority given to existing part-qualification funding and subsidised full qualifications in bushfire impacted LGAs to provide additional skills to displaced workers and skill capacity to assist in the clean up Assisting apprentices find new or permanent employment, (where they have lost their job due to the bushfires), using Continuing Apprentices Placement Service (CAPS) Free replacements of Trade Certificates lost in fires 	<p>Training Services NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce transition plans to be developed in consultation with industry and regional teams Work with SNSW, SBC and Business Connect to coordinate the inclusion of training information in online information sessions and post COVID-19 roadshows Provide updates regarding the take up of training and retraining opportunities Provide information on retraining opportunities for different industries, for dissemination to those industries (forestry, agribusiness, tourism & hospitality, wine industry) <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist TSNSW connect to relevant business chambers and regional organisations in each of the regions Continue to work with TSNSW to identify opportunities for training an upskilling staff to assist with recovery <p>Local Government</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils continue to work in partnership with the Business Connect team to deliver online webinars and workshops and continue to disseminate information on all events and training at a local level. • continue to regularly promote the advisory service and business advisers and make connections with the local business community.
Gaps Identified - General	Better coordination across government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many affected were not aware of the government support available in the early stages post the natural disasters • Need for coordinated communication through public channels • Need for one voice for all of government (3 tiers) govt is hard to navigate and community sees it as one entity, not three • Those affected needed to repeat their story to multiple agencies rather than having one point of contact with government • Multiple agencies approaching councils for different pieces of information in different forms • Those affected were overwhelmed by multiple surveys from various different government and non government agencies asking the same questions. This meant while dealing with the damage or destruction incurred and trying to recover, they were also having to fill out multiple versions of the same information. • Need for better coordination of information around grants and assistance available, Service NSW formed a good solution but too many different sources to consider • Government funding was not available in some cases to areas such as Oberon where there was significant damage by fire and flood, both direct and indirect • Oberon was the only GSRRC Council excluded in the \$1m payment to undertake essential activities for bushfire recovery and community 	Suggested actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage and resource NSW Government's place based economic development teams to lead future coordination of natural disasters • Service NSW to maintain and invest in user friendly content online, and for SNSW to work with dedicated coordination teams in GSRRC • More immediate liaison needed with councils during and post disaster, by one central agency to collect information on extent of damage and assistance needed • Provision of information to councils regarding impact and update of assistance by businesses in their region is needed in a timely manner – some information not received to date • Consideration needed using 2019/2020 learnings, for a set of guidelines to determine direct impacts for individual industries in the case of disaster. This would include industries such as the wine industry, bee-keepers, accommodation & attraction providers, horticulture etc.)

	<p>renewal, which hampered any major recovery initiatives Council were trying to undertake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oberon and Mid Western councils not included in the initial rounds of the NSW \$10K for small business. Resulting in a significant council resources to gather additional data, case studies and stakeholder support to advocate for inclusion in the extended round of funding • Areas such as Camden with damage, not listed on natural disaster declaration • While government initiatives and business development, skills initiatives have all been well received. Toolkits, webinars, have been delivered well by all stakeholders and general business community is concerned in relation to the uncertainty around what happens post the phasing out of Australian Government stimulus (e.g. JobKeeper program) • Timely information dissemination. Some reports from Service NSW and Small Business Commissioner around impacts and uptake of assistance have not flowed through to councils. This information would be extremely useful by LGA on the ground to assist recovery • Ongoing concern that business impacts from recent bushfires, storm and flood events are being blurred and compounded by Covid-19 related impacts. Impacts over the 2019/20 summer seemingly lost in the focus to deal with this new disaster 	
Industry Recovery Actions		
Category	Response	Suggested Recovery Actions
Tourism and the Visitor Economy	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Western Sydney (Nancy-Bird Walton) International Airport and Aerotropolis will continue to provide stability and growth, unlocking thousands of jobs. This critical infrastructure investment will provide long term platform for Western Sydney and wider GSRRC visitor businesses to invest as part of industry recovery efforts. 	<p>Australian Government</p> <p>Tourism Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage the 'Holiday Here this Year' – domestic travel campaign encouraging Australians to see our own backyard – now COVID-19 restrictions are eased • Provide information on government's relief package for tourism industry

	<p>Austrade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10M Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery grants, under the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Fund to support bespoke and varied events as well as social media promotional activities to encourage visitation • Many activities covered by this grant are currently on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions • Grants to support aquarium / zoos <p>Tourism Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Holiday Here this Year' – domestic travel campaign encouraging Australians to see our own backyard – on hold due to COVID-19 <p>NSW Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy Regional promotional campaign https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/buy-regional <p>Destination NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Event Fund – \$1M: Micro Events 10K or Flagship Events \$20K for events from May-December 2020; events to be funded on hold due to Public Health Orders restricting mass gatherings; successful applicants yet to be advised • \$10 million investment in Now's the Time to Love NSW marketing campaign – to aid the state's recovery from bushfires, drought and COVID-19 and encourage visitation <p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and implemented individual "Love Local" campaigns to encourage visitation and locals shopping locally • Worked with Destination NSW and Destination Sydney Surrounds Networks in line with "Now's the Time to Love NSW" campaign and in light of COVID-19 travel restrictions 	<p>NSW Government</p> <p>Destination NSW & Destination Networks to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage tourism businesses to participate in the Destination NSW First Program to assist products to Develop, Promote and Sell through participation in webcasts, face to face workshops, quick tips guides and individual product assistance. • Work with councils and tourism businesses to ensure tourism products are listed with Get Connected, a free online membership program that allows tourism businesses to be displayed on Destination NSW's consumer as well as Tourism • Showcase Greater Sydney region products, experience and places including the amplification of food and drink and nature experiences in consumer and travel trade content. • Work with tourism businesses, in collaboration with local councils, Destination Networks to provide support and industry resources for reopening • Provide referrals to TSNSW for any tourism business who need staff to enable reopening • Provide updates on recovery programs to the working group or Resilience NSW for information and dissemination to their stakeholders (currently on HOLD) • Continuation of scheduled engagement sessions between councils and Destination Networks • Through the Aboriginal Interagency Working Group and NATOC, collaborate with NSW Aboriginal Affairs in regard to Aboriginal sacred sites and special places in recovery as key tourist attractions • Connect Local councils to NSW Aboriginal Tour Operators Council (NATOC) to facilitate engagement on Aboriginal experience development
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	<p>All six GSRRRC councils have developed and implemented actions to drive the local visitor economy in the respond and recovery phases following the natural disasters. Actions to date by the Wollondilly Shire Council provide an example of the significant and sustained actions by local government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and launched the “Love the Dilly” Campaign to: • Generate awareness of Wollondilly and its product offerings • Increase online visibility as well as likes / followers on social channels • Support and engage local businesses to come on board the campaign journey • Leverage the day tripper market and the high % of VFR (visiting friends and relatives) • The campaign messaging encourages the community and visitors to shop, visit and love local. • Leveraging key attractions (NSW Rail Museum) to increase both visitation numbers and tourism spend in locality in Wollondilly (suspended due to COVID-19). • Implementing a local markets and new events program to increase visitation to smaller towns and localities especially those impacted by the bushfires (suspended due to COVID-19) • Fast-tracking the development of tourism infrastructure for the Mermaids Pool and Tahmoor Canyon Walks. • Developing Township Marketing Plans (TMPs) for a number of towns in the Shire including resilience building activities for communities. • Bringing forward the development of the new Wollondilly Visitor Guide in response to the bushfires, floods and COVID-19. • Established the Wollondilly Business Community Taskforce in response to Bushfires / COVID-19 to advise Council on appropriate responses to specifically help the business community through the COVID-19 pandemic; provide feedback to Council on current and emerging issues, opportunities and challenges facing the business community and be the sounding board for potential ideas, responses and solutions to help the business community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Councils and tourism businesses to subscribe to Destination NSW’s Industry newsletter, Insights - as well as the Destination Networks e-news updates to keep abreast of news and information about financial assistance and other forms of business support. • Continue to share opportunities through Destination NSW digital marketing and social media campaigns including Now’s the Time to Love NSW. • Continue to pursue opportunities for regional conferencing to attract business events for the region once COVID restrictions have lifted • Support event delivery through the Regional Conferencing Tool Kit. <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNSW and WSIAO assist DNSW connect to relevant business chambers and regional organisations across each of the regions • In collaboration with GSRRRC councils, support Destination NSW and Destination Networks and Tourism Australia to develop appropriate local, regional and state-wide tourism recovery responses • Support GSRRRC councils’ advocacy for funding of domestic marketing activities from Tourism Australia / Aust Government / NSW Government • Assist Destination NSW and Destination Networks in the coordination of a regional events and visitation strategy • Advocate for a series of programs, developed by DNSW and Destination Networks to reinvigorate visitation into regions impacted by bushfires, drought, flood and amplified by COVID-19 restrictions • Consider the broader impacts on tourism in recovery planning (infrastructure, supply chain, staffing and training)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for The Great Burragorang Valley Walk Project, a 316km walk joining the Blue Mountains, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs through the extraordinary Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and Burragorang Valley landscapes <p>Gaps Identified for Tourism Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reopening of some National Parks is taking too long, impacting tourism (Definite impacts felt in Oberon with Kanangra-Boyd National Park) Lack of communication with councils in regard to National Parks The plight of the town and impacts of the Jenolan Caves closure failed to register with government for some time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate workshops or a working group to represent the wider group, in drawing up applications for any relevant government assistance / recovery package for Greater Sydney Implement any funding received into tangible actions to aid recovery of the tourism industry across the Greater Sydney region and encourage visitation – once COVID-19 restrictions are eased. Work with councils and Regional NSW to create “buy local” campaigns to encourage local procurement <p>National Parks & Wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled engagement sessions between councils and National Parks & Wildlife <p>Training Services NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunities with DNSW to ensure that the tourism and hospitality industries have a sufficient number of trained staff when they reopen after COVID-19 restrictions are eased Work with outdoor tourism businesses that could benefit from reskilled workers, accelerating recovery, rebuild and clean-up of the National Parks, as well as filling staff shortages due to the longevity of closures Work with local attractions, accommodation and hospitality venues subject to their need for trained staff to support reopening <p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement individual “Love Local” campaigns to encourage visitation post COVID restrictions and to encourage locals shopping locally Continue to work with Destination NSW and Destination Sydney Surrounds Networks aligning local campaigns with the “Now’s the Time to Love NSW” campaigns and messaging in line with changing COVID-19 travel restrictions
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop tailored localised programs to drive recovery Continue to investigate opportunities to attract a greater share of visitors and articulate the region's point of difference
	Primary Producers	Rural Assistance Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural disaster recovery grants (\$15K) provide immediate relief to eligible primary producers, small business and non profit organisations for clean up and restoration costs (joint Australian and NSW government Disaster Recovery funding arrangements) Special Disaster Grant – Bushfires (up to \$75K) for immediate clean up and repairs for eligible primary producers Disaster relief loans – Primary Producers – low interest loans (up to \$130K) to help farm business continue to operate for the next twelve months or until the next income is received NSW Disaster Relief Loans – low interest loans to assist non-profit organisations directly affected (up to \$250K) Concessional loans for directly and indirectly affected: Working Capital Loan up to \$50K, over 5 years with a 2 year interest free period Bushfire Recovery Loan up to \$500K over 10 years, with a 2 year interest free period Dairy farming businesses directly impacted by bushfire since August 2019 can apply for grants up to \$200,000 per dairy farm business to support their recovery. Given the compounding issues faced by dairy farming businesses over several years including drought and longer-term industry pressures, co-contributions are not required to access this funding Aquaculture permit holders affected by bushfire since August 2019 can apply for grants of up to \$20,000 per aquaculture business, to assist in the targeted recovery of their production. Funds are to be matched by an equal cash or in-kind contribution from the business. The DPI Rural Resilience Program staff provide information on support available for farmers and their families or workers recovering from natural 	Training Services NSW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunities with TSNSW for Primary producers to get assistance from those being reskilled, to assist in recovery and clean up on farm, and/or harvest as required RAA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide updates to Resilience NSW on additional support assistance as it is announced to enable direct dissemination to businesses through Service NSW Regional NSW / WSIAO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist RAA connect to relevant business chambers and regional organisations across each of the regions Coordinate with Animals and Agribusiness Subcommittee and councils to raise awareness of support and channel eligible businesses to RAA Local Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to pursue opportunities to work in partnership to support Primary producers to gain assistance and support including reskilling and any other opportunities. Continue to work with DPI to support and facilitate assistance to orchardists across the region

		disasters and can connect them with relevant support services and assistance packages	
NSW Wine Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSW Wine Industry Association Regional Recovery Action Plan 28 Jan 2020 – addressing affects of drought, fire and smoke taint and storm impacts• Horticulture grants for businesses directly impacted by bushfire to assist in the recovery of production. Grants are available per hectare depending on the extent of damage, orchard style, or type of perennial tree and berry crop. Funds are to be matched by an equal cash or in-kind contribution from the business.• Viticulturalists – grants for those impacted by bushfire to assist in the recovery of their farms and vineyards• Viticulturalists - small businesses that experienced a significant decline in revenue as a result of the NSW 2019-2020 bushfires and is located within a declared LGA, may be eligible for the \$10,000 Small Business Support Grant from Service NSW.• Repair and Replanting Grant - Businesses which had vineyards in active production which were directly damaged by fire. Grants are available up to \$20,000 per burnt hectare, to be matched by an equal cash or in-kind contribution from the business.• Recovery Grant (non-disaster declared areas) - Businesses outside the declared LGAs that have suffered smoke taint. Grants are available up to \$10,000 per business, no co-contribution required• Recovery Grant of up to \$10,000 - is available to Viticulturalists whose businesses suffered from smoke taint. This includes the following non-disaster declared areas: Orange, Cabonne, Yass and Hilltops.• The DPI Rural Resilience Program staff provide information on support available for farmers and their families or workers recovering from	<p>Resilience NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consideration needed for a set of guidelines to determine direct impacts for the wine industry (i.e. Smoke taint, netting, soil erosion etc) <p>Training Services NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue opportunities to ensure that the wine industry have sufficient numbers of trained staff when they are able to reopen after COVID-19 restrictions are eased. <p>Destination NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to generate awareness and drive visitation for food and wine experiences in the region through publicity activities• Continue to work with wineries to assist in developing bookable tourism experiences through the Destination NSW, NSW First Program.• Increase awareness of NSW as a destination for food and wine tourism to international and domestic markets via social media and marketing campaigns <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist DNSW & TSNSW connect to relevant business chambers and Indigenous & Regional organisations across the regions• Support industry advocacy aimed at accelerating recovery• Work with SNSW, RAA and councils to ensure businesses access the assistance and grants available to them• Act as a conduit to SNSW, RAA and councils for new and arising information and grants as they become available	

	<p>natural disasters and can connect them with relevant support services and assistance packages</p> <p>Gaps Identified for the Wine Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding took a significant amount of time to be agreed bird netting was not considered for orchardists, resulting in bats descending on the remaining fruit / vines that the smoke and/or fire had not already destroyed. issues surrounding smoke taint and the loss of the 2020 vintage considered as indirect damage although the damage is direct. 	<p>Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to pursue opportunities to work in partnership to support Primary producers to gain assistance and support including reskilling and any other opportunities
Forestry, Horticulture & Agribusiness Industries	<p>NSW Government</p> <p>\$140M Bushfire Industry Recovery Package to support Forestry, Horticulture and Agribusiness industries impacted by the recent bushfires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply Chain Support grants will support forestry, horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture industries impacted by the recent bushfires to rebuild, recover, regrow and remain the heartbeat of regional economies. Horticulture businesses directly impacted by bushfire since August 2019 can apply for grants to assist in the recovery of production. Grants are available per hectare depending on the extent of damage, orchard style, or type of perennial tree and berry crop. Funds are to be matched by an equal cash or in-kind contribution from the business Through Local Land Services, Bushfire-affected landholders will now have access to their share of up to \$209 million to help cover the cost of rebuilding boundary fences which adjoin public lands. These are one-off grants of up to \$5,000 per km available for the purchase of materials to rebuild existing fences adjoining public lands damaged by the summer fires. <p>Gaps identified for Forestry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW forestry grant has had mixed feedback. Subsidies for salvage timber haulage will be looked at by a select few although the wear and tear on tools limits the interest of most. 	<p>NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) / Forestry Corporation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a forestry recovery action plan with the forestry industry Implement agreed recovery action plan In collaboration with councils and Regional NSW, identify and engage with large employers in the region regarding impediments Assess if long term viability of any businesses will be affected and identify at-risk companies Support structural change in the industry through targeted support to businesses demonstrating long term commitment to NSW <p>Training Services NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunity for timber transport workers who will be disrupted after timber salvage is complete, to work on Snowy 2.0 or assist with bushfire recovery and clean up <p>Regional NSW / WSIAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist DPI and TSNSW connect to relevant business chambers and Indigenous & Regional organisations across the region Work with businesses to access the Bushfire Industry Recovery Package for the Forestry Industry

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce shifts to damaged plantation areas outside of LGA does have a workforce dispersion effect businesses such as sawmills, harvest and haulage companies will be significantly impacted due to the shortfall, with no future loads after the timber salvage is complete 	Local Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and implement appropriate actions as set out in the Regional Recovery Action Plan for the Animal & Agribusinesses Sub-committee
Repairs for major connectivity infrastructure	BI&T sub committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination and escalation to OEM and the Australian & NSW governments regarding the need for time critical repairs to significant transport and telecommunications infrastructure and advocacy to relevant agencies Gaps Identified for Connectivity Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilient business models that can withstand disruptions to major roadways, railway lines and communications infrastructure 	Transport for NSW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise rail services between Lithgow and Mt Victoria, currently serviced by buses Prioritise bridge repair works in Hawkesbury and Oberon LGAs Local Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to escalate issues within the local community that need escalation to Resilience NSW and the Australian government in relation to critical infrastructure In collaboration with NSW SBC, advocate for full restoration of telecommunications connectivity across GSRRC Support and implement appropriate actions as set out in the Regional Recovery Action Plan for the Infrastructure, Waste, and Environment Sub-Committee