



**SENATOR THE HON LINDA REYNOLDS CSC  
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS**

**THE HON TROY GRANT MP  
NEW SOUTH WALES MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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**BUSHFIRE ASSISTANCE FOR NSW COMMUNITIES**

Disaster assistance has been made available for NSW communities affected by the mid-August bushfires.

Assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) in response to the following bushfires:

- Shoalhaven bushfires from 11 August 2018
- Bega Valley and Eurobodalla bushfires from 15 August 2018, and
- Cessnock and Port Stephens bushfires from 15 August 2018.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs Linda Reynolds, who has responsibility for Commonwealth disaster assistance, said that it was unusual for such significant bushfires to occur during this time of year.

“This reinforces the need for people to be well prepared and have a plan, especially as we approach what is expected to be a very dangerous bush fire season,” Assistant Minister Reynolds said.

“The fires were fuelled by strong winds and burnt through thousands of hectares of land, threatening life and causing major disruptions to the affected communities.

“A range of assistance is now available to help people who have been affected by the bushfires as well as funding for operational response activities.”

NSW Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant said that significant firefighting operations were required in response to each of the bushfires, especially the Bega Valley bushfire that continues to burn.

“I’d like to praise the incredible efforts of our first responders, who continue to protect the communities under threat. Our men and women on the frontline do an outstanding job,” Mr Grant said.

“Regrettably, a helicopter pilot lost his life when responding to the bushfires in the Shoalhaven area, and I again extend my deepest sympathies to the pilot’s family, friends and colleagues.”

Assistance measures available under the NDRRA may include:

- help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged;
- support for affected local councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets;
- concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations;
- freight subsidies for primary producers; and,
- grants to eligible non-profit organisations.

For information on personal hardship and distress assistance, contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444. To apply for a concessional loan, grant or freight subsidy, contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au).

Further information on disaster assistance is available on the Australian Government’s Disaster Assist website at [disasterassist.gov.au](http://disasterassist.gov.au) and the NSW emergency information and response website at [emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://emergency.nsw.gov.au).

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