



Australian
Bar Association

MEDIA RELEASE

9 January 2020

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY THE BUSHFIRE CRISIS

The Australian Bar Association on behalf of its members expresses its deep sympathies to those affected by the bushfire crisis across the country.

It acknowledges the tragic loss of life; the many properties that have been destroyed in the fires and the devastating impact on our natural environment.

We extend our gratitude to the fire fighters and volunteers for their tireless and heroic efforts to combat the fires and to provide assistance to those in need.

Our thoughts are with communities around Australia who remain under threat, as well as those beginning the long process of recovery and rebuilding homes, businesses and infrastructure. For many, that process will involve navigating complex insurance and legal issues at an already difficult and stressful time.

The Bar is seeking to continue to serve communities on these darkest of days by lending our expertise to provide prompt legal assistance to those in need.

The Australian Bar Association is encouraging all members to volunteer to provide legal assistance to bushfire victims on a pro bono or reduced fee basis.

State Bar Associations are working with others across the legal profession to register practitioners willing to provide pro bono legal support to those needing legal help following the fires.

We thank members for the generous offers of assistance already received and ask members to please look out for communications from your local Bar Association and consider how you too may be able to help at this time.

Legal Assistance help lines

NSW

Call LawAccess NSW Disaster Response Hotline 1800 801 529 or go to www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Victoria

Call Disaster Legal Help Victoria on 1800 113 432 for free legal information, advice and referrals, or visit the website at www.disasterlegalthelp.org.au.

Queensland

The Bushfires phone line is 1300 004 924 and the website is:

<https://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Get-legal-help/Our-services/Natural-disaster-legal-help>

Western Australia



Australian
Bar Association

Should it become necessary for the WA Disaster Legal Response Plan to be activated, it will be through WA Legal Aid and the email is: naturaldisasters@legalaid.wa.gov.au.

Australian Capital Territory

People in the ACT impacted by the bushfires, including evacuees from NSW, can contact Legal Aid ACT on 1300 654 314 or the ACT Law Society on 02 6274 0300.

Opening of the Legal Year donations

The ABA is also encouraging its members to make a donation to a disaster relief organisation as the 2020 legal year commences around the country.

The ABA has not selected a particular organisation, but notes that members might consider one of the following:

<https://www.redcross.org.au/campaigns/disaster-relief-and-recovery-donate>

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/donate/make-a-donation/donate-online/?appeal=disasterappeal>

<https://www.rspcansw.org.au/bushfire-appeal/>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal>

For a more full list: see <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-01/bushfire-relief-how-you-can-help-frontline-services/11835156>

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Greg Tolhurst: ceo@austbar.asn.au