

24 March 2022

What you need to know:

- All staff working in early childhood education and care services in flood affected regions can immediately request personal wellbeing support through the Converge Employee Assistance Program.
- From the end of this week, there will also be wellbeing and mental health support on the ground for ECE staff in flood affected areas.
- There is a range of mental health resources and information about financial assistance available on our website.

Dear services and providers

Over the past few weeks, Department of Education officers have made numerous calls to all flood impacted services to offer support, as well as our flood support teams from CCSA, CELA and Network.

We have now confirmed additional mental health and wellbeing support for staff working in early childhood education and care services and this is detailed in this email.

If you are still encountering difficulties with relocation, finding education and care for displaced families or any other flood related issues, please do not hesitate to contact the Department on 1800 619 113 so we can help guide you through these challenging times.

Services can also access our [NSW Floods Support and Assistance webpage](#) to easily find key resources and information for early childhood education services during this time.

Wellbeing support for ECE staff

The Department of Education has partnered with Converge International to offer wellbeing support to ECE services impacted by floods.

All staff working in early childhood education and care services in flood affected regions can immediately request personal support through [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\) - Supporting You](#) by contacting Converge directly on 1800 060 650. ECE staff will have access to 6 free sessions through to 30 April.

We are pleased to advise that clinical consultants from Converge International will be in Northern NSW from next week to provide staff working in early childhood education and care services with face-to-face wellbeing support.

Our flood support officers will commence reaching out to impacted ECE services in the next few days to make an appropriate time for a consultant to provide support to your service.

The consultants will be available to provide post-incident psychology and counselling support through:

- Group sessions about the impact of acute stress (including emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioural), what to watch out for in others, and looking after each other and themselves
- Personalised 1:1 sessions
- Leadership support – what signs should leaders be looking for in staff as of not coping/maladaptive coping in the coming weeks?
- Links with further personal support (following the psychology first aid protocol of Look/Listen/Link)

Mental health and wellbeing resources

There is a range of free mental health support on the [Service NSW webpage](#) including 24/7 telephone services available to you.

We also encourage you to access the range of mental health and wellbeing resources for children, educators, families and the community that can be found on the Department of Education's [Disaster recovery page](#).

Resources for educators

- [BeYou: Educator wellbeing after a natural disaster](#) - tips on how to balance your responsibilities and your own mental health.

Resources for children

Given the significant impact of flooding, we encourage families and services to access resources to support children's mental health and wellbeing.

- [Birdie's Tree: Growing together through natural disasters](#) - online storybooks and therapeutic games to help infants and young children affected by natural disasters.
- [Be You: How to provide support after a natural disaster](#) - tips and guidelines on supporting and comforting children after natural disasters.
- [Victoria State Government Better Health Channel: Trauma and Children](#) - information on identifying and supporting preschoolers through trauma.
- [Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit](#) – offers support for adults and children before, during and after a disaster or traumatic event.

Financial support and assistance

Impacted individuals and ECE services can use the [NSW Disaster Assistance Finder Tool](#) to get a personalised list of available financial support and programs to apply for.

In addition, there is a range of support available through the links below:

Support for businesses

- [NSW Government storm and flood disaster recovery small business grant](#) - for small business or a not-for-profits impacted by storms and floods in February and March 2022.

- [Northern Rivers business flood support package](#) - will provide up to \$10,000 to small businesses and not-for-profit organisations and up to \$200,00 for medium-sized businesses that are directly or indirectly impacted by floods.
- [The Community Child Care Fund](#) – Special Circumstances grants to help services stay open.
- The Australian Government is providing [support payments of \\$10,000](#) to assist early childhood education and care services affected by the floods where they have been closed for eight days or more. This support is now available to more services, with the recent extension of the Local Area Emergencies (LAE) in place in New South Wales.
- [NSW Disaster relief loans for businesses and NFPs](#) - Small businesses may be eligible for concessional loans up to \$130,000 and Not-for-profit organisations may be eligible for concessional loans up to \$25,000.

Support for people

- [Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment](#) - for people impacted by a flooding event.
- [Australian Government Disaster Recovery Allowance](#) – short-term income assistance (up to 13 weeks) if you've lost income as a direct result of the floods.
- [NSW Government Disaster Relief Grant](#) - If your home or essential household items have been destroyed or damaged by a natural disaster, you may be eligible.

Access more information via the NSW Government's [NSW floods information and support services webpages](#).

Supporting additional children in your service

Any services that currently have vacancies or have the space to potentially take on additional children, please contact us on 1800619113 or email ECECD@det.nsw.edu.au.

Please include the available days and age groups you can cater for as this will assist us to connect local families needing care.

More information

For advice and help, please contact us by calling 1800 619 113 or emailing ececd@det.nsw.edu.au.



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Sent to services and providers in Northern Rivers local government areas.

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