

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



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BUSHFIRE-AFFECTED RESIDENTS TAKE NEXT STEPS TOWARDS REBUILDING

Families who lost their homes in the 2019-20 Victorian bushfires are taking the next steps in their rebuilding and recovery journey with the support of payments from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal and grants, modular housing, expert planning advice and extra assistance from the Victorian Government.

People who lost their primary place of residence are receiving an additional \$15,000 Housing Assistance Payment from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal on top of the \$25,000 Housing Assistance Payment disbursed from April.

This is on top of other Victorian and Commonwealth grants, such as up to \$42,000 in Emergency Re-Establishment Payments for underinsured households and up to \$75,000 in grants for directly-impacted farm businesses.

Ten high-quality, short-term modular housing units have been constructed by Victorian manufacturers Ausco and Modular Spaces, and delivered to sites across Towong and East Gippsland. Five units are now formally occupied, 17 more units are under construction, and more orders are expected.

The homes – which can be occupied for up to three years while families and individuals undertake their permanent rebuild – are being installed on fire-impacted properties that have now been cleared of destroyed buildings and bushfire waste under the 2020 Clean-Up Program, which was completed on schedule in August.

At an average cost per unit of approximately \$150,000 for construction and installation, eligible residents pay only a hiring fee benchmarked to public housing rates, with hardship provisions so fees are never higher than 25 per cent of their household income.

The government is also providing more options to families and individuals who are rebuilding on a small number of properties identified as ‘complex sites’ as part of the free bushfire hazard assessments funded by the Victorian Government and undertaken by bushfire hazard professionals and the Country Fire Association.

As well as being eligible for a range of support and step-by-step advice for planning applications from the Rebuild Support Service, owners of complex sites can also get the expertise of the Complex Site Taskforce to help them identify rebuilding options and solutions at the ‘drawing board’ stage. Short-term modular homes are also available to owners of these sites.

In line with previous bushfires, owners of complex sites also have the option of selling their property to the Victorian Government at the 2019 site value approved by the Government Land Monitor.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

“We’re providing as many choices and supports as possible, supporting bushfire-affected residents through the rebuilding process with grants, faster processes and tailored advice – but we all have a responsibility to ensure that homes in bushfire-prone areas are going to be safe to live in.”

“Families who wish to take a bit more time planning their rebuild can move into high-quality short-term modular housing back on their land, and those who want to start as soon as possible can make the most of our Rebuild Support Service and streamlined rules that make the process faster and easier.”