

Bushfire Season – Emergency and Crisis Assistance

This factsheet is designed to help your preparation for bushfire season in the ACT. If you have concerns about bushfire season, how to legally prepare, or what your rights and obligations are, please call the free **Legal Aid Helpline** on **1300 654 314**.

Are there options for emergency and crisis assistance?

If you have suffered loss or been adversely affected as a result of a bushfire, there are several options that may be able to support you.

Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth Government has a Disaster Recovery Allowance which helps people who have been adversely affected by bushfires. The scheme offers payments and services for those who are recovering from bushfires or need emergency help for homelessness, financial hardship or loss as a result of the bushfires.

To get Disaster Recovery allowance, you must satisfy certain criteria.

You must be:

- over 16 years of age;
- an Australian resident or eligible visa-holder;
- work or live in an affected Local Government Area; and
- lose income as a direct result of the bushfire and earn less than the average weekly income in the weeks after the income loss.

The amount you will receive depends on your individual circumstances. You will need to provide evidence of your loss of income and your circumstances.

For more information on how to access these payments and your eligibility, please visit the **Services Australia** website at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/>.

Other Payments

If you have been affected by bushfires, you may be able to apply for an income support payment to help you with your living costs. The type of payment you can get and the amount of payment may depend on your circumstances. Examples of assistance you may get include:

- advance lump-sum payment for people on Centrelink benefits;
- crisis payments;
- special benefits;
- carer adjustment payments; and
- pension loan schemes.

For more information, you should contact **Services Australia** on 180 22 66.

Emergency Resources

You should familiarise yourself with any websites, radio stations and apps that provide useful information and resources on bushfires and appropriate survival plan measures. Some examples include **Access Canberra** (13 22 81), the **Emergency Services Agency** website (esa.act.gov.au) and the **Fires Near Me** phone application or website.

Legal Aid ACT acknowledges it has reproduced some of this information from the Disaster Legal Help Victoria website -

<https://www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au/get-help/emergency-and-crises-assistance>.