

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Thursday, 8 September 2022

## FIRST RELIEF CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY IN GIPPSLAND

A groundbreaking emergency relief centre to support members of East Gippsland's Aboriginal communities in times of crisis is getting underway thanks to a \$2.4 million investment by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes joined Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh and representatives of the Lake Tyers Aboriginal community today to announce the funding and hear about their vision for the new centre.

The Lake Tyers Emergency Relief Centre project will bring together Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and Lake Tyers community to co-design a supportive, safe and secure space for Aboriginal communities within Lake Tyers during and after a bushfire disaster. The centre will also bring community together for activities and meetings outside of emergencies.

The need for the dedicated relief centre was identified following the devastating 2019-20 Eastern Victorian bushfires, during which over 1,000 known registered Aboriginal heritage places were damaged and hundreds of Aboriginal Victorians were affected.

In addition to supporting Lake Tyers Aboriginal community vision for an emergency relief centre, Minister Symes also announced a further \$3.2 million in grants for bushfire-affected Aboriginal communities and culturally appropriate business support, training employment and health and wellbeing initiatives.

Each successful project funded as part of Bushfire Recovery Victoria's Aboriginal Bushfire Recovery Grants will help Aboriginal communities increase their capability to lead recovery and healing.

In East Gippsland, Black Duck Foods will employ a team of local Aboriginal community members to provide targeted training in traditional fire practices and food and land management.

In the state's North East, Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation will use their grant for the protection and management of the Mt Buffalo region with a focus on areas impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires.

Other recipients of the grants include Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Cooperation for training and skills, Kinaway Chamber of Commerce to deliver business support, Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association for health and wellbeing initiatives, Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland for training and employment, Wayapa Wuurrk to deliver workshops, and Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service for healing and resilience activities.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

*"The impacts of the 2019-20 fires were particularly acute for Aboriginal Victorians, given the deep spiritual connection to and cultural obligation to care for Country."*

*"Each of these projects will help Aboriginal communities continue to lead recovery and healing on their terms, ensuring their unique experience of trauma is addressed."*

### Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

*"This unique centre delivered by, and dedicated to, East Gippsland's Aboriginal communities will be a model across the country and I'm so pleased that the Lake Tyers Aboriginal community can see their vision come to life."*

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