



NATURAL DISASTER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS APRIL 2021

Section A: For landholders with agreements including Conservation Agreements, Trust Agreements, Registered Property Agreements, Wildlife Refuges

I have an agreement which has been impacted by a natural disaster (such as bushfire or flood) in the conservation area. How can the BCT assist me?

The BCT can be a touch point for discussing with you the impact of the natural disaster on your Conservation Area. We have staff in regional locations that can assist with technical advice regarding the ecological impact of the natural disaster and restoration actions which may be needed for your conservation area.

If you have an agreement without annual payments (including Conservation Agreements, Trust Agreements, Registered Property Agreements, Wildlife Refuges), then you may be eligible for Conservation Partners Grants for activities such as weed control, fencing or assisted revegetation.

I have an agreement which has been impacted by a natural disaster. Will I still be required to comply with the management plan under my agreement?

If you have a Conservation Agreement (under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*) then you are not required to meet the obligations under the agreement if you are prevented from doing so because of a natural disaster (such as bushfire or flood). This applies for so long as the event continues to prevent you from complying. This relates to Clause 21 of the Conservation Agreement which refers to Force Majeure Events.

There is a similar clause in most other agreements such as Conservation Agreements established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, Trust Agreements under the *Nature Conservation Trust Act 2001*, and Registered Property Agreements under the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997*.

If your conservation area is impacted by a natural disaster, the BCT can provide advice on adaptive management following the impact, and which management actions can be undertaken to assist your area recover.

Do I need to let the BCT know about the impact of a natural disaster?

If you have a Conservation Agreement (under *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*) then you are required to notify the BCT as soon as practicable if an event will (or is likely to) affect your ability to meet the obligations under the agreement.

You are encouraged to notify the BCT about the natural disaster impact if you have another type of agreement (such as Conservation Agreements established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, Trust Agreements under the *Nature Conservation Trust Act 2001*, and Registered Property Agreements under the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997*).

Notifying the BCT means we can assist you with dealing with the impact of the natural disaster on your conservation area.

You can advise the BCT by sending an email message to info@bct.nsw.gov.au or calling 1300 992 688 or contacting your regional BCT office.

How can I help wildlife affected by the natural disaster?

Information is available on how you can help wildlife in a natural disaster.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/helping-wildlife-in-emergencies>



This includes how to provide short term help to some native animals by providing access to water, food or shelter until their natural environment recovers.

Will there be on-ground monitoring to see how sites recover from natural disasters?

The BCT has commenced an ecological monitoring program for sites. We will look at opportunities to incorporate monitoring of how sites are recovering from a natural disaster.

Please discuss with your BCT regional ecologist if you are interested in learning more about our monitoring program.

Conservation Partners Grants

Who is eligible for Conservation Partners Grants?

If you have one of the following types of agreements, you may be eligible to apply for a BCT Conservation Partners Grant:

- Conservation Agreement
- Trust Agreement
- Registered Property Agreement
- Wildlife Refuge or Wildlife Refuge Agreement
- participation in the HSI (Humane Society International) Wildlife Land Trust program

You are eligible for these grants at any time, not just when impacted by a natural disaster. If you have a property under the CEN (Community Environment Network) Land for Wildlife program, please contact them directly.

What can I receive funding from the BCT for?

Conservation Partners Grants are available for the following activities at any time (not just following natural disasters):

- weed control
- fencing
- introduced pest animal control
- revegetation (supplementary planting)
- habitat restoration
- other maintenance (such as tracks or erosion control needed to maintain conservation value)

More detail is available on the BCT website (<https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/cards/apply-conservation-partners-grant>).

Following natural disasters, funding will also be considered for:

- providing support to wildlife such as watering points and shelter
- additional weed control so that native vegetation can recover
- additional or higher frequency introduced pest animal control where prey cover has been impacted by natural disasters (this should be coordinated through Local Land Services, or NPWS when adjacent to a reserve)
- other site-specific activities to restore conservation values.

Please contact the BCT so we can discuss how to assist you with your funding needs.



How much funding can I get under Conservation Partners Grants?

Under Conservation Partners Grants, there are three levels of funding available depending on the type of agreement, the highest level being for in-perpetuity agreements:

- Up to \$15,000 per annum for three years for landholders with: in-perpetuity Conservation Agreements, Trust Agreements and, Registered Property Agreements.
- Up to \$8,000 per annum for three years for landholders with a term Registered Property Agreement.
- Up to \$2,000 per annum for three years for landholders with: Wildlife Refuge, Wildlife Refuge Agreement or who are members of Land for Wildlife or Wildlife Land Trust.

The BCT will consider the following adjustments to assist landholders with agreements impacted by natural disasters:

- allowing higher payments in initial years for essential conservation infrastructure such as fencing, and erosion control works
- paying for works which have previously been implemented but need to be undertaken again because they have been impacted by the natural disaster
- allowing landholders to re-apply for the maximum funding allowed, even if they have already received and expended grant monies.

Landholders are encouraged to also use other sources of funding where possible including any insurance claims, disaster assistance and contributions from neighbours for boundary fences. This will allow the BCT to assist as many landholders as possible. You will be asked to declare any other funding you have or can access that could otherwise be funded by the BCT.

Please contact the BCT so we can discuss how to assist you with your funding needs.

How do I apply for funding from the BCT?

Details on how to apply for a grant (if you do not have one yet) are available on the BCT website (<https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/cards/apply-conservation-partners-grant>).

If you already have a Conservation Partners Grant with the BCT, then we can look at varying that grant to meet your changed circumstances.

If you want to vary your grant (rather than applying for a new one) then you can do this by writing to the BCT with details of what funding you need for what activities. You will need to acquit any monies you have already spent. You can do this now or when you have also completed the post-natural disaster activities (whichever is easiest for you).

Please contact the BCT so we can assist you to vary or apply for a grant by sending an email message to info@bct.nsw.gov.au or calling 1300 992 688 or contacting your regional BCT office.

I have already done some works on the conservation area as they were urgently needed following the natural disaster. Can I apply to the BCT to get the money back?

The BCT will consider paying for works that have already been completed, if they were urgently needed to protect the conservation area.

Please contact the BCT to discuss your situation.

I am applying for a Conservation Agreement with the BCT, and my property is impacted by a natural disaster. What should I do?

The BCT can talk with you about how the natural disaster may have impacted on the conservation



values of your property and options for restoring and protecting those values. Please contact the BCT to discuss your situation.

How can I contact the BCT?

You can contact the BCT by sending an email message to info@bct.nsw.gov.au or calling 1300 992 688 or contacting your regional BCT office.

Other support

Where can I get other assistance from?

Further information on disaster assistance is available at www.disasterassist.gov.au and the NSW emergency information and response website at www.emergency.nsw.gov.au

Disaster recovery payments may be available. To find out if you are eligible see <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/>

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) offers assistance under certain conditions to repair or replace **fences bordering national parks** in accordance with the NPWS [boundary fencing policy](#), including when a fence is damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster or other natural event.

If you or someone you know needs **extra support**, the following services are available:

- Disaster Welfare Assistance Line 1800 018 444
- Mental Health Line 1800 011 511
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Mensline 1300 789 978
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- Beyondblue 1300 22 463



Section B: For BSA agreement holders

I have a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement which has been impacted by a natural disaster in the Biodiversity Stewardship site. How can the BCT assist me?

The BCT can assist with technical advice on the best way to restore your Biodiversity Stewardship site where a natural disaster has severely impacted biodiversity values. This may include an adaptive management approach and reallocation of Total Fund Deposit funds to undertake management actions which will assist in regenerating your BSA.

I have an agreement which has been impacted by a natural disaster. Will I still be required to comply with the management plan under my agreement?

If you have a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (including a former BioBanking Agreement) then you are not required to meet the obligations under the agreement if you are prevented from doing so because of a natural disaster (such as flood or bushfire). This applies for so long as the event continues to prevent you from complying.

The BCT can talk to individual landholders about how the natural disaster has impacted their site and if changes are required to their management plan. If you are prevented from undertaking some or all of your management actions because of a natural disaster, your annual management payment can still be released. In this circumstance, the BCT will guide the landholder on how these funds should be reallocated.

Do I need to let the BCT know about the natural disaster impact?

If you have a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (including a former BioBanking Agreement) then you are required to notify the BCT as soon as practicable if an event will (or is likely to) affect your ability to meet the obligations under the agreement.

Notifying the BCT means we can assist you with dealing with the impact of the natural disaster on your Biodiversity Stewardship site.

You can advise the BCT by sending an email message to info@bct.nsw.gov.au or calling 1300 992 688 or contacting your regional BCT office.

Will there be on-ground monitoring to see how sites recover from natural disasters?

The BCT has commenced an ecological monitoring program for sites. We will look at opportunities to incorporate monitoring of how sites are recovering from natural disasters.

Please discuss with your BCT regional ecologist if you are interested in learning more about our monitoring program.

Other support

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Further information on disaster assistance is available at www.disasterassist.gov.au and the NSW emergency information and response website at www.emergency.nsw.gov.au

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