



## THE HON JACINTA ALLAN PREMIER OF VICTORIA



## THE HON KRISTY MCBAIN MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 12 January 2026

#### **MORE SUPPORT ON THE WAY FOR FIRE-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES**

The Allan and Albanese Labor Governments are delivering further support to Victorians affected by the devastating fires, helping communities begin the long road to recovery.

Premier Jacinta Allan today visited Natimuk, one of the worst-hit communities, to announce the latest support package for bushfire-affected communities – including vital financial and mental health support for our farmers.

Building on the funding announced under the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and the initial Personal Hardship Assistance Program payments, further funding will be delivered to eligible Victorians who have tragically lost their homes in the fires.

The Albanese and Allan Governments are making assistance payments of up to \$52,250 available to eligible uninsured households so they can re-establish their principal place of residence.

For our farmers facing uncertainty following the loss of crops and livestock, the Allan Labor Government is also making sure they have the vital mental health and wellbeing support they need to reduce trauma and help them get back on their feet, expanding existing programs in place for primary producers and farming communities.

This includes free, confidential wellbeing support alongside financial and business counselling via the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

Initially appointed as part of the drought response, the wellbeing counsellors will be available to visit bushfire-affected producers and their families at their property or over the phone.

The package will also bring forward the start date of the Allan Labor Government's 'Look Over the Farm Gate' program, administered by the National Centre for Farmer Health to support farming communities experiencing stress.

Now available from this Friday, 16 January 2026 to meet the immediate needs of those affected by the bushfires, it will provide grants of up to \$5,000 for events and activities that support mental health and wellbeing so they can navigate their recovery as a community.

We know how distressed people are about their animals – that's why the Victorian Government is making it easier for farmers to check on their livestock while still ensuring they remain safe from the dangers of fire-affected land.

Landholders concerned about livestock welfare can now put in a request directly via Agriculture Victoria (on 1800 226 226) who will work with the Fire Incident Controller to assess the request and determine the earliest and safest way to get access.

Victoria is at its best when we unite to support those who need it most. That's why the Victorian Government is launching the *2026 Victorian Bushfire Appeal* – making it easier for people wanting to know where they can generously donate to fire-affected communities.

These donations will cover immediate and longer-term assistance, and programs identified by communities as priorities for their area. This work is done in collaboration with local organisations and charities to ensure the most vulnerable are supported.

100 per cent of donations will go to fire affected communities, and the Government is covering all the administrative costs associated with getting this funding out to where it's needed, as quickly as possible.

Donations will be open online from tomorrow.

#### **Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan**

*“These fires have caused unimaginable loss for so many across Victoria – that's why we are delivering more financial and mental health support to help ease some of the burden facing our farmers and regional communities.”*

*“We know there are so many Victorians out there who want to dig deep to support our farmers and fire-affected communities – that's why we have set up the Victorian Bushfire Appeal.”*

#### **Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Emergency Management Kristy McBain**

*“We are working very closely with the Allan Government to make sure Victorians affected by these fires can get back on their feet.”*

*“I was on the ground in Victoria over the weekend and saw firsthand how devastating this has been for communities.”*

*“We want Victorians to know the Albanese Government stands behind you both during the response to these fires and during the recovery”*

#### **Quote attributable to Victorian Minister for Natural Disaster Recovery Vicki Ward**

*“In recent days, many Victorians have asked how they can donate to fire-affected communities, that's why we are launching the 2026 Victorian Bushfire Appeal to get these generous funds directly to where they are needed most.”*

#### **Quote attributable to Acting Victorian Minister for Agriculture Steve Dimopoulos**

*“We are working with Agriculture Victoria and the Fire Incident Controller to make it easier for farmers to check on the welfare of their animals because we know how distressing this time is.”*

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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