

COMMON QUESTIONS

Storm and Flood Clean-Up Program

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) will support the clean-up and recovery work for the owners of private property damaged by the storms and floods that occurred on 9–10 June 2021.

GENERAL

When will my clean-up start?

You need to register for the Storm and Flood Clean-Up program (Clean-Up program) by visiting the BRV website or phoning 1800 560 760.

Registration for the Clean-Up program and assessment of hazardous trees is now open, and once you have registered, a BRV representative will make contact to discuss how the program works.

Do I need to be insured?

No. If you are eligible, you can participate in this program whether you were insured or not.

If I choose not to participate in the program, will I be able to have my clean-up reimbursed?

No. If you choose not to register for the program, you'll need to make your own arrangements to have your property cleared by a licensed contractor and the waste disposed of safely. Neither you nor the contractor will be eligible to have those clean-up costs reimbursed.

I have already started clean-up on my property, what should I do?

If you have already begun clean-up works on your property and you meet the eligibility criteria, you are welcome to still contact BRV to register for the Clean-Up program. Any costs incurred so far will not be reimbursed.

You can register by visiting www.br.vic.gov.au/cleanup or phoning 1800 560 760.

Can I keep the wood that has fallen on my property?

BRV will approach the salvage, treatment and re-use of fallen trees flexibly. All wood will be assessed against criteria including cultural significance, available storage sites on the property and future risk.

The most important thing in any clean-up is always the safety of the community and the contractors undertaking the works.

In determining the arrangements for wood, BRV and Johns Lyng Group will seek to be guided by property owners and other stakeholders.

If the wood is able to be kept by you, it will be left at an agreed location on your property.

If you have trees still standing on your property which, because of the storm event of 9-10 June, now pose a risk to a place of residence or personal safety, you can register for a professional assessment.

If you have wind thrown or fallen trees on your property, you can contact VicForests, a State-owned business that harvests, sells and regrows sustainable timber from Victoria's native forests and may be able to process fallen wood.

Property owners can contact VicForests by emailing vfs.admin@vicforests.com.au and detailing their location, how much timber is on their properties and dimensions.

Is the clean-up of public land part of the program?

We know that having safe access to public land will be important not only to the tourism sector, but also to ensure residents can have the ongoing connection to land and community that is so important to recovery.

The Clean-Up program will assess the scope and impacts to public land to provide recommendations for inclusion. BRV will be consulting closely with key stakeholders on this.

The immediate focus is on ensuring that private properties, both residential and commercial, can be cleaned up safely and efficiently.

STORM AND FLOOD CLEAN-UP PROGRAM – STRUCTURES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Do I have to pay anything?

No. The Clean-Up program is fully funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments and provided at no cost to eligible property owners, regardless of whether they were insured or not.

How long will it take to complete the clean-up on my property?

Each property will have its own challenges. There are still many areas where safe access can't be guaranteed, and the Clean-Up program will need to approach every property differently.

Before commencing work on a property, Johns Lyng Group will conduct an assessment to identify potential hazards, risks to property access and other safety concerns. Above all, safety is the number one priority of this program – not just for crews as they work, but for residents into the future.

Will damaged fencing be included in the clean-up?

The Clean-Up program covers the removal of debris and waste from houses and other structures destroyed or damaged beyond repair by the storms and floods.

Damaged or destroyed fencing is not generally included, but if it is needed for the safe clean-up of destroyed structures on a property, its removal may be included.

For example, a fence may need to be removed to gain access to your property, or to ensure the safety of workers on your site.

I have a car body that needs to be removed, is this included in the clean-up?

Yes. Vehicles on private property that were working before the event and were then damaged beyond repair are also eligible for clean-up, even if there weren't any structures destroyed on the property.

As well as cleaning up my damaged or destroyed structures, I need a number of trees removed, are these included in the clean-up?

Any hazards on eligible properties, including trees that pose a hazard to property access, structures or work crews carrying out clean-up will be removed.

Will the program remove debris that was left behind during the initial storm response?

The Clean-Up program will remove debris from eligible properties that resulted from response and relief operations following the storms and floods.

The Clean-Up program will assess the scope and impacts to public land, including debris left behind during response and relief operations, to provide recommendations for possible inclusion in the program at a later date. We will be consulting closely with key stakeholders on this.

Which properties and towns will be prioritised for clean-up?

BRV has established a regional presence across the affected local government areas. In addition, Johns Lyng Group has a national footprint of 47 offices, and more than 1000 employees and a nationwide network of more than 6000 sub-contractors specialising in disaster recovery.

That means that the Clean-Up program has the resources needed to work on multiple sites at the same time and are ready to begin initial assessments in communities across the state once property owners register.

Why do I need to sign a consent form?

During the initial site assessment, Johns Lyng Group will discuss the scope of the clean-up with you and provide a consent form that will need to be signed for the clean-up to progress.

The consent form provides your agreement as the property owner for works to be carried out as part of the Clean-Up program.

Clean-Up works can only take place where the property owner has signed a consent form. If you have any concerns or questions about the consent form, BRV and Johns Lyng Group will be available to discuss this with you.

Where and how will the debris be disposed?

Debris and waste from the Clean-Up Program will be disposed of by licensed contractors into licensed waste management sites across the state. All waste disposal will be overseen by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and WorkSafe.

BRV and Johns Lyng Group will seek to maximise the amount of materials being recycled.

The Clean-Up program will also have flexibility for the salvage, treatment and re-use of fallen and hazardous trees and green waste.

In determining the arrangements for wood, we will seek to be guided by property owners and other stakeholders.

What about the presence of hazardous materials like asbestos on destroyed sites?

The Clean-Up Program covers the safe removal of hazardous materials like asbestos, from eligible properties.

Licensed contractors engaged in clean-up activities are subject to a compliance code for removing asbestos, which includes strict measures to reduce the risk to public health and safety.

TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY THAT ARE STILL STANDING BUT HAVE BECOME HAZARDOUS

There are dangerous trees still standing on my property, can they be removed?

BRV is accepting registrations for the assessment of hazardous trees on private property that pose a risk to a place of residence or personal safety.

Trees on private property that were made hazardous because of the June 2021 storms, and are within falling distance of a structure or access to a structure, can be professionally assessed and recommendations made for their treatment.

If someone's life is in danger call Triple Zero 000.

As a guide, falling distance to a structure will be within thirty metres to account for hazardous branches, but it may be further away.

A structure must meet two of the following criteria for consideration:

- A building or object constructed from several parts
- A building or object that rests on deliberately placed foundations
- A building or object that is connected to two or more essential systems (water, power, internet, sewage, gas, solar etc.)

You can register a hazardous tree for assessment by visiting www.br.vic.gov.au/cleanup or phoning 1800 560 760.

I'm concerned about a tree on my property. What can I do?

If you are concerned about trees on your property, you are welcome to register for an assessment of them. Make note of the trees when registering and when discussing your property with BRV.

If the tree meets the criteria, BRV will arrange an assessment of it and provide advice for its treatment if required.

My neighbour has a tree on their property that shifted during the June 2021 Storm. I believe it has become hazardous and may damage my property, what should I do?

In the first instance, you should discuss your concerns with your neighbour and encourage them to register for an assessment of hazardous trees.

How will hazardous trees be disposed of?

BRV will approach the salvage, treatment and re-use of fallen and hazardous trees flexibly. All trees will be assessed against criteria including cultural significance, available storage sites on the property and future risk.

VicForests, a State-owned business that harvests, sells and regrows sustainable timber may be able to provide advice to property owners around the potential for fallen trees on private property to be used as timber products. BRV can put property owners in touch with VicForests, if required.

LARGE FALLEN TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

I have a fallen tree on my property, what should I do?

Private property owners with fallen trees that haven't damaged or destroyed a structure or no longer pose a risk to a place of residence can reach out to VicForests for advice.

VicForests is a State-owned business that harvests, sells and regrows sustainable timber from Victoria's native forests and may be able to help advise on the processing of wind-thrown timber on private property.

VicForests can provide property owners with advice on the potential for fallen trees to be used as timber products. This advice could include contact details of businesses that may be interested in utilising the timber and may remove the timber for a fee.

VicForests can also provide advice around other considerations for property owners, including timber production requirements and key safety considerations.

Property owners can contact VicForests for an assessment of the timber on their property by emailing vfs.admin@vicforests.com.au and detailing their location, how much timber is on their properties and dimensions.

I have a fallen tree on my property that I want to keep, what should I do?

BRV recommends that private property owners with fallen trees that they want to keep, make contact with a qualified arborist to arrange for timber from the fallen tree to be processed and stored.

I have a fallen tree on my property that has left a hole that needs to be filled in. What can I do?

Private property owners with non-structural damage caused by fallen trees will need to make arrangements to have the property made safe.

MORE INFORMATION

For further information about the Storm and Flood Clean-Up program, get in touch by:

Phone: 1800 560 760

Web: www.br.vic.gov.au/cleanup

Email: cleanup@br.vic.gov.au