



# Fire Recovery Unit **Update**

August 2013, Edition 22

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## Final edition of the Fire Recovery Unit Update

This August edition is the final publication of the Fire Recovery Unit Update. Within the Update is an outline of current services and contacts to help you to stay in touch with the latest recovery news and support from service providers, community organisations and local councils.

The Fire Recovery Unit will continue to be the key point of contact for information and connection to services within the State Government for individuals and communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires, including through the regular update of the Bushfire Recovery Services Guide.

Contact the Unit on 1800 055 714, email [fire.recovery@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:fire.recovery@rdv.vic.gov.au), or visit [www.rdv.vic.gov.au/fire-recovery-unit](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/fire-recovery-unit)

## Health and Well-Being

### Statewide Psychological Support

As part of its commitment to medium and long-term recovery, the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF) is continuing to fund a range of psychological support services for people still experiencing emotional trauma as a result of the fires.

Specialist individual counselling, outreach services and support, and an online counselling service for young people are all available free of charge across the state.

To access these services call:

#### Statewide Service (excluding Gippsland)

- Children: 1300 773 352
- Young people: (03) 9765 0300
- Adults: 1300 773 352

#### Gippsland (adults, young people and children)

- (03) 5134 5971

Kids Helpline – all regions: 1800 551 800 or visit [www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/bushfire](http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/bushfire)

To find out more about each service, visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal/community-advisory-committee](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal/community-advisory-committee)



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## GP Referral for Counselling

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Bushfire-affected residents may be able to access free psychological support through the Access to Allied Psychological Support (ATAPS) program funded by the Commonwealth Government or subsidised psychological support through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

Speak with your GP about a referral.

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## Counselling at your Community Health Service

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You may also be able to access counselling support through your local Community Health Service:

You can find your nearest service by entering your postcode at: [www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm)

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## Services for the Bereaved Community

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VBAF has funded EACH Social and Community Health and the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB) to provide a range of support services for those who lost loved ones in the February 2009 bushfires.

Services include an educational program and resources providing practical information for bereaved individuals, their families and friends, and the broader community. ACGB will hold a series of health and wellbeing forums in fire affected communities.

### Specialist Bereavement Counselling:

Individual and group counselling through the ACGB has been extended until January 2014.

Contact ACGB on (03) 9265 2100  
[www.grief.org.au](http://www.grief.org.au)

### Gatherings and Events:

The program of events run by EACH will continue, with monthly events planned until January 2014. Program dates and times will be posted on the EACH website.

[www.blacksaturdayandbeyond.com.au](http://www.blacksaturdayandbeyond.com.au)  
[www.facebook.com/blacksaturdayandbeyond](https://www.facebook.com/blacksaturdayandbeyond)

Join the EACH database to receive email news bulletins and information about social activities and forums. Contact Jodie Bowker at EACH on 0447 336 852 or [jbowker@each.com.au](mailto:jbowker@each.com.au)

### Recovery Task Co-ordinators:

Two Recovery Task Coordinators have been funded to provide short-term support and referral services for bereaved community members. The Coordinators will be available until March 2014.

To contact the Recovery Task Co-ordinator at EACH,  
phone 1300 322 423.

To contact the Recovery Task Co-ordinator at the ACGB,  
phone 1300 664 786.

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## Post Traumatic Growth Mini Conference

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EACH invites you to an exciting half day conference supported by VBAF: "Post Traumatic Growth: From resilience, stress and trauma, positive life changes can grow."

Sunday 8 September, 2013  
RACV City Club, 1pm – 6.30pm  
501 Collins Street, Melbourne.

This conference is for people who have been bereaved as a result of the Black Saturday bushfires, people who are looking to learn more about positive life changes that could grow from their own personal experiences of trauma and those working with people who have experienced a traumatic experience in their lives.

Key note speaker, Dr Jane Shakespeare-Finch, will be joined by a panel of three speakers who will share their own stories of personal trauma and positive growth, including the personal cost which was associated with it.

For more information, go to:  
[www.blacksaturdayandbeyond.com.au](http://www.blacksaturdayandbeyond.com.au)

To register contact Jodie on 9871 1800 or Jesse on 9871 1867  
or email [jbowker@each.com.au](mailto:jbowker@each.com.au)

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## Salvation Army Bushfire Recovery Program

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The Salvation Army's Crossroads and Pathways programs support individuals, families and young people affected by the Victorian bushfires including individual case management, advocacy and linkages to specialised support services.

*Crossroads* cover the City of Whittlesea, Shire of Nillumbik and the Kinglake Ranges and you can contact the team at Whittlesea on: (03) 9716 2065

*Pathways* cover the Shires of Mitchell and Murrindindi including Flowerdale, Marysville and Triangle (excluding the Kinglake Ranges) and can be contacted at their Seymour office on: (03) 57992 583

In the Shire of Yarra Ranges and Gippsland, the Salvation Army also have bushfire recovery support available on: (03) 8872 6400 Yarra Ranges, (03) 5133 9366 Gippsland

## Community Rebuilding and Support

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### Planning Provisions for Rebuilding and Temporary Accommodation

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Temporary planning provisions introduced to assist property owners affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires expire on 30 April 2014. The provisions affect people yet to commence the rebuilding process, and those living in temporary accommodation on their bushfire-affected properties.



### **Fast Track Planning Approval**

Fast Track Planning Approvals are available for the construction of a dwelling to replace one destroyed in the 2009 bushfires. Available to all properties impacted by the fires, this streamlined process significantly reduces the requirements of the normal planning process.

Should you wish to rebuild, lodging a fast track planning approval is a simple process that requires a site plan of your replacement dwelling to be submitted to your local council. Failure to lodge an application by 30 April 2014 will require you to instead apply for a normal planning permit. Additional requirements will then apply, including the referral of your application to other agencies for consent, if your property is within the new bushfire management overlay.

If you are not quite ready to start rebuilding but would like to take advantage of this streamlined approval process, you will still have two years to commence construction after your application is approved by your local council. It is recommended that you apply as soon as possible.

### **Temporary Accommodation**

If you are currently living in a temporary dwelling on your property, the planning provisions allow you to continue living there until 30 April 2014. After this date, you will be required to vacate any temporary dwelling and move to permanent accommodation.

A planning permit can be sought to make your temporary accommodation into a permanent dwelling. However this can be an expensive option and, as there are no guarantees of approval, you will need to allow sufficient time for both the planning and building process.

If this is your intention, you should lodge your application as soon as possible in preparation for the expiry in April 2014. It is suggested that you apply at least six months prior to the expiry date.

**Details for your local council can be found at: [www.dpcc.vic.gov.au/localgovernment/find-your-local-council](http://www.dpcc.vic.gov.au/localgovernment/find-your-local-council)**

### **Building Permit Levy Relief Program**

People who lost their home in the 2009 bushfires and have not yet rebuilt can benefit from the Victorian Building Authority's Building Permit Levy Relief Program.

The program, which reimburses building permit levies and owner builder 'certificate of consent' fees, is open until Thursday 19th December, 2013.

**For more information call 1300 815 127 or visit [www.buildingcommission.com.au/www/html/2421-bushfire-building-regulations-2011.asp](http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/www/html/2421-bushfire-building-regulations-2011.asp)**

### **Community On-Ground Assistance (COGA)**

The state-wide COGA program, supported by VBAF, provides practical help to eligible people with the clean up and recovery of their fire affected properties. The program offers support with:

- General property clean-up and regrowth removal;
- Dangerous tree removal and timber processing;
- House and/or structural building work to assist in the successful acquisition of certificate of occupancy for primary place of residence;
- Advice with the rebuilding process.

**To register or for more information, contact: Sylvie Thomas on 0407 427 090, or email [sylviethomas1@icloud.com](mailto:sylviethomas1@icloud.com)**

### **VBAF Community Foundations established**

As part of its allocation for medium and long-term recovery, VBAF made contributions to several Community Foundations and Trusts.

Community Foundations are independent, locally run organisations working in a distinct geographic area. They build up funds over time and are able to address a wide variety of local needs through grants to community organisations and groups.

The Foundations and Trusts being supported through VBAF have now been formally established, have received their funding and are in the process of setting up their grant-making processes.

More information on the Community Foundation or Trust in your area can be found through the following links or contacts:

- Alpine/Indigo/Wangaratta Shires  
<http://intoourhandsfoundation.com/>
- Kinglake Ranges Foundation  
<http://krfoundation.org.au/>
- Marysville Community Foundation  
Tony Thompson: 0417 138 572
- Mitchell Shire Community Foundation  
Jacqui Simms: 0467 898 211
- Strathewen Trust  
[scra@tpg.com.au](mailto:scra@tpg.com.au)

### **Grants for Resilience & Wellness (GR&W)**

GR&W grants are designed to help communities continue their ongoing recovery from the 2009 Victorian bushfires, and to build strength and resilience in their community.

Round 3 GR&W applications need to be submitted to the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) by **5pm Thursday 19th September**.

Please contact the Program Manager, Natalie Egleton, to discuss a project or project idea that will strengthen your community's resilience and wellbeing: [recovery@frrr.org.au](mailto:recovery@frrr.org.au) or phone 1800 170 070



The GR&W guidelines and application form along with a detailed application tips sheet are available on the program webpage: [www.frrr.org.au/cb\\_pages/grants\\_for\\_resilience\\_wellness.php](http://www.frrr.org.au/cb_pages/grants_for_resilience_wellness.php)

The first round of GR&W has been announced with 12 projects receiving funds to a total value of \$209,199. The full list of projects funded is available on the FRRR website: [www.frrr.org.au/cb\\_pages/news/GRWRound1.php](http://www.frrr.org.au/cb_pages/news/GRWRound1.php)

Round 2 applications are currently being assessed. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing in mid August and public announcements will be made by the end of August.

### Blacksmith's Tree Launch Date Announced

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November** has been announced as the launch date for the Blacksmith's Tree. The launch will be held at the Whittlesea Showgrounds and will include activities and performances from local community members and groups.

Open days are currently being planned to allow the public and school groups to view the assembly process.

For more information contact **Amanda, project manager**, at [treeproject@abavic.org.au](mailto:treeproject@abavic.org.au)

For further information visit [www.treeproject.abavic.org.au](http://www.treeproject.abavic.org.au) or [www.facebook.com/BlacksmithTreeProject](https://www.facebook.com/BlacksmithTreeProject)

### Murrindindi Community Memorials Update

Stage 2 of the Murrindindi Shire bushfire memorial consultation process is almost complete.

Based on feedback received from an extensive consultation process, the Murrindindi Bushfire Memorials Working Group (MBMWG) is recommending two regional memorials to be sited in Marysville and Kinglake to represent the broader impact of the fires, as well as several 'Local Memorials' to be sited in communities where lives were lost.

The Working Group has recommended that the names of those who died be included in the two regional memorials unless families wish otherwise. Bereaved family members are being encouraged to contact Jenny Branton on behalf of the MBMWG to share their thoughts.

Any community members wanting to provide feedback or seek more information can contact **Jenny Branton** on **0417 532 344**.

Information about all aspects of the memorials and their designs is available on the Murrindindi Bushfire Memorial website at <http://murrindindibushfirememorials.wordpress.com>

## Other information

### Bushfire Recovery Services Guide

The Bushfire Recovery Services Guide is maintained by the Fire Recovery Unit and provides details on specialised bushfire recovery services available throughout Victoria.

The guide has details on a number of programs and support services, as well as details on local and statewide programs for health and well-being, financial management, accommodation and housing, business and legal support, and a range of other services.

The Guide will continue to be updated throughout 2013.

Download the guide at [www.rdv.vic.gov.au/fire-recovery-unit](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/fire-recovery-unit) or call **1800 055 714** for assistance.

### Red Cross Resources and Support

Red Cross provides information on preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency [www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx](http://www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx)

In particular, you may find the following resources useful:

- Helping Children and Young People Cope with Crisis: a guide for parents and caregivers
- After the Emergency youth recovery website and MP3 Playlist
- REDiPlan which helps people prepare for an emergency

You can contact Red Cross on 1800 232 969 if you would like assistance with preparing for an emergency or for recovery information.

### Local Bushfire Recovery Information

A number of communities in the fire-affected areas maintain websites, newsletters and regular email circulars which include recovery information. These will continue to be a useful source of up to date news, events and support programs.

If you would like your community's website or newsletter listed on the Fire Recovery Unit website [www.rdv.vic.gov.au/fire-recovery-unit](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/fire-recovery-unit) please contact us at [fire.recovery@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:fire.recovery@rdv.vic.gov.au) or phone **1800 555 714**.

