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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

17 January 2026

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE AFTER FLASH FLOODS IN
VICTORIA**

The Albanese and Allan Governments are activating disaster assistance for Surf Coast and Colac Otways shires following flash flooding that occurred on Thursday 15 January 2026.

The disaster assistance is being delivered under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Support is being provided to councils for the establishment and running of emergency relief centres. Multiple relief centres were stood up in the Surf Coast and Colac Otway shires immediately after the flash flooding, with more than 200 people accessing the relief centre in Lorne in the first two hours.

Funding for emergency accommodation, restoration of essential public assets and counter disaster operations is also included.

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Personal Hardship Assistance Program payments have also been activated for those who've had to evacuate their homes and need immediate things like food and medicine. Assistance under the program includes a one-off payment of \$680 per adult and \$340 per child, up to a maximum of \$2,380 per eligible family.

Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) will continue to work with Surf Coast and Colac Otway councils to understand any further assistance they need.

Information about relief available for people impacted by the flash flooding is available on the VicEmergency website at emergency.vic.gov.au/relief

Information on disaster assistance is available on the Australian Government's website at disasterassist.gov.au or call VicEmergency on 1800 226 226.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Kristy McBain:

"Victorians have had a really tough time with devastating bushfires across the state, and just a week later a significant storm and flood event in a densely populated tourist area causing more confronting scenes.

"Thankfully nobody was seriously injured and all levels of government are working closely to provide support to those impacted."

Quotes attributable to Victorian Minister for Emergency Services, Vicki Ward:

"We're standing with flood-affected Victorians and making sure councils have the support they need after Thursday's severe storm and flash flooding in Wye River and Lorne."

"This was a fast-moving and dangerous weather event that forced people to leave their homes, holiday accommodation and businesses. I want to thank all of our emergency services who acted quickly to keep people safe."

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