



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 9 January 2020

### **NEW FREE LEGAL SERVICE FOR BUSHFIRE VICTIMS**

Thousands of NSW residents impacted by the State's devastating bushfires will be offered free legal help with the launch of the Disaster Response Legal Service NSW.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said Legal Aid NSW will operate the service, which will be available via its helpline 1800 801 529.

"In the face of the worst bushfire crisis in our nation's history, we have seen friends and neighbours come together to protect their communities and support those who have suffered terrible losses," Mr Speakman said.

"I am very grateful to the private legal community for joining the recovery effort by standing together with Legal Aid NSW and community legal centres to offer pro-bono services for people facing legal issues as a result of the bushfires."

Legal Aid NSW CEO Brendan Thomas said a partnership between his organisation, community legal centres, the Law Society of NSW and the NSW Bar Association will provide invaluable help to people impacted by the bushfires.

"Individuals, households and business people can call a single hotline for legal advice from the Disaster Response Legal Service, from which they will be referred to an appropriate lawyer – whether they're from Legal Aid or the private legal profession," Mr Thomas said.

Law Society President Richard Harvey said more than 200 lawyers and firms have already offered pro-bono services and encouraged others to follow suit.

"In the face of expected immense demand for legal advice in the wake of this disaster, our profession is on standby to provide support to our communities. The Law Society is honoured to be able to play a role in facilitating this," Mr Harvey said.

"This means fire-affected owners of farms and businesses who might not be eligible for Legal Aid will be able to access free quality legal advice to help them rebuild after the disaster."

This announcement builds on the work of Legal Aid's [disaster response service](#) that has been operating since 2010 across NSW. This service has already provided legal assistance throughout the bushfire season for people navigating insurance claims, tenancy issues, financial hardship, social security entitlements and employment issues.

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