



**Media Release**  
**18 June 2021**

## **Free financial counselling for flood and storm victims in Victoria**

The National Debt Helpline (NDH) and Small Business Debt Helpline (SBDH) are reminding individuals and small business owners affected by the floods and storms in Victoria that they can access free financial counselling.

“As people recover from disasters like floods or damaging storms, advice and support from a financial counsellor can make a significant difference,” said Helen Davis, the General Manager of the Small Business Debt Helpline.

Financial counsellors provide free, confidential and independent advice. They can look at what options a business owner or individual has following a disaster.

“We want people impacted by the floods and storms in Victoria to know they can access financial counselling for free, without travelling anywhere or waiting for a face-to-face appointment.

“There are two services: the National Debt Helpline for individuals in financial stress and the Small Business Debt Helpline, for small business owners. They can just pick up the phone and call,” Ms Davis said.

Financial counsellors provide advice on a wide range of financial matters, including:

- Disputes with insurance companies, the pros and cons of cash settlements
- Assistance accessing government grants and other disaster relief
- Difficulties paying mortgages, rent or utility bills
- Negotiating with banks and other credit providers
- Accessing Centrelink payments

“Floods and storms can be devastating, both emotionally and financially. As these communities start to rebuild, it’s vital they know financial counsellors can help.

“The Insurance Council of Australia has [declared the damage a catastrophe](#), meaning insurers may offer special services and support for claims related to these events. Financial counsellors can help people navigate and access these supports,” said Ms Davis.

Financial counsellors are different to financial planners or advisors. They don’t provide investment advice nor are they lenders.



Anyone struggling financially due to flooding or storm damage can contact the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 or visit [ndh.org.au](http://ndh.org.au). Small business owners and sole traders can call the Small Business Debt Helpline on 1800 413 828 or visit [sbdh.org.au](http://sbdh.org.au).

### **Media Contact**

Mike Bruce on 0403 920 189

or email [mike.bruce@financialcounselingaustralia.org.au](mailto:mike.bruce@financialcounselingaustralia.org.au).