



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **LAWYERS OFFER LEGAL AID TO BUSHFIRE VICTIMS**

Legal Aid NSW lawyers will give free legal advice and support to hundreds of people affected by the recent bushfires.

Attorney General Mark Speakman praised Legal Aid NSW's (LANSW) history of providing legal assistance to people affected by bushfires.

"The LANSW Disaster Response Service team stands ready to provide legal assistance that covers a range of issues, including insurance claims, tenancy, credit and debt, financial hardship, social security entitlements and employment," Mr Speakman said.

He said lawyers would form part of the wide range of assistance available at LANSW offices at Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour and outreaches at Forster, Kempsey, Taree, Bowraville, Grafton, Macksville, and Nambucca.

Fires in northern NSW this year have destroyed or damaged more than 670 homes and left many hundreds of people facing the challenge of rebuilding their lives.

Legal Aid NSW CEO Brendan Thomas said that civil lawyers from the Disaster Response Service were specialists in areas of law such as insurance, debt, tenancy, social security and financial hardship.

"All of our solicitors providing help at these locations have undergone training about what to expect," Mr Thomas said.

"This is important work at a difficult and stressful time in people's lives, so part of the training is about how best to respond to the trauma experienced by those affected by bushfires.

"Having an experienced advisor to help you navigate through legal issues can significantly reduce trauma and pave the way to rebuilding lives."

Free legal advice is available to anyone affected by a natural disaster. For more intensive casework, a means and merit test is applied. Victims of natural disasters are considered priority clients. The LawAccess NSW Disaster Response Hotline is 1800 801 529 or visit [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au). Guidelines for what to do after bushfires [can be found here](#).