

## Statement from the State Coroner

In New South Wales, the coroner has a responsibility to investigate certain 'reportable' deaths and fires. These include deaths due to bushfires, and bushfires that have destroyed or damaged property.

As a result of the devastating impact of the 2019-20 bushfire crisis across NSW, special measures are being put in place to manage coronial investigations arising from the bushfires. The unprecedented scale of the bushfires, which continue to burn in locations throughout the State, means that these coronial investigations will be complex and take some time to finalise.

The Premier has announced an independent inquiry into the bushfires is to be conducted. This is a separate process from coronial inquiries into the cause and origin of the fires. Information about the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry is available on its [website](#).

No decisions have yet been made regarding whether coronial inquests into fire-related deaths and/or fire inquiries will be held. Police are still investigating the fires and it will take many months before they are able to provide the coroner with briefs of evidence.

In coming months, this page will be updated regularly with news and information concerning the progress of coronial investigations arising from the bushfires.

- **Deaths due to the bushfires**

Investigations into all deaths occurring across NSW due to the 2019-20 bushfires will be managed at the Forensic Medicine & Coroners Court Complex (FMCCC) at Lidcombe.

The Court is working with a number of professionals and experts, such as NSW Police and NSW Health Forensic & Analytical Science Service, to investigate the circumstances of these deaths as quickly as possible and to support families of those who died, throughout the coronial process.

- **Property damaged or destroyed in the bushfires**

NSW Police are responsible for reporting certain fires to the coroner. Damage to or destruction of your property must be reported to your local Police for the details to be included in a fire report to the coroner.

All investigations into the 2019-20 bushfires that are reported to the coroner will be managed at the Lidcombe FMCCC. Not every fire will be reported to the coroner.

Every fire reported to NSW Police will be given an Event Number, even if it is not reported to the coroner. You should ask the Police for the *Event Number* that relates to the fire that destroyed or damaged your property, as this will generally be required by your insurance company.

### Assistance and support

#### *Coronial services*

- For administrative enquiries:  
Contact the State Coroner's Court registry on (02) 8584 7777
- For [guidance and information during the coronial process](#):  
Contact the Coronial Information and Support Program (CISP) on (02) 8584 7777

#### *External services*

- Government support services:  
ServiceNSW bushfire customer care service - contact 13 77 88 or visit their [website](#).
- Legal services:  
Legal Aid NSW Disaster Response Legal Service NSW - contact 1800 801 529
- Non-government support services:  
Australian Red Cross - contact 1800 733 276