

NSW Department of Community Services Disaster Recovery

The Department of Community Services (DoCS) is responsible for providing welfare and community support to people affected by disaster in NSW. The State Disaster Recovery Centre can be contacted on 1800 018 444.

DoCS assists disaster affected people to get their lives back in order by co-ordinating food, accommodation, clothing, advice, guidance, financial and personal support.

WHAT DOES DOCS DO?

- DoCS is responsible for the delivery of welfare under the State Disaster Plan (DISPLAN).
- This includes assisting disaster affected people get their lives back in order by coordinating the provision of food, accommodation, clothing, advice, guidance, financial and personal support.
- DoCS coordinates a number of key non-government agencies, called Community Partners, who assist in the delivery of some of these services. These include the Red Cross, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society, ADRA and Anglicare.
- DoCS works closely with all Emergency Services and when required sets up and manages Evacuation Centres. Staff in these centres help meet the immediate needs of disaster affected people.
- DoCS also coordinates the longer term recovery phase of an emergency operation and may set up Recovery Centres for this purpose.
- A Recovery Centre is designed as a 'one stop shop' to provide disaster affected people with all the assistance and information they need. This includes financial support, insurance and building advice and interpreter services. Centre staff may also visit disaster affected people in their own homes.

DISASTER RECOVERY RESPONSES TO MAJOR EVENTS

Severe weather

Over the Queens Birthday long weekend in June 2007, severe storms across the Central Coast and Hunter regions resulted in widespread damage to property. To assist local people, 16 evacuation centres were established over a four day period, with 1500 people attending.

Recovery centres were opened by DoCS in Newcastle, Wyong, Singleton and Cessnock, providing assistance to more than 3000 people. DoCS also received more than 2500 telephone calls for help.

In 2007 floods and storms also impacted other areas of the state including Lismore, Sydney western suburbs and the Northern Rivers areas. DoCS responded quickly, establishing recovery centres and door knocking the affected communities.

Drought

Ongoing drought conditions around the state have impacted on thousands of families from both farming and non-farming households. DoCS continues to provide financial assistance to families directly affected by the drought.

Bushfires

NSW experienced a number of bushfires during 2006, with a wide area of the state affected. While damage and loss of homes was small, there were six households that either lost their homes, or their homes became uninhabitable as a result of fire in the Camden and Oakville areas. DoCS provided \$96,000 in grants to affected families.

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Cootamundra and Temora silo fires

A fire in a grain silo in Cootamundra resulted in the evacuation of 1500 people from their homes on the afternoon of 12 January 2007. An evacuation centre was set up to support 717 local residents and 120 were placed in overnight accommodation. Residents were prevented from returning to their homes until 14 January 2007, when the local emergency management committee declared the area to be safe. A silo fire also affected the community of Temora, with 70 residents evacuated as a precaution on 13 April 2007. All community partners provided support and residents were allowed to return to their homes on the same day.

Evacuations from Lebanon

The Australian Government started to evacuate Australian nationals from Lebanon in July 2006, due to the conflict between Lebanon and Israel. DoCS coordinated welfare services to returning evacuees as they arrived at Sydney Airport. A total of 15 flights arrived in Sydney between 23 July and 5 August 2006, with 4523 people arriving during that time.

Media Enquiries 02 9716 2804

DISASTER RECOVERY SERVICES PROVIDED 2006/07

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Redfern Unit | Fire | July 2006 |
| Sydney Airport | Repatriation – Lebanon | July 2006 |
| Kyogle | Storm | August 2006 |
| Eastern Suburbs | Storm | September 2006 |
| Darling Harbour | School bus children illness | September 2006 |
| Hawkesbury | Windstorm | September 2006 |
| Hawkesbury | Bushfire | September 2006 |
| Wollondilly | Bushfire | September 2006 |
| South Coast | Windstorm | September 2006 |
| Ulladulla | Bushfire | September 2006 |
| Mt Rankin (Bathurst) | Bushfire | October 2006 |
| Sydney Airport | Repatriation – Tonga | November 2006 |
| Blue Mountains | Bushfire | November 2006 |
| Molong | Bushfire | November 2006 |
| Narrabri | Bushfire | November 2006 |
| Coonabarabran | Bushfire | November 2006 |
| Wellington | Bushfire | November 2006 |
| Mudgee | Bushfire | November 2006 |
| Tamworth Hospital | Evacuation | December 2006 |
| Armidale | Hailstorm | December 2006 |
| Cootamundra | Silo fire | January 2007 |
| Nyngan | Storm | January 2007 |
| Thredbo | Bushfire | January 2007 |
| Mt Kuringai | Bushfire | January 2007 |
| Jacksons Bridge | Truck rollover | January 2007 |
| Tumut | Bushfire | February 2007 |
| Coonabarabran | Storm | February 2007 |
| Trunkey Creek (Bathurst) | Flooding | February 2007 |
| Temora | Silo fire | April 2007 |
| Hunter and Central Coast | Storm | June 2007 |
| Kiama | Storm | June 2007 |