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MEDIA RELEASE

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PLANNING CHANGES FOR BUSHFIRE-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Small businesses in bushfire-affected communities will be able to operate from portable offices without council approval, under the latest bushfire recovery initiative from the NSW Government.

Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for Disaster Recovery John Barilaro said the changes will ensure regional business owners can continue to earn an income, employ local residents and support local economies.

“Small businesses are the lifeblood of our regional communities, and these changes will make it easier for owners to open their doors and start trading again,” Mr Barilaro said.

Planning and Public Spaces Minister Rob Stokes implemented changes to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) Amendment (Bushfire Response) 2020*, which will enable any existing business that has sustained damage in the bushfires to operate from a portable office, such as a shipping container, for up to two years.

“This may only be a small change, but it’s one that will have a significant operational impact for the many small business owners across the State who have been devastated by these fires,” Mr Stokes said.

“Just as Christchurch’s Container Mall brought the city back to life after its devastating earthquake, this move will help communities across NSW get back on their feet.”

This is the latest planning amendment from the NSW Government to make life easier for bushfire-affected communities, and follows changes to allow temporary accommodation like caravans and storage containers to be on property for up to two years without council approval.

The NSW Government is also waiving Planning Reform Fees, worth an average of \$320, and is issuing free BASIX certificates which usually cost \$50, for bushfire-affected residents who need to rebuild their properties.

Minister for Finance and Small Business Damien Tudehope said small businesses

were incredibly resilient and encouraged bushfire-affected enterprises to look into this new initiative.

“We’re committed to doing all we can to help small businesses affected by bushfire not only survive this difficult time, but thrive into the future,” Mr Tudehope said.

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