

Mental Health Supports for Bushfire

Activity Work Plan
2022 — 2026

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BF - 1 - Frontline Emergency Distress and Trauma Counselling Activity

Program Key Priority Area

Mental Health

Aim of Activity

Provide immediate counselling and other mental health services/interventions to support the needs of people experiencing distress or trauma as a result of the 2019-2020 bush fires and 2021/22 floods in the NCPHN region including emergency response and front-line personnel.

Description of Activity

Activity area one:

- Trauma and distress counselling through appropriately qualified mental health clinicians for individuals, families and emergency personnel affected by the bushfires – up to 10 sessions through the following modalities: face to face, telephone, or video-telehealth.
- Free counselling sessions at or through referrals from Service Australia, LGA Recovery Centres, Evacuation Centres, BlaizeAid Camps and other services providing recovery information and support.
- Provide psychological brief intervention sessions to individuals and small groups by appropriately qualified mental health clinicians.
- Provide trauma debriefing/information sessions to communities, volunteer groups and employers/employees in fire affected regions to enhance skills for wellbeing and understanding the mental health issues associated with bush fire trauma and recovery.

Activity area two:

The Strong Community Program is providing trauma-informed support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that have been impacted by several unprecedented natural disasters in recent years, including the bushfires and floods. The Strong Community Program offers community-based treatment services, which includes:

- motivational interviewing
- counselling
- social skills and behavioural skills training
- comprehensive assessment

- individual and group therapies
- relapse prevention
- assertive follow-up and support

Needs Assessment Priority

NCPHN Needs Assessment 2021-2024

Needs Assessment Priorities
Preparing the primary health system for the effects of climate change
Increase access to appropriate mental health services for both the general population and priority populations
Preparation for the impact of environmental pressures on mental health

Target Population Cohort

Individuals and/or families, emergency personnel and front-line volunteers affected by the 2019-2020 bush fires

Indigenous Specific	Yes
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Indigenous Specific Comments

The Strong Community Program is delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Providing in-reach therapeutic support to communities in Cabbage Tree Island, Box Ridge, Woodburn and Lismore and neighbouring Local Government Areas.

Coverage

Whole Region

Consultation

- Mid North Coast LHD
- Northern NSW LHD
- Services Australia
- Local Government
- Office of Emergency Management Committees (MNC and NNSW)

- Community Volunteer Groups
- BlaizeAid
- Rural Fire Service

Collaboration

- Connect to Wellbeing Service (NCPHN Intake and Referral Service) – intake and referrals to mental health practitioners for trauma counselling services and telehealth services.
- MNC & NNNSW LHD – Coordination of bush fire response services with NCPHN throughout the region.
- Local Government Bushfire Coordinator's - Coordination of bush fire response services with NCPHN throughout the region.
- Services Australia – accept referrals and ensure coordination of bush fire response services with NCPHN throughout the region.
- Community Volunteer Groups - Coordination of bush fire response services with NCPHN throughout the region.
- Aboriginal Medical/Health Services for the establishment of the Strong Community Program.

Activity Milestones Details/Duration

Activity Start Date	01/11/2019
Activity End Date	31/12/2022
Service Delivery Start Date	November 2019
Service Delivery End Date	August 2024

Procurement approach

Combination of:

- Continuing Service Provider/Contract Extension
- Expression of Interest

Is this activity being co-designed?	Yes
Is this activity the result of a previous co-design process?	Yes
Do you plan to implement this Activity using co-commissioning or joint-commissioning arrangements?	Yes

Has this activity previously been co-commissioned or joint-commissioned? No

Decommissioning No

Co-design or co-commissioning comments

Healthy North Coast Limited (HNCL) formalised a partnership with Aboriginal Medical Services to form a consortium. Healthy North Coast will act as the lead agency for the formalised Consortia between Healthy North Coast, Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation, Rekindling the Spirit, and Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service. The aim of the Consortia is to achieve the best possible social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and related outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Northern NSW, by implementing integrated planning and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the regional level.

BF - 5 - Community Wellbeing and Participation Activity

Program Key Priority Area

Mental Health

Aim of Activity

Deliver a program of activities that builds social connection and resilience to support bushfire and flood impacted communities effectively respond to and recover from natural disasters.

Description of Activity

Work closely with local government, recovery agencies, communities, NBRA and National Mental Commission to identify the needs of communities. Identify relevant community-based activities to support mental health and community wellbeing with a focus on social connection and resilience-building. Co-design where appropriate and commission relevant activities. Monitor and evaluate to inform future planning.

Needs Assessment Priorities

NCPHN Needs Assessment 2021-2024

Needs Assessment Priorities	
Develop improved links to appropriate mental health services	
Preparation for the impact of environmental pressures on mental health	

Target Population Cohort

Communities affected by the 2019-2020 bush fires and 2021 floods in North Coast NSW

Indigenous Specific	Yes
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Indigenous specific comments

Aboriginal communities were among the worst fire-affected in 2019-20. Aboriginal communities have specific socio-economic vulnerabilities as well as extraordinary strengths and resilience. These communities have received limited attention in disaster response and recovery processes. Through the Healthy North Coast Aboriginal Health team, we will collaborate with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Medical Services and communities to design Indigenous-specific activities to support participation, healing and mental wellbeing.

Coverage

Whole Region

Consultation

Local Government	National Bushfire Recovery Agency	Emergency Management Committees (MNC and NNSW)	Resilience NSW
Community Volunteer Groups	BlaizeAid	Rural Fire Service	Dept. Primary Industry
Dept Education	Red Cross	National Mental Health Commission	Department of Aboriginal Affairs

Collaboration

Local Government, National Bushfire Recovery Agency, Emergency Management Committees (MNC and NNSW), Resilience NSW.

Contribute to needs assessment, ACCO – co-design activity with Aboriginal communities

Activity Milestone Details/Duration

Activity Start Date	01/04/2021
Activity End Date	30/06/2023
Service Delivery Start Date	01/07/2021
Service Delivery End Date	30/06/2023

Procurement approach

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Is this activity being co-designed?	Yes
Is this activity the result of a previous co-design process?	No
Do you plan to implement this Activity using co-commissioning or joint-commissioning arrangements?	No

Has this activity previously been co-commissioned or joint-commissioned?	No
Decommissioning	No

Co-design or co-commissioning comments

Activities in Aboriginal communities will be co-designed with relevant stakeholders. Additional co-design may be undertaken for particular cohorts or locations depending on needs assessed.