

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



Sunday, 23 August 2020

FUNDING BOOST FOR NEXT STEPS IN LONG-TERM BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

The Victorian Government has unveiled a new blueprint for the state's fire-affected regions and more than \$110 million for local projects that create jobs and help communities recover from the summer's devastating bushfires.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville today released Bushfire Recovery Victoria's *Eastern Victoria Fires 2019-20 State Recovery Plan*, which sets out the journey ahead for bushfire-affected communities over the next 12 to 18 months as they move from the short-term 'stabilising' phase to longer-term rebuilding and recovery.

It outlines \$78.06 million for region-wide projects vital for recovery including:

- \$10 million to repair and reinstate roads, crossings and fire-tower infrastructure and \$8 million to ensure the safety of the arterial road network
- \$8 million to deliver and install more high-quality, short-term modular homes and \$4.4 million for support, services and rebates to help locals plan and complete their rebuild
- \$7.7 million to fund new seed stocks and directly sow forest areas by hand and helicopter, and \$5 million to protect rare and threatened species from pests and predators
- \$7.15 million to upgrade infrastructure at Cape Conran to make it 'visitor-ready'
- \$6.4 million for safety works in parks and forests so they are fit for public use and \$1.2 million to support a major event review of Regional Forest Agreements
- \$4.8 million to support Aboriginal community organisations, businesses, jobs and infrastructure
- \$5.1 million to fund legal assistance and \$2 million to provide tailored financial counselling for bushfire-affected individuals and businesses
- \$3.6 million to further boost the capacity of councils – Victoria's key partners in recovery
- \$1.95 million to strengthen the resilience of schools and help them prepare for future disasters
- \$1.88 million to increase family violence support services, including early intervention programs, and \$88,000 to support health and housing services.

In addition, the *State Recovery Plan* also delivers \$34.3 million towards the *Local Economic Recovery* program – matching a previous Commonwealth Government contribution.

Both levels of government will work together on economic recovery projects shaped and supported by local communities including councils, Community Recovery Committees, businesses and other local groups.

The *State Recovery Plan* is underpinned by the *State Recovery Framework* and sets an agenda for recovery across the natural environment, buildings and infrastructure, business and economy and health and wellbeing.

In an Australian first, the Plan also sets out a recovery plan for Aboriginal culture and healing – recognising the unique impact of the disaster on Aboriginal community and Country.

The 2019-20 bushfires were the most extensive in living memory. The fires burnt over 1.5 million hectares, destroyed hundreds of properties, significantly affected local economies and tragically, took five lives.

OFFICIAL

Media contact: Stephanie Jones 0448 359 507 | stephanie.jones@minstaff.vic.gov.au

The *State Recovery Plan* focuses heavily on helping communities during the rebuilding phase of recovery - in the aftermath of the fires the Victorian Government acted quickly to ensure access to emergency housing, deliver the Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program, undertake the massive state-wide clean-up, and administer tens of millions in grants to families and businesses. Bushfire Recovery Hubs were established across the fire-affected areas and Community Recovery Committees soon followed.

With clean-up nearly complete and over 2,500 destroyed or damaged structures cleared free-of-charge from over 700 properties, eligible bushfire-affected households are now getting dedicated planning advice and support and the option of high-quality short-term modular housing to live in for up to three years while they progress their permanent rebuild.

The extra funding announced today means the Victorian Government has now invested more than \$420 million for bushfire response and recovery.

For a copy of the State Recovery Plan and to see what services and support is available, visit brv.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

“With the clean-up almost complete, the State Recovery Plan now helps bushfire-affected communities turn to the next stage in the journey – getting back on their feet, getting works underway and getting things done.”

“We’re delivering 18 critical, region-wide projects right now, and a further \$34.3 million for projects shaped and supported by local communities into the future.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D’Ambrosio

“The devastating effects of these fires on our wildlife and biodiversity are well known – that’s why this funding is so important to help us continue supporting their recovery so they can survive and thrive”

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Ben Carroll

“Thousands of kilometres of road was damaged and lined with hazardous, burnt-out trees. With the most urgent safety measures already complete, we’re now funding the next stage to protect the safety of locals and visitors.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

“Aboriginal culture, community and Country was uniquely impacted by this disaster – this Plan will help Aboriginal Victorians get the support they need – on their own terms.”