

Bushfire Recovery Access Program: Accredited Mental Health Social Workers ready to provide mental health support under new regime

The AASW welcomes the Bushfire Recovery Access Program that comes into effect today and will see people affected by the bushfires, including first responders, receive vital mental health supports. The impact of the unprecedented bushfire crisis of 2019-2020 on people's wellbeing cannot be underestimated and it is important people access help, if they so choose, to better enable them to prepare for the long-term recovery effort. As of today, the Bushfire Recovery Access Program will be rolled out by Medicare and includes 10 immediate counselling sessions and access to more sessions without requiring a GP referral, among other initiatives. Face-to-face or telehealth services can be accessed depending on people's location and circumstances. Accredited Mental Health Social Workers (AMHSWs) are among those who can deliver these services and they have significant expertise in assessment and providing supports with a wide range of complex mental health needs, including grief, loss, trauma, and bereavement. AASW National President Cristine Craik said, "AMHSWs meet the high standards set by Medicare to deliver the Bushfire Recovery Access Program. They are among those professionals currently providing specialist mental health services under Medicare's Better Access program. "AMHSWs work with children, adults and older persons across a wide range of issues including, depression, anxiety, grief and loss. relationships issues, life crises, family conflicts, trauma and abuse. AMHSWs provide a unique contribution to the mental health space in their holistic approach to working with a person. Working through this lens is such a vital skill set for ongoing recovery work with individuals, families and communities." ENDS Notes: Visit <https://www.aasw.asn.au/find-a-social-worker/search/> to find your local social worker and click here to learn more about how AMHSW can help you. For an explanation of the Medicare changes, visit: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/bushfire-recovery-access-program> To interview Christine Craik, please contact Angela Yin on 0413 532 954.

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