

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Thursday, 5 May 2022

HELPING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES RECOVER FROM BUSHFIRES

Projects to boost job numbers, manage Country and revitalise community assets will share in funding from the Andrews Labor Government to help Aboriginal communities strengthen our resilience to natural disasters.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes today announced the recipients of Bushfire Recovery Victoria's \$2.4 million Aboriginal Community Mitigation and Crisis Management grants.

The impact of the 2019-20 Victorian bushfires was particularly acute for Aboriginal Victorians given the deep spiritual connection and cultural obligation to care for Country. Bushfire Recovery Victoria has expanded on previous recovery models by establishing a dedicated line of recovery for Aboriginal Culture and Healing.

In East Gippsland the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) received \$450,000 to deliver 'Resilient Communities, resilient Country - Culture, Tradition and Fire'. The project directs where and when Traditional Owners use cultural burning to protect cultural assets, better manage Country and lessen the impact of future bushfires.

It builds on previous work by GLaWAC to develop a tool for Traditional Owners to assess Country that will be used by staff and the Gunaikurnai community to undertake pre-bushfire season planning and mitigation works.

In the North East Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation received \$450,000 to employ Traditional Owners to build existing traditional fire knowledge and undertake work to protect ancestral lands and lessen the impact of future bushfires.

Traditional Owners employed through the program will have the opportunity to reconnect to the land physically and spiritually and gain knowledge through practicing culturally safe traditional fire and land management practices.

Grants of up to \$450,000 were available to support Aboriginal organisations to develop and implement disaster crisis planning and mitigation initiatives on Country and grants of up to \$1 million to improve infrastructure to better prepare for future emergency events.

The Aboriginal Community Mitigation and Crisis Management grants build on the Government's investment in helping Aboriginal communities with land management and burning, including the \$6.3 million Cultural Fire Grants.

For the full list of grant recipients, visit the [Bushfire Recovery Victoria website](#).

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"These grants support the critical role Aboriginal organisations play in making sure their communities are prepared for bushfires whilst recognising the importance of cultural burning and the role of fires."

"This is about making sure everyone is involved in community preparation and recovery from bushfires."

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

"We're supporting Traditional Owners to share their knowledge of land management and Country, a vital part of Victoria's nation-leading path to Aboriginal self-determination and protecting our state's precious biodiversity."

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