

APPROVED: Public Information Document - January 2019 Bushfires

Thursday 31 January 2019 – 10:30am

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1 Social Media Hashtag

#Tasfires

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.

3 How to access information about fires

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.

4 How to access information about 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.

5 Stay away from bushfire affected areas

If you do that 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 or Huon areas in particular.

6 Public health messages

People in smoke-affected areas should take particular care of themselves, their family and friends at outdoor events. If you're planning an outdoor event, consider moving it indoors, or somewhere away from bushfire smoke, if it is very smoky.

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 your asthma action plan or your plan to manage your specific 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.

Hot weather can also pose an additional risk to vulnerable people. The steps to stay safe in smoky conditions can also help protect from heat illness, as well as the following advice:

- If you do go outside, wear long-sleeved clothing, sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat and plenty of broad-spectrum sunscreen (minimum SPF30+).
- Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Never leave anyone in a car in the sun on a hot day.
- Make sure your pets are out of the sun and have plenty of cool water to drink, and don't exercise them in the heat.

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

6.1 Fire retardants and foams

- Fire retardants and foams may be present on your roof if they were used to fight the fire at your property.
- If fire retardant has entered your tank, do not drink the water and do not give it to pets to drink. The water can still be used for fire-fighting and irrigating your garden.
- If fire retardant has landed on your property or car, remove it with water by scrubbing.

6.2 Reducing the risk of contaminated rainwater

- Check your roof and guttering for dead animals. If it is safe, remove them as soon as possible.
- If it is safe and you have water available, remove ash and debris from the roof and gutters by thoroughly hosing off the roof catchment area.
- Do not collect this wash-down water, the first flush of rainwater after the bushfire, or water from first flush devices or diverters (which are recommended as a routine installation).
- You may need to manually divert this water by fully opening the end of the first flush diverter or propping the diverter to one side. If you do not have a first flush diverter, disconnect the inlet from the roof to the tank.
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7 Keeping rainwater tanks safe in bushfire affected areas

The risk to human health is low from contaminated rainwater tanks in bushfire-affected areas. However, if fire-fighting foams have entered your tank, do not drink the water and do not give it to pets to drink.

If your rainwater tank is intact and the water has no abnormal look, smells or taste, it should be safe to use.

It is safest to boil untreated water that you plan to drink. If the rainwater looks, smells or tastes unusual, assume it is contaminated and don't drink it or use it for cooking, or preparing food.

Check your roof and guttering for ash, debris and animal carcasses. Remove them as soon as possible to avoid contaminants getting flushed into your tank. If your rainwater has been contaminated, drain the tank and allow it to refill with clean rainwater or fill it with water from a registered water carter.

For more information visit

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/water/drinking/rural/tanks

7.1 *Removing contamination from your tank*

- If you have significant contamination in your tank, remove any dead animals (while wearing rubber gloves) before emptying your tank.
- You may then allow the tank to refill with rainwater, or refill it with water sourced from a Council registered water carter (look under 'Water Cartage' in the Yellow Pages).
- Public Health Services recommends that the water used to re-fill the tank be disinfected. For information about managing rainwater tanks including disinfecting the replacement water in your tank, see [Guidance on use of rainwater tanks](#).
- If draining and cleaning the tank is not possible in the short-term, you can use the water for purposes other than drinking, such as garden irrigation, washing and toilet flushing.

8 Bushfire smoke alert for Cygnet area

Dense smoke from bushfires is predicted to continue to affect Cygnet and surrounding areas, as well as communities under direct threat of bushfire, for several more weeks.

Bushfire smoke is harmful and can trigger fatal health conditions. Acting to reduce your exposure to smoke will reduce your chances of becoming seriously ill.

People vulnerable to smoke should leave for a place with cleaner air. This may mean staying with friends or family away from areas most affected by bushfire smoke.

The Kingborough Sports Centre in Kingston View Drive, Kingston is available as a smoke refuge for people living in the Cygnet area who need respite from the smoky conditions.

People will be able to stay at the refuge overnight if needed. Anyone planning to stay overnight should bring bedding, including a camp stretcher or mattress where possible. Car parking is available.

People should also bring their medications, phone and device chargers, spare clothes, toiletries and any other items they require for their own care.

Anyone requiring further information should contact **6211 8200**.

A bus will be provided today to assist people with transport from Cygnet to the refuge if they are unable to access their own transport. The bus will leave from 14 Mary St (outside the Old Cygnet Town Hall) at 10am and 2pm. Transport arrangements will be reviewed after today.

Transport registration forms will be on the bus for people who present directly to the vehicle.

Inquiries regarding the bus service can be made to Community Transport Services Tasmania on **6208 8500**.

9 Track closures

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

10 Evacuation advice

10.1 *Bushfire Safety*

- 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'.

10.2 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.

10.3 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.

10.4 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?pagelid=colCurrentBushfires>.
- For information on current road closures, visit the Tasmania Police website: <http://www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts/>.

Huonville evacuation information:

- **If you do not drive or have access to a car**, 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**.

10.5 *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.

10.6 *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.

10.7 *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.

11 **Returning home after a bushfire**

You must be cautious when returning to your property. Check with local emergency services that it is safe and that you have permission to return.

11.1 Protective clothing

Put on protective clothing before entering your property:

- Sturdy footwear and heavy-duty gloves.
- Overalls with long sleeves and trousers (preferably disposable).
- Special face masks (called 'P2'). Ordinary paper dust masks, handkerchiefs and bandanas do not filter out fine ash or dusts or asbestos fibres.

11.2 Be alert to all hazards

If you have a septic tank, it may have been weakened so do not drive or walk over it. Minimise disturbance of dust and ash, which may contain hazardous materials.

Do not spread ash around, moisten it with water to minimise dust.

Be alert for hazardous materials such as LPG cylinders, chemicals (garden/farm), cleaning products, medicines and other burnt residues.

If you are using portable generators make sure they are in a well-ventilated area to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

There may also be overhead hazards such as falling trees and tree limbs, and live power lines.

11.3 Asbestos

Asbestos fibre exposure is only likely when people actively disturb ashes on properties built with asbestos-cement sheeting (built before 1990).

If asbestos may be present, you must get a licensed asbestos removalist to clean-up.

Ash from treated timber

CCA-treated wood is commonly used in decking, fencing and landscaping. After a fire, the ash from this wood contains copper, chromium and arsenic.

This ash can be harmful; keep children and pets away. Seek advice from your local council on ash disposal.

11.4 Food safety

Throw away all perishable food if the power has been off for more than a day. For shorter outages, if food is still cold to touch (less than 50C) it is safe to use.

Once cold or frozen food has warmed or thawed, it should be thrown out.

11.5 Smoke and soot in the home

Open all doors and windows to ventilate your home to help remove any smoke odour. Hard surfaces (furniture, walls and floors) can be washed with mild soap or detergent and water. Soft furniture and bedding can be aired outside.

11.6 *Clothing*

Clothes that smell of smoke and clothes that had been left on the clothes line should be washed normally and dried outside. Rewashing of clothes ensures sensitive skin is protected from soot, particles and ash.

11.7 *Air pollution*

High smoke levels may cause or worsen breathing (respiratory) problems for some people.

Those most at risk are children, the elderly, smokers and people with pre-existing heart and lung diseases, including asthma. These people should avoid unnecessary travel to affected areas.

11.8 *What you should do*

There are a number of steps you can take to protect your health:

- Follow your asthma action plan or your individual health plan.
- Avoid physical activity outdoors.
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed where possible.
- Switch air conditioners to 'recycle' or 'recirculate'.
- When indoors, minimise other sources of air pollution such as tobacco smoke and wood stoves.
- If your home gets too smoky or hot for comfort, consider going somewhere with less smoke or with air conditioning.

11.9 *Keeping track of the smoke*

Check the smoke particle levels in your area through the Environment Protection Authority's real-time air quality data

Air quality notifications are activated when smoke levels are high in an area for just one hour.

You can see when an air quality notification is active in your area and follow the recommended precautions

You can download the free AirRater app to keep track of air quality in your area.

11.10 *Further information*

Contact Public Health Services for further advice about possible hazards, the health effects of smoke, current air quality and further factsheets.

Phone 1800 671 738, email public.health@health.tas.gov.au or visit www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/alerts

12 Tourism

12.1 Messages for travellers

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 [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.

12.2 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.

11.3 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.

13 Donations

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.

14 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>

15 Department of Education site closures (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 (only school staff are affected by closures during the school holiday period).

16 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

17 Information for businesses

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.

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.

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.

18 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

19 Preventing spread of disease in areas affected by bushfires

People affected by extreme bushfires in Tasmania may be at greater risk of gastroenteritis (gastro) and other diseases that spread from person to person.

These sorts of illnesses can be harder to control where people are living closely together with limited facilities.

If you're in an evacuation or recovery centre, tell the centre coordinator if you or someone you care for becomes unwell with diarrhoea (runny poo), vomiting, stomach pains or fever.

This is important so staff and health services can take steps to slow the spread of illness. Elderly people, infants and people with medical conditions can become very ill with gastro.

19.1 *What is gastro?*

Gastro is an infection of the intestines (the bowel). It is common and is always around in the community.

It is often caused by viruses but can also be caused by bacteria and parasites.

Common symptoms of gastro are diarrhoea, sometimes with nausea, vomiting, stomach pains and fever.

Symptoms usually last a couple of days but sometimes for as long as a week.

19.2 *How can I prevent gastro?*

Gastro spreads easily from person to person, mostly from close personal contact and from contact with contaminated objects (eg if you touch something that has been contaminated and then touch your mouth).

It can also spread via food and water.

You can protect yourself and others from gastro by following these steps:

1. Clean your hands by washing them with soap and water for at least 15 seconds and drying them (a disposable paper towel is best), and/or by using an alcohol-based hand gel:
 - whenever they are dirty
 - after going to the toilet or changing nappies

- before handling food, drinks or eating utensils.
2. Eat safe food and drink safe water:
- keep cold food cold (below 5 degrees C) and hot food hot (above 60 degrees C)
 - cook frozen or perishable food (such as meat or cooked meals) as soon as it is thawed; otherwise, throw it out
 - cook foods thoroughly
 - drink safe water: commercially bottled water, boiled water or water supplied by the emergency services.

19.3 What should I do if I get gastro?

1. Look after yourself

- Drink plenty of fluids. Water or rehydration drinks (from pharmacies) are best. The most common complication of diarrhoea is dehydration. Babies, children and the elderly are most at risk of dehydration.
- If you're alone at home, let a family member or friend know you are ill.
- Consider seeking medical care if you are particularly unwell.

2. Protect others

- If you're in an evacuation or recovery centre, please tell the centre coordinator you are ill as soon as possible. They'll help you get medical care and can take steps to help slow the spread of illness to others in the centre. Elderly people, infants and people with medical conditions can become very ill with gastro.
- Be super fussy about cleanliness. Clean your hands with soap and water (drying them with a disposable paper towel is best), and/or an alcohol-based hand gel thoroughly after going to the toilet.
- Do not prepare or serve food for others, or share food or drinks, until you've been well again for 48 hours.
- Always cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.

20 Hydro Tasmania site closures

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>

21 Upcoming Community Bushfire Briefings

Thursday 31st January – 3PM – **Bothwell Town Hall**

Friday 1st February 2019 – 6PM – **Miena Community Centre**

22 Emergency Assistance Grants

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

A second round of Emergency Assistance Grants is now available, meaning that those displaced who have already received a grant may re-apply. Photo identification is needed to apply and grants of up to \$1000 per family will be provided. Applications are to be made in-person at Service Tasmania Hobart or Baden Powell Scout and Guide Hall, Huonville.

Three Recovery and Restoration Grants will also be made 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.

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.

23 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.

24 Vinnies Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal

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

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>.

25 Register.Find.Reunite. launched

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)**
- **(from Thursday morning) the Kingborough Sports Centre in Kingston View Drive, Kingston**

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.

26 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.

24.1 What to expect

- **Shock**
 - Feeling overwhelmed
 - Feeling numb and detached
- **Physical reactions**
 - Cannot eat
 - Feeling sick
 - Cannot sleep
- **Thoughts**
 - Confusion
 - Forget things
- **Images**
 - Nightmares
 - Flashbacks of what happened

- **Emotions**
 - Fear
 - Sadness
 - Anger
- **Behaviour**
 - Increased alcohol consumption
- **Attitudes**
 - Guilt or failure
 - Questioning your actions
- **Social**
 - Avoiding people
 - Needing to talk about it

24.2 Taking care of yourself and others

Staying in touch with friends and family and talking about how you feel will be important in recovering after a traumatic event.

Looking after yourself

- Keep in touch with people you trust
- Talk about it
- Exercise
- Try to relax
- Give yourself time
- Take a pause and breath slowly

Looking after others

- Listen to their worries
- Help with simple things
- Give them time to recover
- Let them show their feelings
- Remind them to eat and rest
- Ask what is important to them
- Reassure them about safety and security

24.3 When and where should I get help

Do not wait until things become too hard or you feel that you are doing it tough before speaking to someone.

When to get help

- If you are worried
- There is no-one to talk to
- You continue to feel upset
- Physical feelings worry you
- Loss of hope or interest in the future

Where to get help

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

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)

27 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.

28 Total fire ban information

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

28.1 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

28.2 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.

28.3 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).

28.4 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 the 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