



Environment Protection Authority

Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills

Bushfire Recovery Program



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Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only) or info@epa.nsw.gov.au

See also www.epa.nsw.gov.au

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The Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills will provide funding to support the essential waste management services that councils provide and facilitate recovery from the 2019–20 bushfires.

This program will contribute to the NSW Government's commitment that councils will be no worse off as a result of receiving bushfire waste at their landfills.

About the NSW Environment Protection Authority

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is an independent statutory authority and the principal environmental regulator in NSW. It leads the state's response to managing a diverse range of activities that can impact on the health of the NSW environment and its people, using a mix of tools, including education; partnerships; licensing and approvals; and audit, enforcement and financial mechanisms. The EPA is empowered under the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991* (POEA Act).

About the Bushfire Recovery Program Package

In late 2019 and early 2020, bushfires devastated NSW, causing significant damage to communities, infrastructure and the environment. In response, the NSW and Commonwealth Governments established a clean-up program for bushfire-generated waste in January 2020.

In addition to this program, the NSW Government has allocated up to \$95 million for the EPA to deliver a package of five bushfire recovery programs.

The Bushfire Recovery Programs Package addresses ongoing bushfire waste challenges faced by public land managers in NSW. The five bushfire recovery programs are outlined below and closing dates will be on the [EPA website](#)¹.

Bushfire-Generated Green Waste Clean-Up and Processing

This program is a \$45 million initiative to manage up to 500,000 tonnes of green waste generated by the 2019–20 bushfires – waste that would otherwise present significant environmental, safety and bushfire risks.

Aboriginal Lands

The Aboriginal Lands Program is a \$20 million support package to help Aboriginal landowners and communities assess, plan and organise the clean-up of waste, and to repair or rebuild infrastructure, following the 2019–20 bushfires.

Note: To reduce double handling, the Aboriginal Lands Program includes relevant aspects of the other four programs. Local Aboriginal Land Councils should apply for funding **only** through this program.

FenceCycle

The FenceCycle Program provides \$10 million to support councils in collecting and recycling the metal components of burnt rural fencing from bushfire-affected landholders.

¹ <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/grants/bushfire-recovery-programs>

Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills

This program, covered by this document, provides \$15 million to support councils in their bushfire recovery. It is intended to ensure councils are no worse off as a result of receiving bushfire-generated waste at their landfills, a commitment made by the NSW Government as part of the state-wide clean-up program.

Bushfire Dumping

This is a \$5 million program that seeks to reduce the environmental and financial impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires by helping public land managers:

- clean up and dispose of bushfire-related waste that has been illegally dumped on public land
- implement prevention and deterrence measures that will reduce dumping in the future.

If you are eligible, the EPA encourages you to apply for grants under each of the programs in the Bushfire Recovery Package. Each program has been designed to address specific waste challenges, and therefore there is an opportunity to receive assistance to target several waste issues in the wake of the 2019–2020 bushfires.

Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills

Purpose

The disposal of waste generated by bushfires in NSW has, in some cases, caused lasting and costly impacts on council landfills. This program aims to support councils in their recovery from the bushfires by assessing, quantifying and reporting on the impacts that bushfire waste has had on their landfills. It also provides funding for infrastructure projects to ensure council-run landfills recover from any impacts caused by the receipt of bushfire waste.

This program delivers on the NSW Government's commitment that councils will not be financially disadvantaged by accepting bushfire-generated waste at their landfills. It aligns with the EPA's role as a leader, partner and protector for our community and the environment.

Objectives

Landfills are an essential service that councils provide to their local communities. The 2019–20 bushfires have generated an unparalleled amount of waste that has put many council-run landfills under strain.

Disposing of bushfire waste can affect council landfills by:

- rapidly consuming landfill cell space
- reducing landfill cell life
- hastening the need for new cell planning and approvals
- putting pressure on landfill infrastructure and environmental controls
- increasing costs, through the need for additional staff and equipment to manage the waste.

The overall objectives of the Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills are to ensure that:

- councils are not financially disadvantaged by accepting bushfire waste for disposal
- capacity of local waste services is improved for communities
- environmental performance of landfill is increased.

Phases

Phase 1: Impact assessments

Eligible councils can opt-in to the program by email and will receive an impact assessment of bushfire waste at their landfills. These assessments will be carried out by experienced consultants provided by the EPA.

The assessments will be prepared using information from council about:

- the landfill prior to the 2019–20 bushfires
- the amount of bushfire-generated waste disposed of at the landfill
- how the disposal of bushfire-generated waste has affected the council and the landfill facility.

The consultants will summarise these impacts and recommend infrastructure projects to offset them and improve the landfill facility. The impact assessment and its recommendations will inform applications for funding in Phase 2 of the program.

Councils must opt-in to Phase 1 to be eligible for funding in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Funding for landfill infrastructure projects

Up to \$14.5 million in total is available in Phase 2 of the program to fund Landfill Infrastructure Projects. Applications for Phase 2 funding will open after Phase 1 of the program is complete.

Funding in this program aims to compensate councils by funding infrastructure projects at the landfill.

Landfill infrastructure Projects are limited to physical or digital infrastructure projects at the waste disposal facility following the receipt of waste generated by the 2019-20 bushfires. Projects must, in the EPA's opinion:

- improve or restore landfill operations; or
- improve environmental performance of the landfill.

This may include works such as site maintenance, environmental controls, infrastructure for data collection or other facility upgrades.

A technical review committee will review the applications and determine the funding to be allocated. Successful councils will be granted upfront and top up funding and will be responsible for delivery of the project in its entirety.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

NSW local councils that have received waste generated by the 2019–20 bushfire season at their landfills.

Eligibility criteria

The applicant must:

- be a local council body in NSW
- own one or more active landfills
- have received waste generated by the 2019–20 bushfires at the landfill.

Requirements

Any eligible council that takes part in Phase 1 will receive an impact assessment provided by the EPA as part of the program.

Applications for funding in Phase 2 of the program are contestable. Councils can apply for more than one landfill infrastructure project.

Councils must partake in Phase 1 of the program to be eligible for funding in Phase 2.

Phase 1: Assessments

How to apply

Eligible councils must opt-in to the program by emailing bushfirerecovery.programs@epa.nsw.gov.au. Please include in the email:

- council name and ABN
- landfill address(es) and licence number(s) (if applicable)
- estimated tonnes of bushfire waste disposed of at the landfill
- contact details for the relevant council officer.

How it will work

The EPA will contact each council that opts-in to the program to allocate a consultant and sign a scope of works for the impact assessment.

The consultant will liaise directly with the council to assess the impacts and complete the report in 2021. The impact assessment will be provided to council and the EPA.

Phase 2: Funding

Available funding

Phase 2 of the program provides up to \$14.5 million in total to fund landfill infrastructure projects.

Councils will need to participate in Phase 1 of the program to be eligible for funding in Phase 2.

Applications for funding are contestable and must demonstrate value for money. Upfront and top up funding will be provided to successful applicants.

Funding will be subject to terms and conditions to ensure that projects are completed appropriately and within the approved timeframe (no more than two years).

Projects can range in budget, depending on the size, complexity and scope of works, and the impacts incurred by disposing of bushfire waste at the facility.

Depending on the number of applications and the types of projects, the EPA expects to award up to \$1 million for applications that meet the assessment criteria. This aims to ensure funding reaches impacted councils.

Applicants can seek funding for projects over \$1 million. Applications over \$1 million need to be well justified against each assessment criterion and should consider an in-kind contribution.

Councils may also apply for more than one project. A separate application is required for each project.

How funding may be used

To be eligible for funding, a project must either replace capacity lost at the landfill from accepting bushfire waste or improve infrastructure at the landfill.

Projects must be:

- infrastructure-based (physical or digital)
- related to works at the landfill premises
- consistent with development consent and environment protection licences; and
- linked to impacts caused by the disposal of bushfire waste at the landfill.

Funding will be provided directly to councils. Council is responsible for administering these funds and engaging a principal contractor.

What will not be funded

- projects at facilities that do not conduct waste disposal
- projects that existed before 1 July 2020
- projects that do not improve the landfill facility
- projects that are funded by other NSW Government programs

How to apply

All relevant dates are on the EPA website. Councils that have participated in Phase 1 of the program can apply for funding of Landfill Infrastructure Projects online at SmartyGrants (accessible from the [program webpage](#)²).

Application forms will be available on SmartyGrants. Applications will require council to upload the impact assessment from Phase 1 of the program and a project plan.

Councils can apply for more than one project at a landfill. A separate application is required for each project.

Assessment of applications

Applications for Phase 2 of the program will be assessed against the criteria on page 9.

Funding is contestable, and no council is guaranteed funding.

Applications will be assessed by a technical review committee (TRC) established by the EPA. The TRC will assess all applications received within four weeks of the closing date for this program. An assessment of each received application against the assessment criteria below will be undertaken.

Assessment criteria

Each application will be subject to the prerequisites and assessment criteria outlined below.

Councils should consider these criteria during Phase 1 of the program to ensure adequate planning for an application in Phase 2. Consultants will also use these criteria to prepare the impact assessments and develop recommendations for each landfill. These recommendations will be used to inform funding applications in Phase 2.

² <https://epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/grants/bushfire-recovery-programs/council-landfills>

Table 1 Prerequisites – Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills, Phase 2

No.	Prerequisite	Fulfilled?
1	Eligible applicant	Yes / No
2	Application complete	Yes / No

Table 2 Assessment criteria – Bushfire Recovery Program for Council Landfills, Phase 2

No.	Assessment criterion	Weighting
1	The landfill was impacted by the receipt of bushfire waste. The Impact Assessment from Phase 1 is included in the application. Impacts from receiving bushfire waste are clearly presented in tonnes and cubic metres. A justification for the project includes reference to the impacts from receiving bushfire waste.	10%
2	The project improves landfill infrastructure. The project has been analysed against the existing infrastructure and demonstrates improvements. There is a need for the project.	20%
3	The project will comply with relevant planning and environment protection licensing and compliance. Proven ability to obtain relevant planning and licensing approvals. Proven performance and compliance history in relation to any existing licences held by the applicant (where applicable). Proven compliance with NSW environmental and planning laws. Proven satisfactory performance in any previous grant projects.	20%
4	The project will have a positive impact for the environment. Demonstrated alignment with the EPA's Environmental Guidelines for Solid Waste Landfills 2016 and Landfill Environmental Management Plan where applicable. Demonstrated alignment with the local and regional waste strategies Environmental benefits (including non-market costs and benefits). Project measures.	20%
5	The project will have a positive impact for the local community. The project aligns with the local waste strategy. The project considers future waste strategies and capacity. Evidence that the project will secure waste services for the local community. Local employment is supported for the capital works.	10%
6	The project represents good value for money and economic benefit. Value for money is shown by, e.g., funding dollars invested per tonne of bushfire waste disposed. The project is financially viable based on a cost-benefit analysis.	10%
7	Demonstrated ability to deliver the project to a high standard. Sound project planning and methodology. Demonstrated management skills, expertise and relevant experience. Evidence of management systems currently in place at this and/or other facilities managed by the applicant and/or partners.	10%

Notification of funding

Successful applicants will be notified of the projects funded by August 2021, via SmartyGrants, email and phone call. A funding agreement will then be administered via SmartyGrants.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the result in the same manner.

Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback on their applications by contacting the EPA. Decisions by the EPA are final. There is no appeal process.

Any concerns about the program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to bushfirerecovery.programs@epa.nsw.gov.au. If you do not agree with the way the EPA handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Successful applicants

When notified, successful applicants will need to provide the following information via SmartyGrants:

- a signed funding agreement. This agreement will outline all funding obligations and conditions
- a project reporting plan, outlining how the project will be monitored and reported to the EPA for its duration
- an invoice made out to the NSW Environment Protection Authority for the upfront payment; 80% of the project's total value.

Once these steps have been completed, funding will be issued to council via SmartyGrants for the commencement of the project from August 2021.

What you need to do

Use this checklist to ensure you complete each step in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the program.

Read these guidelines carefully.

- Opt-in to Phase 1 of the program by emailing bushfirerecovery.programs@epa.nsw.gov.au by the closing date.
- Complete Phase 1 of the program by working with the allocated consultant and receiving the completed impact assessment.
- Use recommendations from the impact assessment to prepare a landfill infrastructure project plan for funding in Phase 2.
- Submit the application for Phase 2 funding on SmartyGrants by the closing date in 2021.

Key dates

Phase 1: Impact assessments

Visit the [EPA website](#) for closing dates.

Phase 2: Funding for landfill infrastructure projects

Visit the [EPA website](#) for closing dates.

Where to get help

Bushfire Recovery Programs Team

Please contact the Bushfire Recovery Programs Team if you have questions or need help at any point during the program.

Phone: 131 555

Email: bushfirerecovery.programs@epa.nsw.gov.au

Additional program resources

Additional resources for the program are available on the [program website](#)³. They include:

- a fact sheet
- frequently asked questions.

³ <https://epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/grants/bushfire-recovery-programs/council-landfills>