

# *Flood Recovery - FAQs*

## **Will Council be granting any financial relief?**

At its meeting of 21 February 2023, Council determined that it would delay any decisions to provide additional assistance to Flood impacted property owners until the full financial impact of the Event was understood, with subsequent reports to be presented outlining full costings.

This was based upon its consideration of the current support and relief packages being offered to those directly affected by the floods, combined with the Audit & Risk Committee's concerns for the potential long-term financial impact upon the community created through the provision of rebates and fee waivers,

Council has also written to the State and Federal Government as well as SA Grants Commission seeking financial assistance to cover the significant funds Council had expended, and would continue to expend in its response measures, as well as additional funds to prevent the Event having long term financial impacts on Council and the community.

In addition to this, at the December meeting, Council agreed to offer:

- The waiving of all fines and interest for all ratepayers for the three (3) months to February 2023 to enable ratepayers to assess their individual financial situation and make appropriate financial arrangements;
- Ratepayers of Commercial, Industrial, Primary Production and properties that is their primary place of residence, the option of a repayment plan to 30 June 2023, and the waiving of all interest and fines for this period; and
- Ratepayers of residential properties that is their primary place of residence, a CWMS rebate for the period of time that the Council service is not operational (excluding any outstanding capital contribution component).

## **Will Council be pumping out CWMS or do I need to organise this myself?**

With different type of systems (effluent drainage and sewer) operational across the District, it should be noted that all River property CWMS have been flood affected in some way.

Council removed CWMS treatment plant pumps and electrical equipment prior to the flood event and works have commenced on recommissioning all schemes.

In order to prevent any damage to both private and public infrastructure it is a best practice to turn **off** the power supply to any septic pump/grinder pump to prevent damage for when SAPN reconnects the electrical supply to the property.

### **Current Status**

An assessment of septic tanks in the Blanchetown Shack Area is being undertaken to assess whether quantities of silt have been deposited in the septic tank. This assessment will determine the amount of silt infiltration to the system, if any, and if deemed by Council that desludging of tanks required, this process will then be rolled out across the District.

A proactive program of septic tank pump outs is scheduled for CWMS sewer systems (on property grinder pump type) to prevent any potential damage to pumps.

## ***Flood Recovery - FAQs***

In preparation, and where practical, it will assist Council if septic tank lids of these systems are exposed to enable ease of location.

This does not assess any silt in the pipes, gully traps or other inlets. A plumber will need to be engaged by the property owner to assess, predominantly where grinder pump systems are in place.

For property owners wishing to remove material from their own systems or for those with stand-alone systems, septic tanks may need to be pumped by a licenced contractor and cleaned to remove excess silt. Tanks should not be pumped out by property owners, as EPA requirements are to be complied with and may create additional concerns.

### **Access on Private Shack Roads**

Council is aware of the concern of heavy vehicles on flood affected roads, and is liaising with the Association representatives prior to works commencing.

### **Notification**

Each CWMS is recommissioned will be included in the High River Update. The power for each property system can then be turned on and operate

### **In the meantime...**

Please note the following:

- If an on-site wastewater system has been under floodwater, do not use connected fixtures until all components have been professionally inspected and repaired.
- Septic tanks may need to be pumped by a licenced contractor and cleaned to remove excess silt. Tanks should not be pumped out by property owners, as this is illegal and may cause additional damage.
- If using an aerated wastewater treatment system, be aware that irrigation water may be compromised until the system is working correctly.

A professional service agent or plumber can advise when a wastewater system is ready for use after the floodwater recedes.

For information on cleaning up after a wastewater overflow, please see SA Health's [website](#).

### **How is waste management being handled?**

[Green Industries SA](#) has been tasked with to manage the State's flood damage waste response, which includes free property assessments, kerbside pickup, and free transfer station vouchers.

**To register** contact the Relief & Recovery Information phone line on **1800 302 787** between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

### **Flood Waste Prep for Kerbside Collection**

To prepare for collection, Green Industries SA is asking property owners to:

- Ensure flood waste is on the kerbside for collection, and to avoid obstructing road access where possible.
- Separate their waste into sections for scrap metal, household waste and soil where possible.

## ***Flood Recovery - FAQs***

- Place heavier waste on top of lighter waste to ensure kerbside collections remain in place for removal.
- Not put asbestos on the kerbside as this needs professional collection and disposal.

If there are concerns regarding asbestos at a property, please register for a free assessment by calling the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on **1800 302 787** and Green Industries SA will organise for the asbestos to be safely removed for free. For more information on the clean-up process visit [Green Industries SA](#).

### **Free Disposal Vouchers**

Vouchers for free disposal of flood-affected materials are now available for anyone impacted by flood water.

Property owners can register can do so by calling **1800 302 787**, and collect their vouchers by visiting a [participating transfer station](#).

To access the vouchers, residents will need to provide transfer station staff with the client ID assigned to them when registering for any flood relief.

The types of flood-affected materials that can dispose of include:

- hard waste (furniture, mattresses, household items, whitegoods)
- garden waste and trees, branches and reeds that may have washed up onto properties
- debris from houses and sheds (metal, bricks, timber, piping, fittings)
- plant and machinery (tools, lawnmowers, bikes and similar)
- water sport equipment
- electronic equipment and electrical items
- hot water systems
- air conditioners.

Asbestos is not accepted at these sites. Asbestos identification and removal is included as part of the free clean-up assessment, provided by the South Australian Government for registered property owners.

To register for a FREE assessment, please call **1800 302 787**.

Accessing this service is recommended as the best approach for dealing with asbestos.

Kerbside collections of flood-affected materials and sandbags will also be coordinated once heavy vehicle access is permitted and clean-up assessments are complete. For more information, read Green Industries' [frequently asked questions](#).

# Flood Recovery - FAQs

## Transfer Station Extended Hours

To support Green Industries SA's waste management response to the Flood, Council will be extending its transfer stations operating times to allow property owners to dispose of Flood event waste materials.

The following schedule will be implemented from Saturday, **25 February 2023** and is anticipated to continue until **30 June 2023**:

Transfer Station	Saturday	Sunday
Blanchetown	2pm to 5pm	
Bowhill		2.30pm to 5pm
Cadell		2pm to 4.30pm
Mannum	8am to 12noon	8am to 11.30am
Morgan		10am to 1pm
Swan Reach	1.30pm to 4.30pm	
Walker Flat	9.30am to 1pm	

This initiative is a collaboration between the SA Government and Mid Murray Council.

As the lead agency for the waste management Flood response, please see Green Industries SA's website for more information: <https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/flood-disaster...>

## I am really struggling with my mental health. What services are available to me?

When a disaster happens, it is common to feel stress and grief. Some people will recover without formal help, and others might need some extra support to help get things back on track.

SA Health has prepared the attached [Factsheet](#) which outlines the local support for mental health.

## Who do I contact to receive advice on dealing with my insurer?

Free legal appointments with the Riverland Community Justice Centre and Southern Community Justice Centre are available in the Riverland, Murray Bridge and Southern Adelaide.

People affected by flooding can get help with a range of legal issues including insurance, tenancies, employment, civil disputes, debt and hardship, family law, Centrelink disputes and criminal matters.

Call **1300 850 650** to make an appointment or visit [Community Justice Services SA](#) for more information.

# ***Flood Recovery - FAQs***

## **Who do I contact for financial assistance?**

### **Essential Services Reconnection Grant**

If your principal place of residence was affected by the River Murray flood event and you don't have flood insurance, you may be eligible for financial assistance to reconnect essential services (electricity, gas and water, septic or sewer).

Inspection grants (of up to \$400) and/ or repair grants (up to \$4200) are available to eligible households. Find out if you meet [eligibility criteria and how to apply](#).

Once you have gathered the information you need to complete your application, please apply in person at a recovery centre.

### **Individual and family assistance**

- Once-off grant payment for people who have been forced to leave their homes
  - \$400 for people living alone
  - up to \$1,000 for a family.
- Rental assistance for housing or caravan site accommodation for people who are not insured, displaced from their homes by floodwaters, require emergency accommodation, and who do not have access to alternative accommodation.
  - up to \$2,000 for singles
  - up to \$5,000 for families
  - can be paid directly to a rental agent or caravan park proprietor, if you provide evidence (e.g. private rental agreement or booking confirmation).
- Up to \$500 to put toward [purchasing a generator for homes disconnected from the electricity network](#)
- Access to a bond guarantee as part of SA Housing Authority's private rental assistance program, for resident homeowners forced to leave because of flood waters or long-term power outages and who are needing rental accommodation.
- [Disaster Recovery Allowance payments](#), through Services Australia (Centrelink), for people who have lost their income as a direct result of the floods.
- Financial counselling assistance.
- Payment arrangements for [emergency services levy, state taxes](#), or any [outstanding fines](#).

# Flood Recovery - FAQs

## Are there any grants for business or industry?

The following financial support is available for business and industry:

- [Small business industry support grants](#) of \$10,000 for eligible small businesses, farm enterprises and not-for-profit organisations to continue trading during the floods.
- [Small business industry recovery grants](#) of up to \$50,000 for eligible small businesses to assist with reinstatement and clean-up of the small business and repair flood-damaged assets, including damage to or destruction of equipment, flooring and walls in business premises.
- [Levee construction or remediation grants](#) of up to \$50,000.
- Up to \$1,000 (or more by application) for [engineering advice related to privately owned levees](#).
- Up to \$4,000 to put towards [purchasing a generator for businesses disconnected from the electricity network](#).
- [River Murray Primary Producer Recovery Grants](#) of up to \$75,000 to assist affected agribusinesses with essential recovery and reinstatement activities.
- [River Murray Floods Primary Producer Irrigation Infrastructure Grants](#) of up to \$25,000 to assist South Australian River Murray primary producers accessing River Murray water for primary production to meet costs associated with flood impacts to irrigation infrastructure and electricity supply.

For all available financial assistance options, please see [sa.gov.au](http://sa.gov.au).

## I do not have power? Who do I contact?

SA Power Networks advises that restoring electricity supply to properties along the River Murray will take significant time and vary depending on how quickly floodwaters recede and assessment of conditions and circumstances at a local, business and household level, according to.

About 90% of the 3,300 customers (a mix of homes, holiday sheds, pump sheds, and businesses etc) that have been disconnected were due to direct inundation, while the balance related to unsafe clearances between powerlines and the floodwaters.

If the property has been damaged/inundated owners will need to contact an electrician to obtain a certificate of compliance and contact their retailer to raise a service request so that SA Power Networks can then reconnect electricity supply.

Right now, if they haven't already done so, customers should:

1. Keep up to date with SASES alerts and warnings at [www.ses.sa.gov.au/incidents-and-warnings/current-warning-list](http://www.ses.sa.gov.au/incidents-and-warnings/current-warning-list)
2. Visit [sa.gov.au/floods](http://sa.gov.au/floods) for latest information, including registering for a clean-up/structural assessment.
3. Register for SA Power Networks' free SMS/email notification service [www.sapowernetworks.com.au/smsservice](http://www.sapowernetworks.com.au/smsservice)

Please see SA Power Network's factsheet on [Reconnecting power after flooding](#).

# ***Flood Recovery - FAQs***

## **Certificates of Compliance**

If a property has been affected by flood water, property owners can ask a licensed electrician to check electrical installation. Once confirmed safe, an electrician will provide an electronic certificate of compliance. Property owners can then contact their energy retailer to ask about reconnecting the power.

Please call one of these industry association groups to be put in contact with an electrician that has registered to assist with flood recovery:

1. National Electrical and Communications Association on **8282 2966**.
2. Master Electricians Australia on **1300 889 198**.

## **My house has been condemned. What do I need know about rebuilding?**

With a focus on 'building back better', State Planning will be reviewing its policies with regard to development to assist residents in future proofing their properties against flood.

As potential Code Amendments are still being considered, property owners are encouraged to wait until this review process is finalised before submitting development applications so that plans can accommodate any changes to policy.

In the meantime, for impacted property owners requiring copies of previously approved plans, Council may be able to assist, subject to Copyright laws. All requests for copies of plans need to be made in writing and can be done so by emailing [postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au).

Approval will then be sought from the author of the plans prior to providing any copies.

## **How do I handle mould after Flooding?**

Mould is a type of fungi which belongs to a group of organisms including mushrooms and yeasts. For mould spores to grow and reproduce, a food source (dust, dirt or organic matter) and moisture is required.

Mould can be black, grey, green or white. Mould often looks like a stain or smudge and may smell musty.

### **Health effects of mould**

Mould can potentially cause nasal congestion, sneezing, coughing or wheezing, and respiratory infections. It can also worsen asthma and allergic conditions. Contact with mould can irritate eyes and skin.

Some moulds can cause more serious health effects such as fevers and breathing problems in people who are immunocompromised or suffer from respiratory diseases.

SA Health has prepared the attached [Factsheet](#) to assist property owners to control mould after a flood.



# Flood Recovery - FAQs

## Cleaning Rainwater Tanks Impacted by Flood Water

Rainwater tanks impacted by flood water are likely to contain harmful organisms. This means the water stored in the affected tanks will not be suitable for normal use.

### Cleaning rainwater tanks

If the tank has been completely submerged and large amounts of flood water have entered the tank it will need to be drained and cleaned. The aim should be to remove most of the contaminated water and sludge. If small animals or birds have gained access to the tank, these will need to be removed.

Take safety precautions when cleaning tanks as they are confined spaces. Ensure that cleaning is not undertaken alone and avoid entering the tank. Sludge on the bottom of the tank should be removed as part of the draining process.

Use a pump and hose to remove the water and sludge. If there is a second source of water such as mains water, it should be used to hose down the sides and bottom of the tank.

Avoid scrubbing the inner surfaces of tanks as it can destroy protective layers incorporated in some metal tanks or built up over long periods of use.

### Disinfecting drinking water in rainwater tanks

Water should be decontaminated using:

- liquid swimming pool chlorine (12.5 per cent concentration) — **40 mL or 40 g/1000 L**
- granular swimming pool chlorine (70 per cent concentration) — **7 g/1000 L**

Always follow the warnings, directions for use and safety precaution advice on the chlorine product label.

After adding the chlorine, allow the water to stand for at least **1 hour** (or overnight if possible).

When refilling water tanks, please ensure only reputable drinking water suppliers are engaged.

For more information, please see SA Health's [website](#).

## Who do we contact about dead fish removal?

The [Department of Primary Industries and Regions](#) (PIRSA) continues to monitor both the River Murray and the South Coast for fish accumulation/mortalities. PIRSA and partner organisations are investigating all reports received and are conducting clean-up operations at all locations when required in line with its response plan. Fish kills on South Coast beaches are part of an ongoing event which began in January and is caused by the River Murray flood plume entering the marine environment. As part of this ongoing monitoring and clean up PIRSA always looks to conduct any clean up as quickly as possible.

PIRSA in association with relevant councils prioritise clean-ups at sites where fish densities are highest and where such activities will have the least impact on the wider environment (such as shorebird nesting sites).

Each clean-up effort may have different management techniques, based on factors including site access, and where and how densely fish are distributed on the beach. PIRSA always looks to conduct any clean up as quickly as possible.



## *Flood Recovery - FAQs*

To assist PIRSA and supporting agencies with ongoing monitoring, people are being asked that if they do notice something unusual along the river or the coast, to contact FISHWATCH on **1800 065 522**.

Members of the public are permitted to collect carp for use as fertiliser, provided that the fish are dead.

For other species where there is a size or bag limit, these regulations still apply to fish carcasses.

### **What is the process for agricultural levee assessments and dewatering?**

Levee assessment and dewatering activities can only commence when the area can be safely accessed. These activities involve heavy vehicles and equipment, so appropriate areas for access and pump placement need to be confirmed before works can commence.

Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) is leading the engagement with landholders for dewatering and agriculture recovery, and has made the re-establishment of the levee network and dewatering process the highest priority for producers in the Lower Murray region.

The levee assessment process involves LiDAR surveys with drones where levees have been breached or overtopped, and on-ground inspections where they have not. These surveys started on 27 February 2023.

Until assessments are completed, it is not possible to predict the exact nature of the levee stabilisation works required. It is likely that different solutions to stabilise each levee will be used in the short-term to allow dewatering to commence.

With the River Murray flood now in the recovery phase, the planning process is already underway for the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA)

The Government of South Australia aims to work with landholders within the LMRIA to establish a coordinated approach dewatering. For information, please see the dewatering [Factsheet](#) or PIRSA's [website](#).

### **Who do I call to report fallen trees?**

Flooding may cause direct damage to trees by changing soil conditions, interrupting normal oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange between trees and their environment, sedimentation and physical damage.

Flooding also can weaken trees, making them more susceptible to damage from insects and diseases. The likelihood of insect and disease damage depends upon the severity of the flood and tree health. A tree in weak condition before a flood can be further stressed by flooding.

Due to the period of inundation, trees along the bank may be at risk of falling into the River

If a fallen tree is within the main channel of the River, please contact Crown Lands for the Riverland & Mallee regions:

28 Vaughan Terrace, Berri SA 5343

Post: PO Box 231 Berri SA 5343

Phone: (08) 8595 2105

Email: [DEW.Crownlands@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.Crownlands@sa.gov.au)

If a tree is creating a marine hazard, please report this to [Marine Safety](#).

# Flood Recovery - FAQs

## Further Information & Resources

### Hotlines:

- State Relief & Recovery Information Line **1800 302 787**
- SES **132 500** & [Emergency Contacts](#) Guide.
- SA Water's dedicated River Murray flood **1800 130 952**
- SAPN Hazards **13 13 66**
- Council **8569 0100**

### Recovery Centres:

- **Murray Bridge Recovery Centre** 28 Bridge Street, Murray Bridge - 9am-5pm Monday-Friday.
- **Mannum Recovery Centre** Mannum Institute, 47 Randell Street, Mannum - 9:30am-4:30pm Tuesday-Thursday.

### Webpages:

- [SA Recovery](#)
- [SA Health's River Murray Mental Health Support](#)
- [Mid Murray Council High Flow Advice](#)
- [SA.GOV.AU - River Murray High Flows](#)
- [SA.GOV.AU – Financial Assistance & Grants](#)
- [SES.SA.GOV.AU - River Murray Flood Information](#)
- [ENVIRONMENT.SA.GOV.AU - River Murray High Flows](#)
- [SAWATER.COM.AU - River Murray High Flows](#)
- [SAPOWERNETWORKS.COM.AU - River Murray Flood](#)
- [WATERCONNECT.SA.GOV.AU – River Murray Flow Reports](#)
- [HOUSING.SA.GOV.AU](#)
- [DIT.SA.GOV.AU – Road & Ferry Closures](#)
- [Marine Hazards Reporting](#)
- [PIR.SA.GOV.AU – River Murray Flood](#)
- [Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network](#)



## Support for flood-affected River Murray communities



**1800 302 787**  
Relief Information Line



**sa.gov.au/floods**  
Latest information, financial  
assistance and support