

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Thursday, 9 June 2022

STORM REPAIRS MOVING AHEAD ON 1,000 STEPS

The iconic Kokoda Track Memorial Walk, also known as 1,000 Steps, in Dandenong Ranges National Park is another step closer to re-opening.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio today announced the appointment of Earth and Environment Constructors to repair and replace concrete steps and handrailing along the 1.4-kilometre track in challenging terrain.

Works at the 1,000 Steps are expected to be completed later this year and reopened, after last year's storms saw more than 150 trees fall and destroy much of the popular location.

The devastating storms caused significant destruction across Victoria and that recovery is still ongoing – to further support this work the Andrews Labor Government is investing almost \$5 million in additional funding to help eight storm affected councils.

This boost in funding means council staff can continue to help residents with whatever they need to keep the rebuilding process going – from planning permits and recovery grants to community engagement to keep locals connected to each other.

The funding will be available to the Yarra Ranges Shire, Latrobe City, Cardinia Shire, Hepburn Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, Moorabool Shire, South Gippsland Shire and Wellington Shire councils.

More than \$200 million has supported communities to build back better and stronger after the June storms – including \$105 million jointly-funded with the Commonwealth for the complex clean-up, \$2 million in emergency relief payments and Victorian Government investments of \$8.2 million for council coordinated recovery efforts.

More than \$73 million has helped repair nearly 2 million hectares of public land that was damaged, requiring a complex and extensive recovery. So far 186 of 217 recreation sites have reopened, including 147 out of 174 walking tracks, with the majority of remaining sites on track to open by spring.

More than a thousand homes have been cleared of debris by Bushfire Recovery Victoria and local contractors.

Extreme weather events are becoming increasingly common, that's why the *2022-23 Victorian Budget* allocated \$120 million towards making Victoria more resilient to storms, bushfires and other climate-related events.

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

"We are working hard to re-open storm damaged areas and offer support to communities as they continue to rebuild and recover after last year's June storm event."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"We know that recovery needs to be driven by locals. This funding means councils will be able to continue taking the lead in supporting their communities to recover – and we'll stand with them every step of the way."

Quote attributable to Member for Monbulk James Merlino

"It will be great to see this important and popular destination re-open, ensuring a safe experience for our local community and visitors."

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