

# BUSHFIRE RESPONSE & RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS

7 STEPS  
IN A PLAN  
FOR  
RECOVERY

Recommendation  
Number 5

HOUSING AND  
HOMELESSNESS

## HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTH EAST NSW

The size and scale of the 2019/2020 summer bushfire crisis was unprecedented, and the impact on vulnerable people and communities has been profound.

2,448 homes were destroyed in NSW and 7,500 people were directly impacted. Housing, which was already in critical shortage, is now even harder to source, particularly for people on low income, including those living on income support.

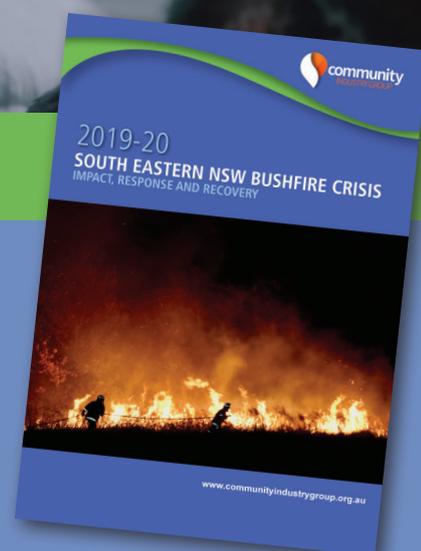
The additional impact of the coronavirus pandemic has created a new cohort of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with growing job losses and increasing economic insecurity.

The combined effects of bushfire crisis and coronavirus pandemic has impacted housing supply and generated an increase in demand on homelessness services and support services in the South East NSW region.

Social housing stock is extremely limited across the region. Waitlists are long and individuals and families unable to access the rental market are facing severe hardship. People living on income support payments are increasingly unable to find and secure an affordable and appropriate private rental in the region.

Despite NSW Government initiatives to provide temporary accommodation, there remains a cohort of people who are homeless and extremely vulnerable. Much of the homelessness is hidden, with people sofa-surfing, sleeping in tents or caravans, or living in their cars.

Service providers report an overall sense of panic and despair among vulnerable communities. Without appropriate and rapid action, homelessness and lack of safe, secure and affordable housing will negatively impact health, safety, wellbeing, and access to education and employment.



Community Industry Group has worked directly with service providers in disaster-affected areas, and has seen and heard first-hand accounts of the impact on individuals, families and communities.

This report includes real life examples of the hardships people faced and are currently facing. It also recognises the often extraordinary efforts of community services workers during the crisis, and post-crisis.



**1300+**

Homes destroyed in South East NSW

People living in poverty:

**19.5%** Batemans Bay



Eurobodalla Hinterland **15.2%**

**15.2%** Bega-Eden Hinterland



Affordable rental properties for a single person on JobSeeker payment\* **0%**

social housing



The expected waiting time for a three bedroom social housing property in South East NSW can be up to ten years!

Region	Expected waiting time
Bega Valley	5-10 years
Eden	Up to 2 years
Goulburn	5-10 years
Shoalhaven Heads	2-5 years
Snowy River	2-5 years
Queanbeyan	5-10 years

\* Reference: Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot 2020

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- \$5 million per year for 5 years (\$25m) additional program funding for services which support communities in the bushfire impacted areas in South East NSW, including crisis accommodation and outreach services.
- Inclusionary zoning - at least 15% affordable housing in new developments, to be introduced across NSW.
- Innovative finance solutions to develop more social housing:
  - Public Housing to be classed as public infrastructure to open up investment options (i.e. Waratah Bonds).
  - Government to work with industry to develop Affordable Housing using institutional investment.
- The development of an Affordable Housing Strategy for all NSW Local Government Areas.
- Permanently increase income support payments to ensure recipients are living above the poverty line, and able to secure safe and appropriate housing.