

# Joint Media Release



**Jaclyn Symes**  
Attorney-General  
Minister for Emergency Services



Australian Government  
**Senator The Hon Murray Watt**  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Minister for Emergency Management

Tuesday, 6 February 2024

## SUPPORTING THE RECOVERY AND REBUILD AFTER VIC FLOODS

Victorian communities affected by the recent December and January storms and floods will receive additional support from the Allan and Albanese Governments.

The package announced today includes more than \$105 million for increased financial assistance to support the immediate and long-term recovery and rebuild phase.

This assistance will be jointly funded under Category A and B of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and it includes:

- **Emergency roadworks** from larger-scale works like the rebuilding of roads, bridges and culverts – particularly in the Gippsland, Hume, Loddon Mallee and Eastern Metropolitan regions – to finding and fixing potholes, asphaltting and repairing road surfaces damaged by the severe weather events to get flood-affected Victorians back on the road.
- **Expanding the Emergency Recovery Hotline** which enables residents affected by disasters to access information about available programs that can help them recover and connect them with mental health, business, legal and financial support services.
- **Expanding the Recovery Support Program** which can provide storm and flood-impacted residents with access to a dedicated Recovery Support Worker, playing an important role to connect them to critical services and support programs specific to their recovery journey.
- **Additional mental health and wellbeing support** including psychological First Aid training programs, face-to-face mental health and wellbeing support from the Bendigo Mental Health and Wellbeing hub, free and subsidised telepsychology services from Rural Health Connect, and proactive emergency outreach visits and group counselling sessions.

These additional support services will be available in the 28 Local Government Areas where disaster assistance is already available, including the Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP), which continues to support eligible storm and flood-affected Victorians, and support to councils to repair and restore essential public assets.

To access recovery support, impacted residents can call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760. If you think you may be eligible for re-establishment assistance, you should contact your local council.

Information on disaster assistance, including PHAP is available on the Australian Government's website at [disasterassist.gov.au](https://disasterassist.gov.au) and the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing website [services.dffh.vic.gov.au/personal-hardship-assistance-program](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/personal-hardship-assistance-program).

If your business has been impacted, reference your insurance policies or contact your local council for support.

### Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Emergency Management Murray Watt

*"This significant investment will boost recovery for individuals, families, homeowners, businesses, and councils in Victoria recovering from this widespread flooding event."*

*“Previous assistance for Councils and individuals is already making a big difference on the ground, but this new funding program will expedite the response for a number of communities.*

*“The breadth of the programs we are jointly funding demonstrates that we are listening to community, we recognise the broad range of needs, and that we are working with all levels of government to deliver that support where we can.”*

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

*“I can’t thank our emergency services workers, volunteers, councils and community groups enough for their collaboration in supporting the critical response work.”*

*“As communities begin to recover and rebuild, we will be there to support them each step of the way - this includes vital support for mental health and wellbeing during this difficult recovery phase.”*

**Quotes attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne**

*“We’re making a significant investment in fixing damaged roads to ensure that work Victorians in storm and flood-affected areas can get back on the road as soon as possible.”*

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**Minister Watt’s office: Tali Eley 0499 770 772**

**Premier Allan’s office: Jennifer Aitken 0467 745 963**