



MEDIA RELEASE

Disaster assistance for New England bushfire-affected communities

28 Feb 2018

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, has welcomed disaster assistance which has been made available for the local government areas of Gwydir, Tamworth and Uralla in response to bushfires in January.

Mr Joyce said assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

“These bushfires caused serious damage to properties around Bundarra, Uralla and Niangala,” Mr Joyce said.

“More than 15,000 hectares of land, including private property and state forest was burnt by these fires which threatened life and property, caused road closures and diversions, and required a mass deployment of local NSW Rural Fire Services.

“The Bonnay fire (Gwydir LGA) started about 8kms south west of Bundarra and burnt more than 12,550 hectares of land. Ten head of livestock and nearly 1000km of fencing was damaged or destroyed with a total estimated damage value to primary producers of more than \$8 million.

“The Eureka fire (Uralla LGA) started about 30kms north-west of Uralla and burnt through more than 395 hectares of land - the majority being on private land.

“The Scrub Creek fire (Tamworth LGA) started about 25kms south of Niangala and destroyed more than 2906 hectares of land, mostly in State Forest.”

Minister for Law Enforcement and Cyber Security Angus Taylor, who has responsibility for Commonwealth disaster assistance, said that NDRRA funding is now available to help affected communities rebuild and resume their lives.

“There has been a significant impact on primary producers, with loss of livestock and fences damaged or destroyed. A range of assistance is now available under the NDRRA to help affected communities and support the primary production sector,” Mr Taylor said.

“The Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments are committed to helping people recover

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

from the impact of natural disasters.”

NSW Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant said that a significant and coordinated multi-agency response was required by state and local authorities to fight the fires.

“A large number of firefighting personnel, appliances and aircraft were deployed to undertake firefighting operations,” Mr Grant said.

“The funding available through the NDRRA will help cover the cost of fighting the bushfires and ensure damaged public infrastructure can be repaired.”

Assistance available under the NDRRA may include:

- help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged
- support for affected local councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets
- concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations
- freight subsidies for primary producers, and
- grants to eligible non-profit organisations.

Further information on disaster assistance is available on the Australian Government’s Disaster Assist website at disasterassist.gov.au and the NSW emergency information and response website at emergency.nsw.gov.au.

(ENDS)

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