



DISASTER RECOVERY ACCESSING LEGAL HELP

vals.org.au | 1800 064 865 | Disaster.Support@vals.org.au

Disasters like bushfires, floods and pandemics can lead to complicated legal issues and exacerbate existing issues.


The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (**VALS**) is here to help.

To contact us, you can:

- **Free call 1800 064 865**
- **Email Disaster.Support@vals.org.au**
- **Visit your local VALS office or Client Service Officer**

WHAT LEGAL ISSUES CAN VALS HELP ME WITH?

Overleaf, we have provided a Disaster Recovery Legal Help Check to help with identifying potential legal issues.

VALS can only provide ongoing assistance with the issues in the Disaster Recovery Legal Help Check that have the VALS logo  next to them. However, we would be happy to talk to you about any of the issues in the Disaster Recovery Legal Help Check and connect you to another service where necessary.

Alternatively, you can contact another service directly. See the List of Other Services on page 3.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE FROM VALS?


VALS may be able to provide you with information, referral to another service, discrete advice or ongoing casework.

We can only provide discrete advice or ongoing casework to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who meet our financial eligibility test, where there is no conflict of interest.



Before we can open an ongoing casework file for a person, they must provide VALS with sufficient confirmation of Aboriginality.

DISASTER RECOVERY LEGAL HELP CHECK





Safety

-  Are you at risk of family violence?
 - Are you concerned about your or your child's safety?



Housing and neighbours

-  Are you having issues paying rent? Has the landlord issued a Notice to Vacate?
-  Does your rental need repairs?
 - Are you at risk of homelessness or need emergency accommodation?
 - Do you have any issues with your neighbours (eg with fencing or dangerous trees)?


Insurance

-  Has your insurance claim been denied?
-  Is your insurance claim taking forever and causing stress?
-  Are you paying for insurance policies that are unaffordable or you might not need?
-  Do you have funeral insurance?


Consumer and motor vehicle issues

-  Have you purchased any goods or services that are faulty, unsafe or don't match the advertising?
-  Has your vehicle been impounded or forfeited?


Employment and disability

-  Have you lost your job?
 - Have you been denied your entitlements at work (eg leave, pay or super)?
 - Did you stop work due to illness or injury? Have you remained unemployed due to mental or physical health issues?
 - Are you unhappy with the quality of NDIS goods or services or do you have debts from NDIS overspends?


Working with Children Checks (WWCC)

-  Has your WWCC application been refused and is this affecting kinship care arrangements or your ability to get a job?


Discrimination

-  Have you experienced discrimination?


Money and debt

-  Are you being hassled about any debts or loans?
 - Do you have any unpaid fines?
 - Do you want advice on government grants?
 - Are you having issues with Centrelink?


Legal documents

-  Do you want to remove or amend a Guardianship or Administration Order?
 - Have you lost important documents or ID?
 - Do you need to make or update your will?


Children

-  Are you having issues with children/sharing the care of your children with someone else? Or property or child support issues?
 - Have you had any contact from Child Protection?

Police misconduct

-  Have you been treated unfairly by the police?

Crime

-  Are you at risk of breaching any bail, parole, community corrections, intervention or other court orders due to the disaster?
 - Have the police charged you with a criminal offence or indicated they may do so?
 - Do you have any court dates coming up?

Victim of Crime

- Have you been the victim of a crime or had property stolen or damaged by another person?



VALS can only provide ongoing assistance with the issues that have the VALS logo next to them.

LIST OF OTHER SERVICES

Other legal services

- Find your local **community legal service** by calling **1300 792 387** or visiting **www.fclc.org.au/find_a_community_legal_centre**
- Call **Disaster Legal Help Victoria** on **1800 113 432** or find fact sheets on **disasterlegalhelp.org.au**
- VALS can also connect you to legal support from a range of specialist legal services:

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|---|---|--|
| Djirra: For family violence support. Tel: 1800 105 303 | Tenants Victoria: For help with rental property issues. Tel: 9416 2577 Worker's line: 9411 1444 | Social Security Rights: For help with social security and Centrelink matters. Tel: 1800 094 164 Worker's line: 9481 0655 |
| Consumer Action Law Centre: For help with consumer, credit and insurance issues. Tel: 1800 466 477 | Women's Legal Service: Assists women with child protection and family law matters. Tel: 1800 133 302 | Justice Connect: To find a pro bono lawyer (including for small businesses and primary producers). justiceconnect.org.au/refer |

Emergency contacts

- Dial **000** if you need urgent help from the police, fire or ambulance services.

Mental health support

- You can access the **Dardi Munwurro** 24-hour Brother to Brother Aboriginal men's crisis line by calling **1800 435 799**.
- You can access the **Victorian Aboriginal Health Service's** Yarning Safe'N'Strong phone support on **1800 959 563**.
- You can access **Lifeline's** free 24-hour telephone crisis support service by calling **13 11 14** or texting **0477 13 11 14**.
- You can access **Lifeline's** bushfire recovery line by calling **13 43 57** or request a free video counselling appointment with a trained counsellor at **www.lifeline.org.au/community-counselling**.