



Robyn Preston MP

Member for Hawkesbury

MEDIA RELEASE

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LOCAL HEROES BEHIND BUSHFIRE CLEAN-UP IN CENTRAL REGION COMMUNITIES

Regional contractors are driving the effort to clear properties in the Central Region through the NSW and Federal Government's bushfire clean-up program with 21 businesses now engaged to carry out work in their own community or a neighbouring Local Government Area.

Member for Hawkesbury Robyn Preston MP said more than 90 qualified subcontractors across regional NSW have helped to get regional towns back on their feet through the program which is expected to direct more than \$180 million into local economies.

Ms Preston said the vast majority of subcontractors employed through the program are small or medium businesses with tradies and specialists who will know the faces behind the properties they are helping clear or helped protect local neighbourhoods from the flames.

"Local and neighbouring businesses and subbies have engaged their skills and knowledge to clean-up local properties and I thank and congratulate the teams in the Central Region for their work which has helped significantly to get us on the road to recovery," Ms Preston said.

"Many of these small and medium businesses come from the hardest hit communities and we have worked to ensure local subcontractors are engaged in the clean-up work so that money is put into local bank accounts which is then spent and invested locally."

"I'd also like to commend Laing O'Rourke who have done a fantastic job designing their procurement processes to bring these local businesses on board fast and paying them on a weekly basis, which has really helped support local jobs in our community."

Ms Preston said subcontractors are currently active in all bushfire impacted areas across NSW and making great progress, including the Central Region where Eather Group, an Aboriginal owned business in Londonderry is among the many businesses behind the local effort.

"When joining the clean-up, Eather Group made a commitment to hire job seekers as part of their crew, delivering on their promise, including hiring a special needs worker from Hawkesbury via Nova Employment, welcoming him to join their work, Ms Preston said.

"This recruit assists with loading and prepping their bushfire fleet and site gear at the yard, and it turns out that Eather were clearing his own family's property in Colo Heights so he was able to participate as a site labourer on that property, a very moving experience.

"I'd also like to thank Eather Group and businesses just like them who have helped to create employment opportunities for the regional communities they live and work in, as every property cleared allows the owner the chance to heal and start their rebuild."

Property registrations for clean-up are still open. Residents are urged to make sure they are registered and also making sure your friends, family and neighbours are registered as well.

You can register by calling 13 77 88 or visiting

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/register-opt-nsw-bushfire-clean>.

If at any point you would like further information about the clean-up process you can visit

<https://cleanup.lnhr.com.au/> at any time or contact Laing O'Rourke on 1800 007 539.

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