

2020 Victorian Bushfires

Social Recovery Planning update

Fact Sheet as at 20 January 2020

Introduction

The prolonged and ongoing bushfires in east Gippsland and North East Victoria have been cause for the declaration of a State of Disaster in six local government areas. The scale and depth of community need will become clearer as the impacts of the 2020 bushfires become better understood, but the effects are far reaching across the whole state.

The recovery process is long-term and will incorporate the intensive needs of the immediate period and the years of long-term recovery that follow.

Social Recovery Planning

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for coordinating social recovery support for impacted Victorians. Social recovery planning complements broader recovery efforts relating to the economic, built and natural environments.

Social recovery planning includes the following areas:

Housing and Accommodation – to assist people displaced by the emergency to access temporary accommodation and return to permanent housing as soon as possible

Individual and Household Financial Assistance – to assist households to minimise the financial impact of the emergency by providing advice and financial assistance where eligible

Psychosocial Recovery – to support the emotional, spiritual, cultural, psychological and social needs of affected people and communities during an emergency and as they resume their normal life

Health and Medical Assistance – to ensure that health and medical emergency responses are coordinated and appropriate.

Region specific recovery plans will continue to be developed as the situation across the state changes and the needs of communities are better understood.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) is a new permanent and dedicated agency that will coordinate all bushfire recovery activity.

BRV will be responsible for working closely with bushfire-impacted communities - including local Community Recovery Committees - in the development and delivery of local recovery projects.

The agency will also be responsible for advising the Victorian Government on the coordination of efforts and development of an overarching plan for the recovery of communities across the state.

Programs and contacts

Bushfire Case Support program

The Victorian Bushfires Case Support program is available for people in fire-affected areas in Gippsland and North East Victoria and people who may have been impacted by the bushfires in these areas but live in other parts of Victoria.

There is a dedicated intake service hotline: **1800 560 760**

For more information about the Bushfire Case Support program visit <http://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief-and-recovery/952>

Personal Hardship Assistance Program

The Victorian Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP) provides two kinds of financial assistance:

- Emergency relief assistance to meet immediate relief needs of families/individuals
- Emergency re-establishment assistance to help families/individuals re-establish a principal place of residence.

A dedicated PHAP hotline (**1800 961 054**) is available 9.00 am –5.00 pm (7 days per week).

For more information about PHAP and other financial and legal assistance relating to the 2020 Victorian bushfires visit <http://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief-and-recovery/934>