



## Prioritising Mental Health – bushfire response

The Australian Government is providing critical mental health support to people, communities and first responders impacted by the 2019–20 bushfire emergency.

This includes:

- Frontline emergency distress and trauma counselling in affected areas.
- Providing up to 10 additional face-to-face and telehealth Medicare-subsidised psychological therapy sessions under the Bushfire Recovery Access Initiative.
- Training for emergency services personnel and their employers to ensure they are equipped to recognise and respond to trauma.
- Expanding local mental health services commissioned by Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to meet increased demand.
- Bolstering the capacity of headspace services in areas significantly affected, including expansion of the planned Bateman’s Bay service.
- Funding for bushfire trauma response coordinators to be a single point of contact and link individuals with appropriate mental health supports.
- Small community grants for grass-roots activities to strengthen social connectedness, improve mental health and assist community recovery.

### Why is this important?

The scale and ferocity of the 2019–20 bushfires has had a devastating effect on our communities, environment and infrastructure – and significantly affected the mental health of many Australians. This measure provides immediate and improved longer-term access to the critical resources people and communities affected by the bushfires need to assist recovery from this disaster.

### Who will benefit?

Communities and emergency service personnel across Australia who are directly affected by bushfires during 2019–20 will benefit from this support.

### How much will this cost?

This will cost \$76 million from 2019–20 to 2021–22.