



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP

Prime Minister

Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie

Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience

Senator the Hon. Linda Reynolds CSC

Minister for Government Services

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE SUPPORT FOR NSW AND QUEENSLAND FLOOD ZONES

More support is on the way for families, farms and businesses affected by the catastrophic flooding disaster in northern NSW and Queensland as part of an additional package of support from the Morrison Government.

As communities continue the recovery and clean-up effort led by Resilience NSW and regional recovery coordinator, Deputy Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon, as well as by the Queensland Government and Major General Jake Ellwood, this further support from the Morrison Government will ensure people get money in their pockets to help get them through.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said his government was focused right now on the pressing needs of communities in NSW and Queensland.

“I intend to recommend to the Governor-General to make a National Emergency Declaration covering this severe weather and flooding event across New South Wales and Queensland to ensure all our emergency powers are available and that we cut through any red tape we might face in delivering services and support on the ground,” the Prime Minister said.

“I have made this decision today, in consultation with the Premiers, after further briefings from government agencies about the situation in northern NSW and seeing the catastrophe firsthand. We introduced the power to make a National Emergency Declaration after the Black Summer bushfires and it will ensure our Ministers and agencies don’t face any unnecessary bureaucracy as they roll out what communities need.

“The feedback we’ve had from communities, state governments and my own ministers who have visited the impacted areas has helped us identify where the gaps are right now, and how we can get support out the door quickly to where it’s needed.”

The National Recovery and Resilience Agency and Emergency Management Australia have assessed the flood extent area, the proportion of the populations affected, the latest residential impact assessments and the proportion of population seeking assistance for Disaster Recovery Payments to declare the Richmond Valley, Lismore and Clarence Valley LGAs are the highest impacted areas and in need of additional support.

The Prime Minister said those three LGAs were facing catastrophic conditions.

“The sheer scale and impact to these areas in northern NSW highlights the need for extra support right now,” the Prime Minister said.

“While people in northern NSW aren’t able to work, are still clearing out their homes and businesses, the extra two lots of \$1,000 payments we’re rolling out to eligible families and individuals will give them some certainty as they start to rebuild their lives.

“We can’t underestimate the long term mental health toll so many communities will be facing. As well as the new mental health supports we’re announcing, my government will closely monitor the situation to understand what else people need as they recover from these disasters.

“Resilience NSW and Deputy Commissioner Lanyon and the Queensland Government and Major General Ellwood will work alongside the Federal National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA) to identify the priorities for the longer-term recovery under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

“We’ll work closely with the NSW and Queensland Governments to deliver further funding. It’s crises like this that the Emergency Response Fund was established to help support and it will help as part of the initiatives we deliver so communities across NSW and Queensland get back on their feet.”

This next phase of support includes:

- An additional two weekly disaster payments for the catastrophe zones in the Lismore, Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley LGAs, automatically paid for those who have already claimed and received the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment, at the current rate of \$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child. These payments will be made from 15 and 22 March. The NRRRA will also undertake assessment of possible additional LGAs that also meet the catastrophic impact assessment
- Support for Norco in northern NSW on a bespoke business support package, in partnership with the NSW Government, to help restore operations of this key business and employer
- \$10 million to support the mental health of school-aged children in the Northern Rivers region affected by the recent flood event under the ‘Resilient Kids’ program
- \$800,000 to extend the Regional Small Business Support Program to include small businesses impacted by the recent flood event in NSW and QLD for two RFCS regions, with a six month extension until 31 December 2022, as well as free and independent case managed financial counselling through the Rural Financial Counselling Service
- \$5.4 million to boost existing legal assistance services operating within affected communities
- \$25 million for emergency relief, food relief and financial counselling services

- Approximately \$6.9 million in support payments of \$10,000 to assist early childhood education and care (ECEC) services affected by the floods where they have been closed for more than seven days. More severely impacted services will also be able to apply for Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances grants
- \$7 million to expand the Commonwealth's business recovery and resilience service, Strengthening Business, into at least 30 of the most flood affected regions of northern New South Wales (NSW) and south-eastern Queensland
- \$31.2 million to deliver immediate and longer term local mental health support services for individuals, families, and communities impacted by the disaster and to support communities to recover and build resilience across the flood affected communities
- \$4.7 million to ensure the immediate continuity of primary health care services for flood-impacted Australians

Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience Bridget McKenzie said the Government was also looking at how to support primary producers particularly in northern NSW.

"As people turn their minds to the future, we want them to know they've got options and we'll be there to help them," Minister McKenzie said.

"That's why we're working with NSW and Queensland to identify the priorities for the longer-term recovery under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements."

Minister for Government Services Linda Reynolds said the additional \$1,000 disaster payments would take immediate pressure off many families and allow them to focus on recovering from this major disaster event.

"The catastrophic scale and impact of what we're seeing in this region of northern NSW is exactly why this extra support is needed," Minister Reynolds said.

"The additional two \$1,000 payments will automatically kick in for AGDRP recipients in the Lismore, Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas so there is no need for people to re-apply.

"Eligible adults in these three LGAs will receive a total payment of \$3000 each, plus a total of \$1,200 for each child. I'd encourage anyone who has not yet applied for the disaster payment to do so as soon as possible."

The Federal Government has paid \$238.9 million in disaster payments to 205,700 individuals impacted in NSW, since the payments opened on 1 March, including \$16.5 million to 14,342 individuals in northern NSW. The Government has also paid \$146.3 million in disaster payments to 125,200 individuals impacted in Queensland, since the payments opened on 28 February.

The Morrison Government has so far deployed more than 4,370 Australian Defence Force personnel to the flood zones, including 2,650 to northern NSW, and this support is expected to increase over coming days, with total deployments expected to reach 6,000 across NSW and Queensland by the end of the week.

The ADF are also deploying additional tractors, front end loaders, bob cats, dump and lift trucks into the region, and have been inserted into communities including Evans Head, Coraki, Woodburn and

Broadwater by helicopter, and have been on the ground in Wilson's Creek, Main Arm and Repentance Creek.

The latest round of support is in addition to the \$434.7 million package announced last week by the Morrison and Perrottet Governments, including:

- Demand driven - \$75,000 grants to assist primary producers that have suffered direct damage from the recent severe weather and flooding. NSW Government estimate this to initially be \$111.5 million.
- Demand driven - \$50,000 grants to assist small business and not-for-profit organisations that have suffered direct damage from the event. NSW Government estimate this to initially be \$89.7 million.
- \$210 million to assist affected communities with the clean-up and removal of flood and storm related damage, debris and green waste. This will enable LGAs to work with Resilience NSW and NSW Government agencies to coordinate clean-up activities in their communities.
- \$1 million grants to impacted councils to assist with their immediate social, built, economic and environmental needs. This list may continue to grow.
- \$6.5 million to provide Community Recovery Officers to support communities impacted by this event.

The Morrison and Palaszczuk Governments announced an initial \$558.5 million jointly funded support package for flood affected Queensland communities in need, which included:

- Demand driven grants - \$75,000 for farmers and primary producers
- Demand drive grants - \$50,000 for affected small businesses and not-for-profit organisations
- Demand driven grants - \$20,000 for sporting and community clubs and associations
- Nineteen affected councils will also be helped through a \$1 million injection each to assist with urgent clean-up works.

People in NSW requiring assistance are urged to contact Service NSW on 13 77 88 or online at:

www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods

For more information on grants for primary producers, small businesses and non-profit organisations, phone the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority on 1800 623 946 or visit

<http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au>

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