



**Adam Marshall MP**  
Member for Northern Tablelands  
Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Monday, 9 September 2019

### **DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR BUSHFIRE AFFECTED FARMERS & FAMILIES**

RESIDENTS, farmers and communities impacted by the horrific fires across the region will be able to immediately access disaster assistance, Northern Tablelands MP Adam Marshall announced today.

Mr Marshall welcomed the speedy natural disaster declaration by the State and Commonwealth Governments over the weekend within the Armidale Regional, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha local government areas, where the fires have raged since last Friday.

He said the declaration and assistance would also cover those who will be impacted in coming days as the fires continues to burn.

Assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

“The fires have been absolutely devastating, but it’s a comfort to many that a range of assistance is now available to help people who have been affected by the bushfires as well as funding for operational response activities,” Mr Marshall said.

“The fire has been fuelled by strong winds and burnt through tens of thousands of hectares of private and public land, threatening life and causing major disruptions to nearby communities.

“I’m pleased the NSW and Commonwealth governments are working closely together to provide immediate relief to those impacted in the last few days and support the longer term recovery of our local communities.”

Mr Marshall said significant firefighting operations were continuing in response to the bushfires to try to bring them under control.

“Our fireies have again been doing a tremendous job, working non-stop to protect lives and properties,” he said. “This is the largest firefighting effort our region has seen in living memory and everyone is pitching in – I cannot praise them enough!

“The NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire & Rescue NSW, as well as National Parks and Wildlife Service teams have battled blazes during incredibly challenging weather conditions and deployed hundreds of firefighters, appliances and aircraft to combat the fires, and I know everyone is incredibly grateful for those efforts.

“Our thoughts too are with the families and businesses who’ve lost properties. It’s a devastating experience and my hope is that this assistance will ease some of the immediate burden they’re facing on the road to recovery.”

Mr Marshall attended a community meeting yesterday at Ebor, where the NSW Rural Fire Service and Local Lands Services updated locals on current fire conditions and expected weather patterns over the next few days.

“The strong westerly winds should keep the fire front moving east, away from Ebor and surrounding areas, but there’s always a risk the winds could change and blow the fire back towards the west,” Mr Marshall said.

“Locals should continue to keep their radios on for emergency broadcasts and regularly check the NSW RFS ‘Fires Near Me’ app on their devices for updates.”

Assistance measures available 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;
- grants to eligible non-profit organisations; and
- Emergency fodder and/or water for stock.

To access emergency fodder and/or water for stock, contact Local Land Services on 1800 814 647 to arrange pick up.

For information on personal hardship and distress assistance, contact the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line on 1800 018 444. To apply for a concessional loan, grant or freight subsidy, contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)

Further information on disaster assistance is available on the Australian Government’s Disaster Assist website at [www.disasterassist.gov.au](http://www.disasterassist.gov.au) and the NSW emergency information and response website at [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)

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