

APPROVED: Public Information Document - January 2019 Bushfires

WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2019 – 10:30AM

CONTENTS

Contents	1
1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND UPDATES	4
1.1 Property loss and damage	4
1.2 Recovery information	4
1.3 Stay away from bushfire affected areas	4
1.4 Total fire ban information	4
1.4.1 Not permitted during a Total Fire Ban:.....	4
1.4.2 Permitted during a Total Fire Ban:.....	5
1.4.3 Use of chainsaws, brush cutters/whipper snippers and mowers during a total fire ban	5
1.4.4 The occupier of the land where a fire occurs must immediately:	5
1.5 Injured and orphaned wildlife: What to do if you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal.....	5
1.6 Free green waste disposal – huonville	6
2 ACCESSING INFORMATION	6
2.1 Social media hashtags	6
2.2 Accessing whole-of-government information from TasALERT	6
2.3 How to access information about fires/warnings	7
2.4 Road, track and site closures	7

2.4.1	Road closures.....	7
2.4.2	Supply of essential goods and services to the huon area.....	7
2.4.3	Track closures (National Parks) – Parks and Wildlife	7
2.4.4	School closures – Department of Education (libraries, child and family centres and schools).....	8
2.4.5	2.4.5 School Bus Services	8
2.4.6	Hydro sites.....	9
2.5	Mail in Bushfire Affected areas	9
2.6	Community meetings and bushfire briefings	9
2.6.1	Community meetings information	9
2.6.2	Upcoming Community Bushfire Briefings	9
3	PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES	10
3.1	Smoke Warning	10
4	DEFENDING YOUR HOME	11
4.1	Bushfire Safety.....	11
4.2	Defending your property during a bushfire	11
4.3	Power outage safety and preparation during bushfires	11
5	EVACUATION INFORMATION	12
5.1	Current evacuation centres	12
5.2	Huonville evacuation information:	13
5.2.1	How will I know if I need to evacuate?.....	13
5.2.2	What do I do if an evacuation is ordered?	13
5.2.3	Can I take my pet?	13
5.2.4	What about my horse (or other large domestic animals)?	14
5.2.5	What to do after an evacuation.....	14

6	POWER AND WATER UPDATES	14
6.1	Hydro Tasmania.....	14
6.2	TasWater – Water conservation.....	14
7	HEALTH AND WELLBEING – SUPPORT AVAILABLE	15
7.1	Where to get help.....	15
7.2	Who can I contact?	15
8	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	17
8.1	Emergency Assistance Grants	17
8.2	Recovery and Restoration Grants	18
8.3	Access to grants for people with a disability, Frail, Aged and no mode of transport	18
8.4	Allegations of Fraudulent claiming of grants	19
8.5	Disaster Recovery Allowance.....	19
8.6	Banks Offer Emergency Assistance For Affected Customers	19
8.7	Funding for councils	20
8.8	Information for businesses	20
8.9	Freight subsidies	21
9	HOW THE PUBLIC CAN HELP	21
9.1	Vinnies Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal	21
9.2	Donations – goodS and assistance not required.....	21
9.3	Volunteering.....	22
9.4	Register.Find.Reunite. SERVICE.....	22
10	TOURISM	23
10.1	Messages for travellers	23
10.2	Messages for tourism operators.....	23

10.3	Tourism businesses affected by fire	24
11	RETURNING TO YOUR HOME AFTER A BUSHFIRE.....	25
11.1	Electrical Safety After a bushfire	25
12	KEEPING RAINWATER TANKS SAFE IN BUSHFIRE AFFECTED AREAS ..	26
13	LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC EVENT	26

I GENERAL INFORMATION AND UPDATES

I.1 PROPERTY LOSS AND DAMAGE

The Tasmania Fire Service confirms that six properties have been destroyed or damaged by fire, and Tasmania Police have contacted the property owners. The Tasmania Fire Service continues to investigate reports of damaged properties.

I.2 RECOVERY INFORMATION

The Tasmanian Government has established a Bushfire Recovery Taskforce to oversee the medium and long-term recovery from the current bushfires.

Michael Stevens, formerly a senior public servant and Coordinator of the 2013 Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, has been appointed to lead the Taskforce.

The Taskforce can be contacted on **1800 567 567** or recovery@dpac.tas.gov.au. Recovery information is available at tasalert.com/recovery

I.3 STAY AWAY FROM BUSHFIRE AFFECTED AREAS

If you do not live in a bushfire affected area, you are asked to stay away. This is important for your own safety and to allow access for emergency services.

Please reconsider non-essential travel and avoid the affected Central Highlands, Huon, Zeehan and Mt Anne areas in particular.

I.4 TOTAL FIRE BAN INFORMATION

During a Total Fire Ban no fires can be lit in the open air for any purpose.

I.4.1 NOT PERMITTED DURING A TOTAL FIRE BAN:

- all BBQs, portable stoves, pizza ovens or other cooking devices that use wood, charcoal, heat beads or other solid or liquid fuel;
- grinding, welding and cutting metal in the open;
- campfires;
- incinerators;
- burning heaps; and
- burning land

I.4.2 PERMITTED DURING A TOTAL FIRE BAN:

- electric and gas BBQs and stoves – as long as they are cleared of flammable material for at least one metre; and
- the use of machinery – as long as operators comply with the Tasmania Fire Service “Machinery Operations Guidelines” available at fire.tas.gov.au.

I.4.3 USE OF CHAINSAWS, BRUSH CUTTERS/WHIPPER SNIPPERS AND MOWERS DURING A TOTAL FIRE BAN

- Mowing with chainsaws, brush cutters/whipper snippers and mowers is permitted in a suburban or built up area, but not in bushland or areas with non-green vegetation.
- You must clear the area of flammable material, make sure water is nearby and all precautions are taken to avoid spark generation (ie clearing the area of rocks).

I.4.4 THE OCCUPIER OF THE LAND WHERE A FIRE OCCURS MUST IMMEDIATELY:

- Take steps to extinguish the fire or prevent it from spreading; and
- Report the fire to Tasmania Fire service by calling Triple Zero (000).

Please note, no fire permits will be issued during a Total Fire Ban and all existing fire permits are automatically suspended.

For more information, visit www.fire.tas.gov.au

For information regarding water usage during a day of Total Fire Ban please refer to www.taswater.com.au

I.5 INJURED AND ORPHANED WILDLIFE: WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED ANIMAL

If you find a sick, injured or orphaned animal as a result of the recent bushfires, please contact the Injured and Orphaned Wildlife Program on 6165 4305 (business hours) or Bonorong Wildlife Rescue* on 0447 264 625 (all hours).

Alternatively, if you are able and it is safe to do so, wildlife may be taken to a veterinary practice.

These four steps will increase the chances of successful release back into the wild:

1. keep the animal warm, dark and quiet
2. do not feed it anything, as often this can do more harm than good
3. keep handling to a minimum
4. keep away from people and domestic animals.

It is in the best interests of the animal for it to be looked after by an experienced wildlife rehabilitator with experience, skills, capacity and appropriate facilities to

rehabilitate it for release back into the wild. If you would like to become a wildlife rehabilitator, please contact the Wildlife Management Branch (6165 4305).

Please note: it is important that you do not enter an area that has been fire-affected until the public is advised that the area is safe.

* Bonorong Wildlife Rescue is a privately run, volunteer-based rescue service operating Tasmania-wide.

1.6 FREE GREEN WASTE DISPOSAL – HUONVILLE

Free green waste will be accepted from Huon Valley residents at no cost at the Southbridge Waste Transfer Station only from tomorrow, Tuesday 5 February, until Monday, 11 February. Proof of residence in the Huon Valley is required.

Opening hours are:

- 10 am – 2pm, Mondays and Wednesdays
- 10am – 4pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays to Sundays

Please note that opening hours may change at short notice due to smoke, fire hazards and road closures.

Visit <https://www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/free-green-waste-disposal/> for more details.

2 ACCESSING INFORMATION

2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA HASHTAGS

#Tasfires

#Southwest

#Westcoast

#CentralPlateau

2.2 ACCESSING WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT INFORMATION FROM TASALERT

TasALERT is the Tasmanian Government's official emergency information website.

If you are affected by the fires in Tasmania you can access all emergency information from the Tasmanian Government in one place on the TasALERT website www.tasalert.com

You can follow TasALERT on social media by searching 'TasALERT' on Facebook and '@TasALERT' on Twitter.

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000). Do not seek assistance through the TasALERT website or social media channels.

2.3 HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT FIRES/WARNINGS

There are uncontrolled bushfires burning around the state. There is a real risk that communities and properties will be affected, particularly in the Huon Valley and Central Highlands.

Visit the Tasmania Fire Service website www.fire.tas.gov.au for current Bushfire Warning Messages for fires affecting the State, or call the Fire Information Line on 1800 000 699.

Report any unlisted fires to the Tasmanian Fire Service by calling Triple Zero (000).

You can also stay up-to-date by listening to ABC local radio.

2.4 ROAD, TRACK AND SITE CLOSURES

2.4.1 ROAD CLOSURES

Visit the Tasmania Police website www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts for information about current road closures. Do not rely on navigation systems, such as Google maps, to provide road closure information.

Do not travel on or enter any closed roads. Motorists should avoid driving through smoke affected areas unless absolutely necessary.

If you have to travel, please drive to the conditions with your headlights turned on, obey all road closures and be aware of reduced speed limits.

2.4.2 SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL GOODS AND SERVICES TO THE HUON AREA

Tasmania Police has assured the community that arrangements are in place to ensure that goods and services are getting through to towns south of Huonville despite the Huon Highway being closed to south-bound traffic.

Police are also considering water-borne delivery options that can be quickly activated for the delivery of goods and services or for evacuations if necessary.

Consideration is being given to bona fide residents wishing to return to their properties, as well as business operators and suppliers.

2.4.3 TRACK CLOSURES (NATIONAL PARKS) – PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service have closed a number of tracks due to high fire danger. Closures or re-openings can sometimes happen at short notice, so for the latest information, visit the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service Facebook page or website: www.parks.tas.gov.au

2.4.4 SCHOOL CLOSURES – DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (LIBRARIES, CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES AND SCHOOLS)

For information about Department of Education site closures due to fire danger, check the latest information at: <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/about-us/alerts/>.

This information includes Child and Family Centres, Libraries and Schools.

Based on advice from the Tasmanian Fire Service, a number of Department of Education sites will remain closed for the next two weeks to ensure the safety of students, staff and the community.

At this stage the following arrangements have been confirmed:

- From Thursday 7 February Glen Huon Primary students and teachers will be able to attend Huonville Primary School.
- From Friday 8 February Geeveston Primary students and teachers will be able to utilise dedicated spaces at Huonville High School.
- From Tuesday 12 February Franklin Primary students and teachers will be able to attend Huonville Primary School.
- From Tuesday 12 February Dover High School students and teachers will be able to attend Huonville High School.

If your child/children have relocated to another area of the state the Department is offering temporary placements in a local Government School. For your child to attend a local school during your temporary relocation, please contact Learning Service at:

- Northern Region (including North West) - 6777 2440
- Southern Region - 6165 6466

Kindergarten students from Dover, Geeveston, Franklin and Glen Huon will be delayed to the week commencing 12 February to ensure the right environment is in place to support the wellbeing of these younger students as they embark on their school journey.

2.4.5 2.4.5 SCHOOL BUS SERVICES

Current road closures in the Huon Valley mean that the usual school bus services cannot be provided. Road closures may also occur during the day affecting where bus services can operate.

Based on advice from the Tasmania Fire Service and Tasmania Police, it has been decided to suspend all Tasmanian Government school bus services SOUTH of the bridge at Huonville starting from Wednesday 6 February 2019. Arrangements for these will be reviewed on a daily basis subject to advice from the Tasmanian Fire Service and Tasmania Police.

The Tasmanian Government school bus services that operate NORTH of Huonville bridge provided by the Department of State Growth will run as normal. These

services will operate from the Huonville Interchange, located in Skinner Lane (not the Huonville High School).

Details on routes and times can be found at:

<https://documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Bushfire%20Support%20-%20Bus%20Details%20Huon%20Valley.pdf>

Parents of students who need to access northern bus services will need to take them to the Huonville Interchange to access their buses. Students will also need to be collected from the Huonville Interchange (Skinner Lane) at the end of the day.

Any service that would normally take students to either Huonville High School or Huonville Primary School will still deliver students there – not leave them at the Interchange. However, students located south of the bridge, who would normally catch a bus to Huonville, will need to get themselves to and from the Interchange.

For more information about school bus services, visit <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/2019/02/tasmanian-government-school-bus-arrangements-cater-bushfires-huon-valley/>

More information: www.education.tas.gov.au/about-us/alerts

The Department of Education is working to support families and the community with information for both parents and teachers on how to best support children through these events, this information can be found here:

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/bushfire-support>

2.4.6 HYDRO SITES

For information about Hydro site closures due to fire danger, check the latest information at: <https://www.hydro.com.au/things-to-do/visitor-information-and-safety/alerts-for-visitors>

2.5 MAIL IN BUSHFIRE AFFECTED AREAS

All mail and parcels are being delivered – service in all areas is back to normal.

2.6 COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND BUSHFIRE BRIEFINGS

2.6.1 COMMUNITY MEETINGS INFORMATION

Check the TasALERT website or Facebook page – or council websites and Facebook pages – for the most up to date messages about community meetings, bushfire briefings and/or information sessions.

2.6.2 UPCOMING COMMUNITY BUSHFIRE BRIEFINGS

Tuesday 5 February – Huonville Town Hall, 40 Main Street, Huonville – 7:00pm

3 PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES

3.1 SMOKE WARNING

Bushfire smoke is likely to continue to affect Tasmania during February. The smoke will vary – it may be light or heavy and may last from several hours to a day or more. Smoke may affect places that are far away from fire.

Parts of southern Tasmania experienced extremely high and potentially harmful levels of smoke in late January. Smoke levels are now lower, but smoky conditions are likely to occur from time to time in the coming weeks.

People returning to areas that were recently affected or threatened by fires should keep in mind the risk to their health from smoke.

Most healthy people can cope with periods of moderately poor air quality but may experience itchy eyes and throat irritation.

Some people are more at risk of health harms from smoke. Pregnant women, infants and children, elderly persons, smokers, and people with chronic medical conditions (especially lung and heart conditions) are more sensitive to the effects of smoke.

If you can see and smell smoke, follow the action plan for your health conditions. This may mean staying indoors.

Public health advice about managing smoky conditions is to:

- Avoid physical activity outdoors when it is smoky.
- Close doors and windows when it is smoky; air the house when it clears.
- Switch home air conditioners to 'recycle' or 'recirculate'.
- Consider visiting a nearby air conditioned, space such as a shopping centre, library or cinema.

If you have chest pain, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms related to the smoke or heat, get urgent medical care. In an emergency call 000.

Useful links:

- Smoke and health information:
www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/alerts/air/bushfire_smoke
- Hot weather and health information:
www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/alerts/standing_health_alerts/extreme_heat
- Monitoring the air quality in your area:
www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/alerts/air

4 DEFENDING YOUR HOME

4.1 BUSHFIRE SAFETY

- The Tasmania Fire Services recommends that leaving early is always the safest option.
- The most important decision you have to make is to decide whether to leave, or to stay and defend your property.
- **If you decide to leave**, prepare your property and leave early. Most people who die in bushfires are caught in the open, either in their car or on foot, because they leave too late. Think about:
 - when to go
 - where to go and how to get there
 - who to tell
 - what to take.
- **Staying to defend** a well-prepared property during a bushfire always carries the risk of injury or death. If you decide to stay and defend your property, make sure:
 - your home is well-prepared
 - you are physically fit and emotionally prepared
 - fire conditions are less than 'extreme'.

4.2 DEFENDING YOUR PROPERTY DURING A BUSHFIRE

- Follow your **bushfire survival plan**.
- Monitor www.fire.tas.gov.au and your local **ABC Radio** station.
- Pack your **emergency kit** into your car. Your **emergency kit should include**: water, medications, toiletries, essential papers and cash, a battery-operated torch and radio, spare batteries, spare clothing, mobile phone charger, bed linen, towels and something to sleep on.
- **Prepare your property**, even if you are planning to leave:
 - block drainpipes and fill gutters with water
 - remove flammable items from outside the house (such as blinds, outdoor furniture, doormats, hanging baskets).

If you decide to stay, get ready to **actively defend** your home.

4.3 POWER OUTAGE SAFETY AND PREPARATION DURING BUSHFIRES

TasNetworks aims to deliver a safe and reliable electricity supply, however unexpected events such as bushfires can cause extended power outages.

If your power goes out, equipment such as electric water pumps cannot be used. Because of this, you should not rely on power supply as part of your bushfire survival plan.

Powerlines and poles are vulnerable to bushfires because they run through all parts of Tasmania's rural landscape, including in fire-prone areas.

It is likely that powerlines in the path of a bushfire may be damaged or destroyed as a result of bushfires.

TasNetworks takes extra precautions when operating the electricity network on Total Fire Ban Days. These precautions include altering our processes to ensure power does not automatically restore following a fault. As this process involves a physical inspection of reported outages, it may take longer for outages to be restored.

Make sure mobile phones and other essential electronic devices are fully charged and keep up-to-date with current outages by following TasNetworks on Facebook or visiting www.tasnetworks.com.au

5 EVACUATION INFORMATION

5.1 CURRENT EVACUATION CENTRES

- **Huonville PCYC** remains open. There is plenty of capacity inside and outside for people at this stage. The PCYC remains open for those who are seeking respite from smoke. Rooms with filtered air are available. There are mobile phone charging facilities available.
 - T: 6264 3122
 - W: huonvalley.tas.gov.au
 - Facebook: @huonvalleycouncil
- **Ranelagh Recreation Grounds** remain open for large animals. Please contact Lisa if you intend to bring animals to the showgrounds so the appropriate accommodation arrangements can be made: 0438 663 192
- **Bothwell Hall** is open from 8.30am to 4.30pm daily as a drop-in centre for information or support (no attendances for overnight stays for at least a week). Contact details are on the door.
- **Hamilton Hall** is not open in the foreseeable future. Contact details are on the door.
- **Kingborough Sports Centre** closed at 10.30am yesterday (Saturday 2 February). Contact details are on the door.
 - T: 6211 8200
 - W: kingborough.tas.gov.au
 - Facebook & Twitter: @KingboroughTas
- **Salvation Army New Norfolk** have opened their doors each day for about three weeks now (working with the Derwent Valley Council authorities) as a drop-in centre for anyone in the Upper Derwent Valley who wants to get away

from smoke and have a break from the tension up there due to the Gell River fire, especially now it has encroached on the Mt Field National Park. It is not an official evacuation centre but will remain open as a community service and all are welcome.

5.2 HUONVILLE EVACUATION INFORMATION:

- **If you do not drive or have access to a car and live in Geeveston**, go to the **Heritage Park** assembly area for **bus transport to Huonville**. Heritage Park is located near the intersection of Arve and School Roads The address is 7 Brady Street.
- **If you are incapacitated and unable to safely make your way to the park, advise Tasmania Police personnel or contact the SES on 132 500.**
- If you can't find temporary accommodation with family or friends, please advise support personnel when you arrive at the **Huonville Evacuation Centre** at the PCYC. The PCYC is behind the Huonville Oval. The address is 40-72 Wilmot Road.
- Community members **seeking grant information**, who do not otherwise need to be at the evacuation centre, should go to **Baden Powell Scout and Guide Hall** (near the Huonville Evacuation Centre at the PCYC) **from 9am**.

5.2.1 HOW WILL I KNOW IF I NEED TO EVACUATE?

- If you need to evacuate to a safer place, public announcements will be issued through ABC local radio and television, TasFire website www.tasfire.gov.au and www.tasalert.com.
- An emergency warning SMS text message may be sent to telephones within the evacuation area but do not wait to receive a text message if you see or hear another announcement.
- Tasmania Police and emergency services personnel will doorknock in the area to inform residents of the need to evacuate but do not wait if you see or hear another announcement.

5.2.2 WHAT DO I DO IF AN EVACUATION IS ORDERED?

- If you are directed to evacuate your property, take only your **emergency kit**, secure your property and leave without delay. **If you have a car**, drive carefully and obey all road signs and directions from Tasmania Police and emergency services personnel.
- TFS are updating evacuation information on their website at: <http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/Show?pageld=colCurrentBushfires>.
- For information on current road closures, visit the Tasmania Police website: <http://www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts/>.

5.2.3 CAN I TAKE MY PET?

- If you need to take the bus or stay at an Evacuation Centre, you may take your cat or dog.

- Pet shelters will be available at the Huonville Showgrounds but you must stay there with your pet.
- If you have a pet crate, make sure you bring it with you. Animals must be on a leash at a minimum.

5.2.4 WHAT ABOUT MY HORSE (OR OTHER LARGE DOMESTIC ANIMALS)?

- Horse, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, ducks, cats, dogs and caged birds can be accommodated at the Ranelagh Showgrounds.
- You will need to take feed with you, although limited food - grain and hay, has been donated.
- You or another responsible adult will need to stay on site constantly to care for your animals.
- If you have horses, please bring electric fence tape and post droppers with you.

5.2.5 WHAT TO DO AFTER AN EVACUATION

- You must not return home until authorities tell you it is safe.
- Be aware of road hazards, such as trees or power lines on the road, damaged roads and bridges, or crews working on clean-up and repairs.
- If your property is affected:
 - do not turn on gas and electricity until you are sure it is safe to do so
 - have all wiring, gas and electrical equipment tested by an electrician
 - wear strong boots, gloves and other protective clothing during clean-up.

6 POWER AND WATER UPDATES

6.1 HYDRO TASMANIA

Waddamana Heritage Site remains closed to the public until further notice, due to fire activity in the area.

A number of recreation sites managed by Hydro Tasmania are also closed due to fire threat, including camping grounds and boat ramps in the Lake Pieman to Upper Derwent and Central Highlands regions. A full list of closures is available on Hydro Tasmania's website: <https://www.hydro.com.au/things-to-do/visitor-information-and-safety/alerts-for-visitors>

6.2 TASWATER – WATER CONSERVATION

It is critical to maintain the availability of water for firefighting and fire prevention.

TasWater encourages all Tasmanians, even in areas not currently affected by fires, to conserve water to make sure water is available in the system to protect properties and life.

Reduce water use by:

- Turning off all sprinkler systems, including automatic sprinkler systems.
- Where possible, restricting hose use to essential purposes such as firefighting or prevention.
- Rescheduling chores that require water, such as watering plants, washing windows or vehicles.

TasWater has procedures in place in the event of power outages at water treatment plants and continues to monitor water systems and treatment plants via remote data systems.

For information about water conservation, see: www.taswater.com.au/waterwise

7 HEALTH AND WELLBEING – SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Natural disasters are traumatic and overwhelming events that can affect everyone in the community. Current bushfires have a widespread impact on the state and many members of our community have encountered emotional, physical and financial stress.

Everyone will feel different in the days, weeks and months that follow an event like this. It is important to take notice of how you and those around you feel and behave in case extra support is needed.

7.1 WHERE TO GET HELP

- Family and friends
- Your doctor
- Social Work Services at your local Community Health Centre
- Local community groups
- Employer assistance programs

7.2 WHO CAN I CONTACT?

You can speak to or see someone now:

Social Work Services

- South: 03 6166 8354
- North: 03 6777 4155
- North West: 03 6478 6119

Rural Alive and Well: 1300 4357 6283

Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24 hours / 7 days)

Beyondblue: 1300 224 636 (24 hours / 7 days)

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24 hours / 7 days)

For more information about how to take care of yourself and others and where (and when) to get help, check out the following FACT SHEET on the TasALERT website (available from the Recovery tab>Bushfires 2019):

[Taking care of yourself and others](#)

8 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

8.1 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANTS

The Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments are providing further financial assistance to those people who have been seriously impacted by the Tasmanian bushfires.

Tasmanians are now able to apply for Emergency Assistance Grants at locations in Launceston and Burnie.

With the release of a second round of the Emergency Assistance Grant, aid of up to \$2,000 per family - \$500 per adult and \$250 per child – is now available for people to assist with buying clothing, food, transport, shelter and personal items.

People who have already received the first round of funding, which was up to \$1,000 per family, are eligible to come back for a second payment of up to \$1,000.

If you did not receive a grant in the first round, you will be able to receive two grants – up to \$1,000 each – at the same time.

All residents from the Huon Valley LGA, West Coast LGA or Central Highlands LGA that have been affected due to fire and/or smoke are eligible for the Emergency Assistance Grant. The Emergency Assistance Grant is not income tested, but you must present in person with proof of ID and residential address to one of the locations listed below.

LOCATIONS – 6 February

- Huonville: Baden Powell Scout and Guide Hall (near the Huonville Evacuation Centre at the PCYC), from **9am – 5pm**
- Hobart: Service Tasmania, 134 Macquarie Street, 9am-5pm.
- Launceston: Service Tasmania, Henty House 1 Civic Square, 8.30m-4.30pm
- Burnie: Service Tasmania, Reece House 48 Cattley Street, 8.45am-4.45pm
- Dover: Esperance Multipurpose Centre, 15 Chapman Avenue, Dover, 10.30am – 3pm.
- Geeveston: Community Hall, 5 Brady Street, Geeveston, 10.30am to 3.00pm.

PROCESS

Applications must be made in person and photo identification with proof of address is required to confirm eligibility for the grant.

For more information, call the Tasmanian Emergency Information Service on **1800 567 567** (between 9am - 5pm)

8.2 RECOVERY AND RESTORATION GRANTS

Three Recovery and Restoration Grants are available to assist in meeting the longer term needs of people who have lost their homes or incurred property damage as a direct result of the bushfires.

The Recovery and Restoration Grants are targeted at individuals most in need who are unable to provide for their own recovery. Eligibility criteria is applied so that low-income households with no or inadequate insurance can be assisted. The three grants are:

- Temporary Living Expenses Grant: Financial assistance for temporary accommodation if a home is unfit to live in or inaccessible.
- Replacement of Household Items: Financial assistance for replacement of essential household items damaged or destroyed.
- Repair and Restoration Grant: Financial assistance for essential repairs to re-establish a home which has been damaged.

The grants are being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

If affected individuals wish to apply for a Recovery and Restoration Grant, they can do so by phoning the Tasmanian Emergency Information Service on **1800 567 567**. These grants will be available for three months after impact.

It is possible that additional financial assistance measures may become available to individuals as the recovery needs of impacted communities become clearer.

Residents of Cygnet meet the eligibility criteria for a grant because they are a) affected by the fires, and b) residents of the Huon Valley LGA.

For people unable to visit a grant application location ie they are south of Huonville due to road closures –

Communities Tasmania is working on a solution to the issue of not being able to verify IDs when they can't meet with impacted people face to face. We will share any updates on the application process or new locations for applying for grants on TasALERT as soon as new info is available.

8.3 ACCESS TO GRANTS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY, FRAIL, AGED AND NO MODE OF TRANSPORT

Applications for Emergency Assistance Grants (EAG) must be made in person and photo identification with proof of address is required to confirm eligibility for the grant.

If the applicant requires transportation to collect their grant, we suggest contacting Community Transport Services Tas. (CTST). Where possible CTST will endeavour to assist people on the West Coast affected by the fires accessing EAG.

People in the Huon Valley, West Coast or Central Highlands local government areas who require transport, due to no private or suitable public transport, can contact CTST by phoning 1800 781 033 or emailing bookings at info@ctst.org.au.

Please be aware that CTST have limited places and there is a waitlist.

CTST will not provide transport in the areas of Emergency Alert, Watch and Act as defined by Tasmania Fire Service.

8.4 ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUDULENT CLAIMING OF GRANTS

Emergency assistance is being provided to individuals and families in need that have been impacted by the current bushfire event.

Assistance is being provided very rapidly to those living in impacted communities by a large number of dedicated people. Applicants are required to provide proof of identification and proof of address, an assessment is made on a case by case basis.

Making a fraudulent application is a serious matter and we will pass on the information you have provided to ensure the people on the ground distributing the grants are aware of this.

8.5 DISASTER RECOVERY ALLOWANCE

The Disaster Recovery Allowance is the latest measure made available by the Commonwealth Government to assist Tasmanians who have suffered financial loss as a direct result of the bushfires.

The Allowance will provide short-term income support to assist employees, sole traders and farmers who can demonstrate that the bushfires have affected their income, and will be payable for up to thirteen weeks from the date of impact.

The Allowance is being made available in addition to the financial support already being provided to Tasmanians under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. This includes Emergency Assistance Grants, Restoration and Recovery Grants and Transport Subsidies.

To lodge a claim for the Disaster Recovery Allowance contact the Department of Human Services on 180 22 66 or visit www.humanservices.gov.au/disaster

8.6 BANKS OFFER EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR AFFECTED CUSTOMERS

Commonwealth Bank

Commonwealth Bank is providing its emergency assistance package for customers and businesses affected by bushfires in southern Tasmania. Special arrangements are in place to provide support to Commonwealth Bank and CommInsure customers should they need it.

They are encouraging affected customers to discuss their individual circumstances with them by either phoning 1300 720 814 or visiting their nearest Commonwealth Bank branch.

Further information about the emergency assistance package available go to www.commbank.com.au/emergencyassistance

Westpac Bank

Westpac Bank's Disaster Relief Package is for customers affected by natural disasters.

Westpac are encouraging affected Tasmanian customers to discuss their individual circumstances with them by either phoning 1800 067 497 to apply for financial relief or call 1800 198 229 for home insurance claims.

8.7 FUNDING FOR COUNCILS

Funding is also being made available to eligible councils through the DRFA for activities such as delivering emergency assistance to individuals, restoring damaged public assets and undertaking counter-disaster operations.

Bushfire affected councils which may be eligible for Disaster Relief funding include Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, Huon Valley and West Coast.

8.8 INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES

During bushfires or other emergencies, Business Tasmania can help impacted businesses access necessary information and services.

If your business has been affected by the current bushfires, contact Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 to register your details. The Business Tasmania team will provide updates as new information comes to hand.

Small business owners can also visit the Business Tasmania team at the Huonville Town Hall weekdays from Monday 4 February to seek advice and discuss issues relating to the impact of the bushfires. You can also call Business Tasmania 9am-5pm weekdays and information sheets will be available on site after hours.

Business Tasmania advice @ Huonville Town Hall
40 Huonville Main Rd
11am-2pm Monday to Friday

If your business is in immediate danger phone 000.

During an emergency you can keep yourself, your staff and your customers updated by visiting www.alert.tas.gov.au or listening to ABC local radio.

Bushfire preparation resources for small businesses are available on the Business Tasmania website at [https://www.business.tas.gov.au/preparing_for_disasters/tools-and-checklists/checklist - bushfires](https://www.business.tas.gov.au/preparing_for_disasters/tools-and-checklists/checklist-bushfires)

Grocery and essential supplies retail businesses concerned about continuity of supply should liaise with their wholesalers to discuss arrangements and possible solutions.

8.9 FREIGHT SUBSIDIES

Freight subsidies will also be made available to eligible primary producers in affected areas that have suffered asset damage relating to the transportation of livestock. Individuals can contact AgriGrowth Tasmania on 03 6777 2233 or visit www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au for more information.

The subsidies are being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

For factsheets on transport subsidies, please visit: <https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/about-the-department/bushfire-information/freight-subsidies-for-primary-producers>

9 HOW THE PUBLIC CAN HELP

9.1 VINNIES TASMANIAN BUSHFIRE APPEAL

Members of the public can also support those affected through the 2019 Vinnies Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal.

No. of Donations Received	No. of Interstate Donations Received	\$ Total of Donations Received	As At
108	18 (Including money received from North Hobart Football Ground yesterday)	\$14,212	05/02/19 @ 9:30am

Cash donations can be made at Vinnies shops throughout Tasmania, or by transfer through the donation hotline on **13 18 12** or the Vinnies website at <https://www.vinnies.org.au/donate#!state=tas>.

9.2 DONATIONS – GOODS AND ASSISTANCE NOT REQUIRED

While the goodwill and generosity of the community is very much appreciated, donated goods and assistance are not required at this stage.

Currently there is no public appeal for donations, nor any need to donate bottles of water or food to fire fighters. However, this situation may change in the future, so please keep informed through TasALERT www.tasalert.com for any updates.

9.3 VOLUNTEERING

If you're thinking about volunteering to help with the current fires, please be aware that only trained volunteers and emergency service workers will be able to assist in affected areas.

However, additional volunteers may be required to help with recovery efforts when it is deemed safe.

The best way you can help is to register through Volunteering Tasmania's online system. EV CREW (Emergency Volunteering - Community Response to Extreme Weather) service will match your skills, availability and location with the needs of organisations supporting recovery efforts.

Volunteering Tasmania will contact you if and when your specific skills are needed, which may be days or even weeks after an emergency occurs.

If you would like to find out more about what the EV CREW do, or to register your interest in becoming an Emergency Volunteer, see <https://emergencyvolunteering.com.au/tas/volunteering/what-does-the-emergency-volunteering-crew-service-do>

9.4 REGISTER.FIND.REUNITE. SERVICE

Red Cross and Tasmania Police have opened Register.Find.Reunite. to register evacuations and assist people affected by the Southwest Fires to get in touch with their families and friends if communications are cut.

“Being separated from family and friends is one of the most stressful things a person can experience during an emergency. Not knowing where your loved ones are, not being able to contact them by phone or email adds to that anxiety,” said Red Cross State Manager Emergency Services, Howard Colvin. “The service helps find and reunite family, friends and loved ones during a disaster.”

People can register and look for someone with Register.Find.Reunite. on the Red Cross website at redcross.org.au from a computer or any mobile device.

If internet and mobile communications are down due to the emergency, people can also register and enquire in person at:

- Huonville Town Hall
- Bothwell Community Hall
- Huon Valley PCYC Evacuation Centre, 42 Wilmot Road Huonville, (Only for people staying AT the evacuation centre)

The Register.Find.Reunite. service matches registrations from people affected by an emergency to enquiries made by their loved ones searching for news. Where a match is made, the person who made and the person registering has given permission to do so, the enquiry will be notified. By registering with Register.Find.Reunite. you are also letting important services know that you are OK and what support you may need.

10 TOURISM

10.1 MESSAGES FOR TRAVELLERS

Tasmania is safe to visit and there are many areas of our State which are unaffected by fire that can be accessed and enjoyed, including many iconic attractions and experiences. Some areas of Tasmania are currently affected by fire and smoke.

- Travellers to Tasmania are advised to keep up-to-date on areas that may be affected and avoid non-essential travel to those locations.
- View the, Tasmanian Fire Service website www.fire.tas.gov.au, [TasALERT](#) website or listen to [ABC local radio](#) for community alerts or warnings.
- For information about current road closures, visit Tasmania Police website at <http://www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts>. Do not rely on navigation systems, such as Google maps, to provide road closure information.
- The majority of visitor destinations and attractions throughout Tasmania are not impacted by the fires and are safe to visit, but it is important that you check yourself before setting out.
- There are 18 accredited Tasmanian Visitor Information Network (TVIN) centres around the state, located here: <https://www.startwithi.com.au/centres/>.
- TVIN staff can provide advice to visitors on up to date and current warnings, road or track closures. They can also assist visitors to change their itineraries and can help find available accommodation should they need to change their plans.
- Whilst smoke is affecting parts of Tasmania, there are many areas not affected. For real time air quality data visit: <https://epa.tas.gov.au/epa/air/monitoring-air-pollution/real-time-air-quality-data-for-tasmania>
- Travellers are advised to contact their insurance company for advice reading changes or cancelations to their travel plans.
- Tourists wishing to travel to Strahan are advised access is still available via Anthony Link Road (to Queenstown) and the Lyell Highway. TFS, in conjunction with Tasmania Police, continue to work towards reopening all roads in the area as soon as practicable and safe.

10.2 MESSAGES FOR TOURISM OPERATORS

Tourism operators should review their safety plans and stay up-to-date with the latest information.

Operators receiving enquiries from visitors should advise them of available options in regards to their booking, and direct them to:

- [TasALERT](#) for consistent and current emergency information and warnings
- [ABC local radio](#) for community alerts and emergency information, useful if on the road or outside internet access
- [Tasmania Police community alerts](#) page for road closure information.
- An accredited [TVIN](#) centre if they require assistance to change travel plans.
- The Parks and Wildlife [Facebook page](#) or [website](#) for the latest track, campsite and reserve closure information.

10.3 TOURISM BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY FIRE

If your business has been impacted by the current bushfires, please contact Business Tasmania for advice on 1800 440 026.

In times of extreme weather events or other emergencies, Business Tasmania can help impacted businesses access necessary information and services.

If your business has been affected contact Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 to register your details.

The Business Tasmania team will keep you informed by providing updates as new information comes to hand.

If your business is in immediate danger phone 000.

During an emergency you can keep yourself, your staff and your customers updated by visiting www.alert.tas.gov.au or listening to ABC local radio.

11 RETURNING TO YOUR HOME AFTER A BUSHFIRE

If you have been evacuated from your home due to fire or smoke danger, please remember that you must not return home until authorities tell you it is safe to do so.

If you've checked with local emergency services that it is safe and you have permission to return, please take a moment to read the following advice and tips and be cautious when returning to your property:

- be aware of road hazards, such as trees or power lines on the road, damaged roads and bridges, or crews working on clean-up and repairs.
- if your property has been affected:
 - do not turn on gas and electricity until you are sure it is safe to do so
 - have all wiring, gas and electrical equipment tested by an electrician
 - wear strong boots, gloves and other protective clothing during clean-up.

For more information about the type of protective clothing you should wear and hazards to look out for, as well as tips about food safety, how to clean your property and your rainwater tank/s, check out the following fact sheet on the TasALERT website (available from the Recovery tab>Bushfires 2019):

[Returning home after a bushfire](#)

11.1 ELECTRICAL SAFETY AFTER A BUSHFIRE

If you're returning to your property in a bushfire affected area, make sure it's safe to do so.

If you experience tingling taps, flickering lights or notice any other indications that something might be wrong, please contact TasNetworks immediately on 132 004.

If your home or buildings like sheds and carports have been impacted by fire (including by embers and ash), your electrical wiring, circuit breakers and fuses will need to be confirmed safe to connect (or remain connected) to our network.

Have your property inspected by a licensed electrician and ensure repairs are carried out before contacting us to have a power restored. For safety purposes, an electrician will have to provide us with a Certificate of Electrical Compliance before reconnection if you have been disconnected for safety reasons.

Plug in your CablePI

When returning home, ensure your CablePI is plugged in and switched on. When it's working correctly it'll show a solid green light. An alarm of flashing amber light indicates a problem. If this occurs, stay away from sinks, taps or other metallic objects in your house immediately call TasNetworks on 132 004.

If you don't have a CablePI, order one at www.tasnetworks.com.au/cablepi

For more information go to: www.tasnetworks.com.au/outagesafety

12 KEEPING RAINWATER TANKS SAFE IN BUSHFIRE AFFECTED AREAS

Bushfires generate large amounts of ash and debris that can contaminate your rainwater supplies.

For more information about keeping rainwater tanks safe in a bushfire and reducing the risk of contamination, check out the following FACT SHEET on the TasALERT website (available from the Recovery tab>Bushfires 2019):

[Keeping rainwater tanks safe in bushfire affected areas](#)

13 LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC EVENT

Natural disasters are traumatic and overwhelming events that can affect everyone in the community. Current bushfires have a widespread impact on the state and many members of our community have encountered emotional, physical and financial stress.

Everyone will feel different in the days, weeks and months that follow an event like this. It is important to take notice of how you and those around you feel and behave in case extra support is needed.

For more information about how to look after yourself and others, and where (and when) to get help, check out the following FACT SHEET on the TasALERT website (available from the Recovery tab>Bushfires 2019):

[Looking after yourself following a traumatic event](#)