Preparing for a natural disaster

Australia is a country with a diverse range of climates and landscapes. Because of this we are prone to a range of natural disasters including floods, bush fires and heat waves. While many carers have experienced these events in the past, it is important to know what to do when severe weather hits.

If you or the person you care for need help getting around it is crucial that you develop an evacuation plan well in advance. Ensure that you have any mobility aids, vital medical equipment and medication ready to go in an emergency kit. If you need to evacuate the property, do so as quickly as possible and remember to ask for assistance from authorities and emergency services if required.

Floods

If you live in a low-lying flood-prone area it is important that you familiarise yourself with flood safety procedures and develop an evacuation plan.

The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) has developed a dedicated website, FloodSafe, which provides information on

- Preparing for a flood
- Evacuation warnings
- What to do during a flash flood
- Recovering after a flood

There is also information about how to assist people with physical disabilities, hearing or vision impairments, intellectual disabilities and those who are frail. Visit the site at http://www.floodsafe.com.au/ or call 1800 201 000

The NSW Ministry for Police and Emergency Services also provides flood information on its website including

- Emergency contacts
- Current evacuations
- Links to flood warnings
- Transport disruptions

Visit the site at http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/current/flooding or call 02 8247 5900
**Bush fires**

Bush fires are a common occurrence all over Australia. Fires can change direction and move very quickly so it is important that you have a Bush Fire Survival Plan in place.

The **Rural Fire Service** website provides useful information including

- Advice on developing a Bush Fire Survival Plan
- The locations of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs)
- What to include in an Emergency Survival Kit.


**Heat waves**

Australian summers can bring very hot temperatures which can pose serious health risks including dehydration and heat stroke.

The **NSW Ministry of Health** website provides advice and helpful resources including the ‘beat the heat’ guide which includes dedicated section for carers. Visit the site at [http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/beat_the_heat](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/beat_the_heat) or call **02 9391 9000**