
Report of BMCC's Bushfire Recovery Meeting

This is a summary report of Blue Mountains Council's Bushfire Recovery Meeting prepared by Steve Ridd, Tour Director, Nature Trail, a 2019 start-up tour operator based in Katoomba, Blue Mountains. The comments made in this report reflect only the opinion of its author. [20th February 2020]

1. Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators' Bushfire Recovery Forum

Meeting Background

On Wednesday 12th February 2020, Blue Mountains Council staged a meeting at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre having invited local Blue Mountains (BM) Nature/Adventure Operators and relevant government representatives (Council, NPWS, Services NSW, NSW Office of Emergency Management).

In this summary report of the meeting, this author has chosen to rename the event more aptly as the '**Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators - Bushfire Recovery Forum**'.

The notified intention was to participate in a specific tourist industry sector meeting to propose and invite financial recovery initiatives following the bushfire emergency that has decimated the Christmas 2019 peak tourist revenue season with visitation downturn set to be ongoing.

The meeting was arranged by Patricia Lane-Gonzalez, Programme Leader in Council's 'Place Management' and hosted by Tessa Hockly, Programme Leader in Council's 'Economic Development'. Present and participating also in the meeting was Council's Tourism Development and Events Co-ordinator Wendy Dollin.

The meeting did not factor other impacts to Blue Mountains tourist visitation and outdoor operator bookings, besides the bushfire disaster itself, namely:

- NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian's three rolling declarations of a State of Emergency on 11th November, 19th December in 2019 and again on 2nd January 2020, all due to the bushfire emergency impacting many parts of New South Wales including all the Blue Mountains region. This entailed evacuations, road closures (including the Great Western Highway), rail closures (including the Blue Mountain Line), shut down of essential utilities, and taking possession of property in the course of the emergency response.
- Transport NSW unilateral decision on 6th January 2020 to shut down the entire Blue Mountains rail line from Central Station due to bushfire damage near Mount Victoria. Trains

could have made it to Katoomba, yet the entire line was closed from Central, which significantly impacted tourist visitation to the Blue Mountains.

- The subsequent flooding event on 9th February caused a landslip on the rail line before Katoomba. The rail service has been suspended and remains closed as at the date of this report.

Meeting Agenda

Ms Tessa Hockly's email invitation to 20200207:

"Dear Adventure operators

The purpose of this meeting is to hear from adventure operators, to communicate what assistance is available, discuss issues around this and develop a plan of action for all parties.

When: Wednesday Feb 12, 10.30am - 12.30pm

Where: Workshop Room, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Parke Street, Katoomba

Parking is available under the building in the Coles carpark, access off Parke Street

The agenda is briefly to discuss:

- 1. Impacts to the industry, given we know you are amongst the hardest hit***
- 2. What assistance is available – including discussion about the shortcomings and usefulness of current offerings***
- 3. What Council can do to assist – broad economic recovery actions, specific measures***

I have taken the liberty of inviting Antony de Cruz, our Service NSW contact, to come and talk about their latest assistance offers and to hear feedback from industry. I have also invited the Office of Emergency Management to attend, as they have just this week formed a regional subcommittee for Economic Recovery...

Thanks, Tessa."

Meeting Attendance

The meeting's attendance included approximately 20 participants.

This comprised a mix between around half being Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators and half being Governmental staff, including Blue Mountains Council staff, and staff from NPWS, Services NSW and NSW Emergency Management.

Excluded Stakeholders?

Notably there was no presence at this meeting of any Blue Mountains small businesses interconnected with Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, being:

- Backpacker accommodation (YHA, Flying Fox, etc.), Katoomba's outdoor equipment retailers, eateries, pubs, mini-bus hire, etc.

Were they indeed considered/invited? What enquiries were made, if any?

Yet, in relation to impacted outdoor equipment retailers (Katoomba), this was specifically explained and recommended by Steve Ridd to Patricia Lane-Gonzales by phone during a phone conversation of 7th February 2020.

No Clear Follow up to Meeting

To this author, there appeared to be no clear outcome of this meeting, no minutes were taken, not action items were presented or distributed to participants. There was no mention of any follow up or ongoing dialogue of subsequent meetings.

In this author's opinion the meeting was an informal talkfest so that Council could be seen to be doing something to support bushfire-impacted outdoor operators of the Blue Mountains.

Maybe some tangible benefit may indeed result.

2. Reported Consequences of the Bushfire Emergency

1. Business Significant Financial Loss

- Customer cancellations of trip bookings and refunds of deposits/prepayments have blanketed the 2019-20 peak summer season and these extend well into mid-2020. This scenario is commonly impacting all Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators who attended the Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators Bushfire Recovery Forum.
- The financial value of lost revenue from these cancellations for Customer bookings cancellations and refunds in the tens of thousands of dollars from established Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators.

2. Operator Subcontracted Staff Rendered Unemployed Indefinitely

- Staff/subcontractors of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators with no income, yet incurring ongoing basic living expenses and bills while having little if any financial reserves – i.e. enforced poverty

3. Mental Health Problems and Relationship Stresses

- As lack of work and income is leading to consequential severe financial hardship and so an inability to pay bills, pay for basic human needs (such as food, rent, utility bills, medicines, fuel, public transport, basic household and family expenses, etc.). One comment at the meeting was that *“some staff are being forced to live in caves and go dumpster diving”*.

4. Some Nature/Adventure Operators are expected to wind up their businesses

- A few participants at the meeting expressed their dismay that should the recent and ongoing customer downturn and lack of revenue endure over the rest of the year and beyond, then they shall be forced to consider winding up their operation

permanently. This will adversely impact ongoing employment opportunities for Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators. It will also impact upon connected Blue Mountains small businesses – caterers, cafés, outdoor equipment retailers, bus hire, accommodation providers, etc. The local economic flow on impact may be considerable but economic forecasts are unquantifiable.

5. Government Charges Imposed Upon Tour Operators While Denied Access & Customers

- That the NSW Government failed to promptly extinguish an ignition that reportedly started on 26th October 2019 at Gospers Mountain more than 70km northeast of the Grose Valley and was left to burn through half a million hectares of World Heritage, caused the Blue Mountains national park to be closed off to all tourists including commercial tour operators from 13th November. This was a stab in the back to Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators required pay the NSW Government a host of fees and charges for the privilege to showcase this world heritage area.
- That the NSW Government continues to require Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators to pay NSW Government's fees and charges – vehicle registration fees, public liability insurance premiums, national parks eco-pass fees, and Blue Mountains Council's commercial tour license fees, represents a stab in the stomach.

3. Specific Recovery Initiatives out of the Meeting

1. Recovery Plan of Action?

- No definitive “Plan of Action” was proposed by Blue Mountains Council staff at this meeting, yet it was a key topic of the agenda.

2. Australian Government’s ‘NSW Bushfires – September 2019 - ‘Disaster Recovery Allowance’

- This option seems to be applicable to Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, since it recognises loss of income as a result of the bushfires and involves payments of benefits of up to \$3,500 comprising \$500 per fortnight over a maximum 13 week period. These amounts are gross, so recipients have to pay tax on the payments (how bizarre).
- It applies to both bushfire-impacted business owners and to their individual staff/subcontractors) employees)
- This option is one that this author is currently pursuing for small business income loss.
- The payment benefit is administered by Centrelink via Services Australia. Applicants are required to register on the Australian government’s myGov internet portal <https://my.gov.au> and to upload evidentiary documentation to prove their loss of income. Telephone 180 22 66 to speak with a government officer and to obtain guidance on uploading documentation on the myGov portal, provide your bank details and a ‘Member Service Reference number’. Apparently a “complex assessor” reviews each submission and then contacts you if any queries
- For more information go to:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/nsw-bushfires-september-2019-disaster-recovery-allowance>

3. NSW Government's Emergency Bushfire Response: Small Business Grants

- This governmental response is irrelevant to Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, since clause 3.2 (e) states: *"An applicant is not eligible for assistance under the scheme...for loss of income as a result of the eligible disaster."* (For details, refer to [Appendix 1](#)).

4. Australian Government's Disaster Recovery Payment

- This governmental response is irrelevant to Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, since it only applies to bushfire victims who have lost real estate property from the bushfires. The losses incurred by Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators relate to income loss from customer cancellations.
- For more information go to:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/nsw-bushfires-september-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment>

5. Service NSW – Disaster Assistance Finder Excludes Economic Loss

- Since December 2019, the NSW Government's post-bushfire support hotline number **13 77 88** and its website services have failed to offer any financial support to businesses impacted by financial (economic) loss, despite such businesses being within acknowledged impacted local government areas such as the Blue Mountains.
- Services NSW (Customer Care Specialists) response to this author's registration has been poor - both by phone and to its website:
<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/bushfire-customer-care-service>

6. NSW Bushfire Recovery Loan Grant of up to \$50,000

- The NSW Government small businesses in the Blue Mountains directly impacted by the NSW August 2019 to February 2020 bushfire event, Bushfire Recovery Grant (loans) for up to \$50,000.
- The purpose of the loan is to help pay for costs associated with the clean-up and reinstatement of a small business or non-profit organisation's operations. The costs could include, but are not limited to:
 - Payment for tradespeople to conduct safety inspections
 - Equipment and materials required for cleaning up
 - The removal and disposal of damaged goods and materials
 - Repairing premises and internal fittings
 - Hiring equipment and/or replacing stock needed to resume operations.
- This grant is not available for expenses that are covered under the small business or non-profit organisation's insurance policy, or for loss of income as a result of the bushfires.
- Eligibility for this grant is restricted to small businesses that have suffered direct bushfire damage to your business assets or equipment. Direct damage means the direct and material impact of fire or bushfire-related firefighting activities.
- The grant loans are concessional in that no interest is accrued for the first two years and no repayments are required for the first two years.
- **Comment:** Two years will likely not be a sufficient grace period for most small business, since it is general expected that restoration of customer visitation to pre-bushfire volumes will take at least two or three years. The 2019 season was a reportedly a soft market anyway before the 2019 bushfire event. A more realistic grace period would be ten years for no interest to accrue and for no repayment during this time.
- In addition, loan repayments after this ten year period should also be based upon a business's ability to repay that loan, according to annual ATO assessable income threshold. A comparable example of such a concessional loan system is that of HECS-HELP debt which commences once a student's Help Repayment Income (HRI) is above the minimum repayment threshold for compulsory repayment.

7. NSW Roads and Maritime Services Fees and Charges Deserve to be

Waived for next 3 years

- The NSW Government which is tasked solely responsible for bushfire emergency management across NSW, during the Christmas 2019 season comprehensively failed the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area by allowing 80% to be fire impacted.
- As a direct consequence of that bushfire mismanagement, a series of bushfire emergencies were declare by the NSW Premier across the entire state of New South

Wales including the Blue Mountains region and local government area. This caused the entire Blue Mountains World heritage Area to be closed to public access including all Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators from late November 2019 into January 2020 which is peak tourist season.

- Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators and their staff as a direct consequence were denied tourist revenue during this period and it is expected to endure for more than 12 months, and perhaps with visitation and financial impacts for years to come. Most Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators have no current income to afford governmental business-as-usual fees and charges. Government insular bureaucracy needs to be kept in check from the masters who pay them – taxpayers, who are currently struggling.
- Yet under the current and widespread bushfire disaster catastrophe impacting the Blue Mountains region (as well as many other NSW regions, indeed far worse so) these business –as-usual government fees and charges are clearly unfair. They present unconscionable financial imposts upon Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators directly adversely impacted by the NSW Government’s bushfire emergency declarations and ongoing restricted access to key sites within the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area national parks.
- The NSW Roads and Maritime Services fees and charges that it imposes upon Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators that have been impacted by the bushfire disaster should be waived for the next three years.
- This includes:
 - i. **Commercial Vehicle Registration Fees** for each tour vehicle (annual fees from \$800 according to vehicle weight)
 - ii. **Commercial Vehicle CTP Green Slip Insurance** (annual fees start from \$400)

8. NSW Point-to-Point Transport Commissioners’ Booking Service

Provider Fees should be waived for next 3 years

- The annual fees that apply to all Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators registered as Booking Service Providers (*having replaced Hire Car and 4WD Operators licensing*)

since the advent of Uber) should be waived for the next three years including the passenger fees and the Taxi Levy.

9. National Parks & Wildlife Service of NSW Eco-Pass Fees should to be waived for next 3 years

- Given that most of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area was closed for most of summer 2019-2020 and with still many area remaining closed or else badly bushfire impacted, the value of the touring experience has greatly diminished. (Refer to [Appendix 2](#)).
- The likely sustained financial impact of the Christmas 2019 Bushfire Disaster to Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators is likely to be felt for more than 12 months, and more likely up to 3 years.
- The National Parks and Wildlife Service Eco Pass annual fee of \$265 applicable to all Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators registered under the Eco-Pass scheme should be waived as well as the passenger fees for the next three years.

10. Blue Mountains Council's Nature-Based Recreation and Tourism Licence Fee Deserves to be Waived for next 3 years

- Blue Mountains City Council 'Nature-Based Recreation and Tourism Licence' annual renewal fee that starts from \$290 per licensee should be waived for the next three years.

11. Services NSW should provide a special grant to fund common insurance costs of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators for next 3 years

- Recognising that Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators have been "amongst the hardest hit" by this bushfire disaster, the most appropriate assistance that the NSW Government could offer are cash grants to fund overhead costs that are

common and necessary across all Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, namely insurances.

Specific grant measures recommended to fund the following over the next three years:

- i. **Public Liability Insurance** (annual premiums start from \$2000)
- ii. **Comprehensive Commercial Vehicle Insurance** (annual fees start from \$1300)
- iii. **Workers Compensation Insurance** (annual fees start from \$200 and increase according to the number of staff employees and the activity risk profile)

12. Services NSW should provide a special grants to fund annual renewal of First Aid Certificates for staff of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators for next 3 years

- All field staff/subcontractors of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators are required to have a current first aid certificate which must be renewed annually.
- The cost of renewing first aid certificates is around \$160 per certificate holder.
- A specific measure that would directly assist unemployed staff of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators would be for the NSW Government to fund the annual renewal of first aid certificate training for these staff over the next 3 years.

13. Council's Bush Track Manual Labour Repair Scheme

- Council's Environmental Planning Branch offered an approved specific scheme of direct employment by Council. It involved adding a casual manual labour force comprising the unemployed subcontractors of operators in order to help fast track the remedial repair work currently needed to Council's bushfire impacted walking tracks in dangerous post-bushfire landscapes. It was not made clear whether this

scheme extended to NPWS walking tracks as well as a collaborative recovery initiative. It was not clear whether relevant insurances would be the responsibility of Blue Mountains Council (workers compensation insurance, business/public liability insurance, products insurance), but more likely the risks and insurance costs to be borne wholly by the contractor operators chosen by Council to administer Council's scheme.

- An arbitrary budget proposed by Council was a round \$100,000 intended to provide reliable and consistent employment to up to 18 staff/subcontractors of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, who remain otherwise unemployed as a result of the bushfires. Administration of the scheme was offered to any willing BM outdoor/tour operator. Operators raised questions about details and about training. Some concern was highlighted about why Council needed to outsource the management of this proposed scheme given that Council already had an ongoing track maintenance/repair programme within its Environmental Planning Branch programme. Details about the scheme were requested by this author to after the meeting to Council's Environmental Planning Branch leader, but none has been forthcoming.

14. Council's Altitude Small Business Conference

- This conference to be held locally 12-13 March 2020 including a session entitled Building Disaster Resilient Businesses. A concessional attendance price per person is \$51.70.
- The attendance fee of \$51.70 should be waived, given that only one session appears relevant to bushfire impacts small businesses, and given that attendees from the meeting have no cash flow and yet are committed to paying ongoing bills.

15. Council to Re-prioritise it's capital expenditure to support Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators and their staff/subcontractors

- Given the unprecedented scale and severity of the bushfires and their devastating impact upon Blue Mountains tourism, particularly those acknowledged "hardest hit" financially – being Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators, Council should consider reprioritising its capital expenditure budget for the next three years to fund

programmes to directly support the recovery of Blue Mountains Outdoor Operators and their staff/subcontractors.

- Consideration should be given to staging a second forum ASAP to discuss options.

16. Council's Offer of Free Business Advisor Sessions

- The week commencing Monday 10th February 2020, Business Advisors will be stationed in the Blue Mountains ready to meet with our affected businesses.

17. Council's From Surviving to Thriving Session

- Council is supporting the Western Sydney Business Centre to provide a bushfire recovery event. These evening sessions will be held in Springwood 17 February and Katoomba 24 February 2020.

18. Free Counselling Service

- Blue Mountains Council is offering free confidential Counselling via LifeWorks to all Blue Mountains residents and businesses.

Appendices

Appendix 1: NSW Emergency Bushfire Response: Small Business Grants Guidelines (2020)

1. About the program

The objective of this assistance measure made under agreements between the Commonwealth and relevant State Governments, is to support small businesses directly affected by the 2019-2020 bushfire disaster events (eligible disaster events commencing August 2019). The small business grant application period is effective for six months upon announcement of the grants. Extensions may be considered following submission to the Commonwealth.

The Emergency Bushfire Response for *Small Business Grants* are intended for small business owners to help pay for costs of clean-up and *reinstatement of small businesses* that have suffered direct damage as a result of the *eligible disaster*.

2. Available funding

The maximum grant amount for clean-up and reinstatement amount is \$50,000.

- a) An **initial amount of up to \$25,000** is available (an initial claim). To support an initial claim, evidence of the direct damage such as photographs, quotations, tax invoices or official receipts are required.
- b) A **subsequent amount of up to \$25,000** is available (a subsequent claim). To support subsequent claims full evidence of payment is required. (This evidence must also include any amounts claimed under the initial claim if not already provided).

Note: multiple applications can be made up to the maximum amount available under the *small business grants*.

3. How funding may be used

3.1 Grants are provided to help pay costs associated with clean up and *reinstatement of the small business*, this may include:

- a) engagement of tradesperson to conduct a safety inspection of damage to a property, premises, or equipment;
- b) purchasing, hiring or leasing equipment or materials to clean a property, premises, or equipment;
- c) purchasing, hiring or leasing equipment or materials that are essential for immediately resuming operation of the *small business*;
- d) employing a person to clean a property, premises or equipment if:
 - i. the cost would not ordinarily have been incurred in the absence of the *eligible disaster*; or
 - ii. the cost exceeds the costs of employing a person to clean the property, premises or equipment that would ordinarily have been incurred in the absence of the *eligible disaster*;
- e) removing and disposing of debris or damaged materials;
- f) removing and disposing of spoiled goods and stock due to power outage;
- g) repairing a building, or repairing or replacing fittings in a building, if the repair or replacement is essential for resuming operation of the *small business*. If the repair or replacement is for small businesses that is home based, applicants are only permitted to claim the costs for damage to the premises which is directly attributable to the business, not other household damage;
- h) any of the following:
 - i. replacing lost or damaged stock if the replacement is essential for immediately resuming operation of the *small business*;
 - ii. leasing temporary premises for the purpose of resuming operation of the *small business*.

3.2 An applicant is **not eligible** for assistance under the scheme:

- a) for repairs to a building that the applicant lets to a person for residential or commercial purposes, unless the applicant lets the property in the course of operating a business (superannuation funds and personal investment vehicles are not regarded as businesses); or
- b) if the *small business* is entitled to receive or has received an amount under a policy of insurance for the relevant costs claimed; or
- c) for any expenses that are claimable under the *small business owner* insurance policy; or
- d) the *small business owner* has successfully received funding or assistance from any other government source or program or donation in relation to the business, where that funding or assistance has met the relevant costs claimed ; or
- e) for loss of income as a result of the *eligible disaster*.

4. Eligibility criteria

4.1 To be eligible for the grant, the applicant must:

- a) be a *small business owner*;
- b) hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN at the time of the *eligible disaster*;
- c) own a *small business* located in the *defined disaster area* for the *eligible disaster* that has suffered direct damage as a result of the *eligible disaster*;
- d) have been engaged in carrying on the *small business* when affected by the *eligible disaster*;
- e) be primarily responsible for meeting the costs claimed in the application; and
- f) be intending to re-establish the *small business* in the *defined disaster area* for the *eligible disaster*.

4.2 An applicant may also be eligible for a grant if:

- a) the *small business* is located outside the *defined disaster area* for the *eligible disaster* but operates part – time or on some regular basis within the *defined disaster area* and that business' plant and/or equipment were damaged.

4.3 Applications from businesses that employ 20 or more full time employees but have a turnover of less than \$50 million may also be considered following submission to the National Bushfire Recovery Agency via Service NSW.

5. Eligible separate business

5.1 Applicants who operate more than one small business, for example under a single ABN at separate locations, may apply for assistance for each eligible separate business up to the maximum amount of assistance available for the relevant defined disaster area and determined by the establishment notice.

5.2 When determining an application on this basis, the relevant agency may consider (but is not limited to):

- a) the staffing arrangement of the separate business;
- b) whether the separate business has its own plant, equipment or stock;
- c) the accounting and insurance arrangements of the separate business;
- d) whether the separate business operates under their own trading name;
- e) the commercial viability and autonomy of each business.

6. Evidence of direct damage

Evidence of direct damage associated with the eligible disaster must be provided as follows:

- a) a list of bushfire-related damage, supported by photographic evidence of the direct damage; or other appropriate evidence to prove financial impact if/when the damage is unable to be photographed or receipts lost due to the extent of the disaster event.

7. Terms and conditions

7.1 Applicants are able to apply for assistance under the scheme where they are a small business owner.

7.2 Applicants must retain all tax invoices, official receipts, bank statements, quotations or other similar records for assistance received under the scheme until one year after the closing day for applications for the eligible disaster.

7.3 Applicants must consent to the relevant agency conducting an audit of quotations, tax invoices, official receipts, bank statements or other similar records to verify the amounts given under the scheme have been used in accordance with the claim. Penalties may apply for false or misleading information.

7.4 Applicants must provide authorisation for the relevant agency to contact their insurance company to confirm or verify entitlements or the outcome of any claims made in relation to the eligible disaster.

8. Definitions

Administrating Agency (used interchangeably with **Relevant Agency**) means the responsible agency/department/body for assessing and administrating the *small business grant* applications.

Defined disaster area for an *eligible disaster* means the area that the appropriate Minister has defined for the purpose of activating Category C under the *Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements*.

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements means the funding arrangements as agreed between the Commonwealth and the State for providing financial assistance to communities affected by an *eligible disaster* (available on the Australian Government Disaster Assist Website).

Eligible disaster means bushfire.

Eligible separate business means a separate *small business* owned by the same *small business* owner that would be a commercially viable and autonomous business if the other separate businesses operated by the eligible entity ceased to operate.

Evidence of payment means any of the following:

- a) an invoice including the name, address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the invoice and a description of each item to which the invoice relates and is clearly identifiable as being related to approved expenditure for the applicant and can be related to damage from the *eligible disaster*
- b) a receipt including the name and address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the receipt and a description of each item to which the receipt relates
- c) a copy of the applicant's bank transfer and/or bank statement.

Full-time employment means an individual who ordinarily works for at least 35 hours each week for the *small business*.

Public company means a *public company* within the meaning of the Corporation Act.

Reinstatement means the carrying out of activities that are necessary to help the *Small Business* continue or resume production at a similar level as before the *eligible disaster*.

Small Business is a business, other than a farm enterprise that:

- a) holds an Australian Business Number (ABN); and
- b) is not a *public company*, charitable business (charitable business means a business that does not operate to make a profit) or body incorporate under the *Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997*; and
- c) employs fewer than 20 *full time employees*. That is, the sum total of all standard hours worked by all employees (whether full-time or part-time) is less than the number of standard hours which would be worked by 20 full-time employees, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics; or
- d) if operated by a sole trader and the business has no employees other than the sole owner:
 - a. the sole owner must derive the majority of their income from the business unless the applicant can satisfy the *relevant agency* that the sole trader, immediately before an *eligible disaster*, derived that majority of income from the business and that the majority of income from the business and that the majority of the sole trader's income would have come from the *small business* again, were it not for the *eligible disaster*; or
 - b. is a *small business* in development.

Small business in development means an enterprise that is being developed by an individual and in the opinion of the relevant agency will be developed into a small business that will be carried on by the individual as a sole trader.

Small business owner is a sole trader, partnership, private company or trust that carries on a *small business*.

Appendix 2: NPWS Advisory of Blue Mountains National Park Closures from 13 November 2019

From: Megan DeLimaGarcia [<mailto:Megan.DeLimaGarcia@environment.nsw.gov.au>]

Sent: Friday, 20 December 2019 1:41 PM

To: steve@naturetrail.com.au

Subject: Links for Blue Mountains National Park

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/blue-mountains-national-park>

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/blue-mountains-national-park/local-alerts>

Applies from Wed 13 Nov 2019, 12.00pm. Last reviewed: Wed 18 Dec 2019, 4.26pm.

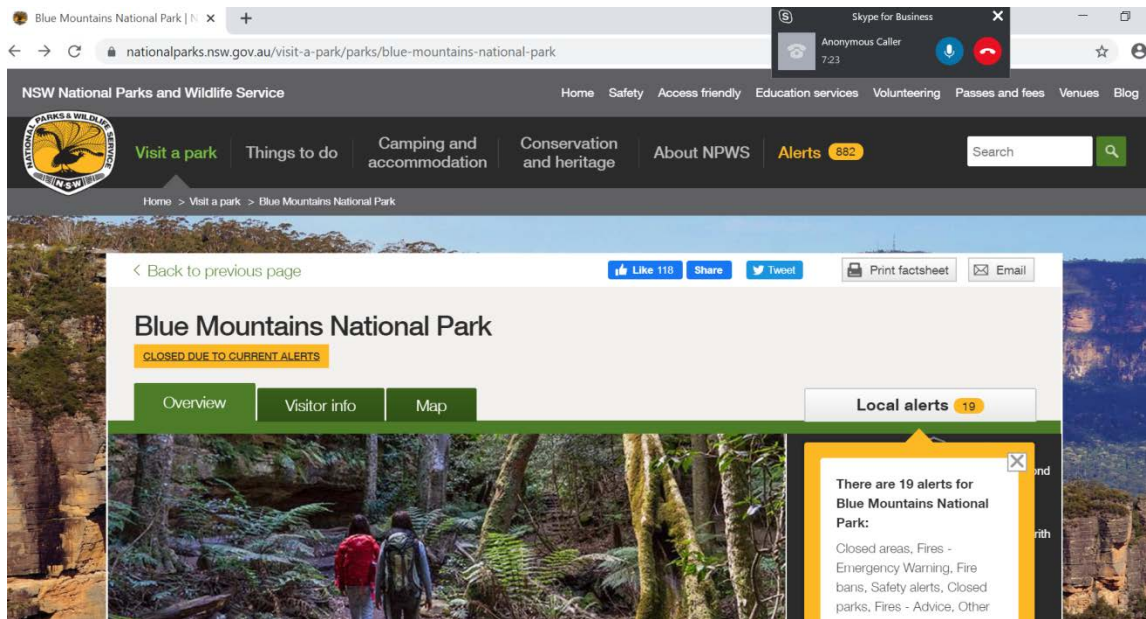
Closed parks: Park closed due to dangerous fire conditions

This park is closed due to current fire danger conditions and the bushfire situation. Do not enter this park. Penalties apply for non-compliance. For more information contact the local NPWS office.

Affects 71 locations in this park:

- [4WD Oberon Colong historic stock route](#)
- [Acacia Flat campground](#)
- [Andersons trail](#)
- [Blackheath lookouts driving route](#)
- [Blue Gum Forest](#)
- [Blue Mountains Heritage Centre](#)
- [Blue Mountains Heritage Centre](#)
- [Blue Pool walking track](#)
- [Burralow Creek campground and picnic area](#)
- [Burramoko Ridge \(Hanging Rock\) trail](#)
- [Charles Darwin walk](#)
- [Cliff Top walking track](#)
- [Conservation Hut](#)
- [Dardanelles Pass loop walking track](#)
- [Den Fenella walking track](#)
- [Dunphys campground](#)
- [Echo Point to Scenic World via Giant Stairway](#)
- [Euroka campground](#)
- [Evans lookout](#)
- [Fairfax Heritage walking track](#)
- [Federal Pass](#)
- [Furber Steps-Scenic Railway walking track](#)
- [Glenbrook Gorge track](#)
- [Govetts Leap descent](#)
- [Govetts Leap lookout](#)
- [Grand Canyon track](#)
- [Greater Blue Mountains drive](#)
- [Ingar campground](#)
- [Jack Evans walking track](#)
- [Jellybean track](#)
- [Kedumba River Crossing campground](#)
- [Leura Cascades Fern Bower](#)
- [Lockleys Pylon walking track](#)
- [Lyrebird Dell walking track](#)
- [Mount Banks Road cycle route](#)
- [Mount Banks Summit walk](#)
- [Mount Hay Road - Leura](#)

- [Mount Portal lookout](#)
- [Mount Solitary walking track](#)
- [Mount Werong campground](#)
- [Murphys Glen campground](#)
- [Narrow Neck trail](#)
- [National Pass](#)
- [Nature track](#)
- [Nepean lookout](#)
- [Nepean River walking track](#)
- [Overcliff-Undercliff track](#)
- [Perrys lookdown](#)
- [Perrys lookdown campground](#)
- [Perrys lookdown to Blue Gum Forest walking track](#)
- [Pierces Pass to Blue Gum Forest walking track](#)
- [Prince Henry Cliff walk](#)
- [Princes Rock walking track](#)
- [Pulpit Rock lookout](#)
- [Pulpit walking track](#)
- [Red Hands Cave](#)
- [Red Hands Cave walking track - Blue Mountains National Park](#)
- [Rocket Point lookout track](#)
- [Rodriguez Pass walking track](#)
- [Round walking track](#)
- [Ruined Castle walking track](#)
- [Six Foot track](#)
- [Tunnel View lookout](#)
- [Valley of the Waters picnic area](#)
- [Wentworth Falls picnic area](#)
- [Wentworth Falls to McMahons Point](#)
- [Wentworth Falls to Woodford via Ingar campground](#)
- [Wentworth Falls track](#)
- [Wentworth Pass loop walking track](#)
- [Woodford – Oaks trail](#)
- [Woodford Station to Murphys Glen campground](#)



Appendix 3: Blue Mountains National Park – areas still closed from 25th December 2019

The following areas of Blue Mountains National Park remain closed due to the bushfire and/or flood damage and associated hazards:

- Kings Tableland Road from Queen Victoria Hospital to McMahons Point including Andersons fire trail and cycle route
- Kedumba, Ruined Castle, Perrys, Green Gully (Dunphy's), Acacia Flat camping areas.
- Access roads and lookouts around the Grose Valley (including Mount Hay, Victoria Falls, Hat Hill Road (Perry's) and Point Pilcher.
- Access tracks into and around the Grose Valley (including Perrys, Mount Banks, Mount Hay, Flat Top, Pierces Pass (Hungerfords), Lockleys Pylon, Victoria Falls and Rodriguez Pass.
- Wentworth Pass, National Pass and Valley of Waters tracks where floods have damaged creek crossings.
- Dardanelles Pass where landslides have destroyed the track
- Prince Henry (between Solitary Restaurant and Tarpeian Rock) and Leura Cascades track due to landslides and flood damage.
- Walking tracks around Blackheath (including Walls Cave, Grand Canyon, Hanging Rock/Burramoko, Popes Glen, Cliff Top, Rodriguez Pass, Bridal Veil Falls, Braeside walk, Pulpit Rock, and Western Rim)
- Canyons around Mount Wilson, Bells Line of Road and Grose Valley (including all Wollongambe, Serendipity, all Bell Creek, all DuFours, all Bowens Creek, Claustral, Yileen, Birrabang, Dalpura, Hat Hill, Pilcher, Katoomba Creek, Fortress and Butterbox (Mount Hay).

- Rock climbing areas around the Grose and Narrowneck (all burnt sites including Bowens Creek, Bell Super-crag and Diamond Falls)
- Glenbrook precinct, including Euroka, Mount Portal, Jelly Bean, Blue Pool, Woodford-Oaks fire trail, Nepean lookout and fire trail, Redhands Cave and fire trail
- Ruined Castle, Golden Stairs, Tarros Ladders, or Mount Solitary routes
- Wild Dog Mountains routes (including Kanangra to Katoomba, Breakfast Creek, Mobbs Swamp, Katoomba to Mittagong, Coxs River, Yellow Pup Spur)
- Vale of Avoca lookouts, walking tracks and routes.
- Buralow campground and surrounding area.

The Six Foot Track remains closed between Guyvers Bridge to the Jenolan Caves (including Cox's River, Alum River and Black Range campgrounds) due to dangerous conditions caused by the recent rainfall event that has exacerbated the recent bushfire impacts causing land slips, track erosion and tree fall.

Crown Lands contractors are busy working towards opening the currently closed sections of track before the end of the February.