



THE HON ANTHONY ALBANESE MP
PRIME MINISTER



THE HON JACINTA ALLAN
PREMIER OF VICTORIA

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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**ADDITIONAL \$160 MILLION COMMITTED TO SUPPORT RECOVERY FOR
FIRE-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES**

The Albanese and Allan Governments continue to stand with communities affected by the devastating January 2026 Victorian bushfires, announcing \$160 million in additional support to help families, businesses and primary producers.

Up to \$158 million is funded by both Governments under joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), while the Allan Government is investing an extra \$2 million for schools within fire-affected areas to engage additional mental health services.

Local government areas eligible for support are Alpine Shire, Ararat Rural City, Benalla Rural City, Campaspe Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Greater Bendigo City, Horsham Rural City, Macedon Ranges Shire, Mansfield Shire, Mildura Rural City, Mitchell Shire, Moira Shire, Mount Alexander Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Pyrenees Shire, Strathbogie Shire, Towong Shire, Wellington Shire, Wodonga City, Yarra Ranges Shire and Lake Mountain Alpine Resort.

This funding builds on the more than \$210 million in already announced relief and recovery supports for bushfire-affected Victorians, including emergency relief payments, grants for primary producers, access to emergency accommodation, and support for councils.

Clean-up for homes and businesses

An additional \$112 million will expand the state-coordinated Clean-up Program with Forge Solutions now appointed as lead contractor. Forge Solutions have extensive experience in disaster clean up and will prioritise engaging local contractors to support their work.

Clean-up support will be available for uninsured and underinsured residential homes and structures such as sheds or garages.

It will also be available for businesses if uninsured or underinsured structures have been damaged or destroyed by the January 2026 Victorian bushfires.

Uninsured and underinsured community assets – like sporting facilities and community halls – will also be able to access the clean-up program if clean-up is not covered by other programs.

Registrations for the Clean-up Program are now open. Call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 or visit Emergency Recovery Victoria website: vic.gov.au/clean-support-january-2026-bushfires.

Emergency Recovery Support Program

Recovery has a long tail. To help people get the support they need throughout their recovery journey, an additional \$20 million will expand the Emergency Recovery Support Program.

The program helps people affected by the bushfires navigate and access the government support programs and services they need. It can also help with things like insurance and legal questions, finding local services and connecting people to essential health and wellbeing support.

Dedicated recovery support workers will also be available for people who need extra help navigating their recovery.

The Emergency Recovery Support Program is available by calling the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760.

Temporary accommodation

Further funding is being provided to ensure immediate accommodation supports are available to those who need it, while we work to provide medium to longer term accommodation options best suited to the recovery needs of individuals, families and communities.

Financial counselling and advisory support for businesses

More than \$1.7 million will go towards supporting business owners affected by the January 2026 bushfires by providing access to tailored business recovery advice and financial counselling.

The Business Recovery Advisory Service will be available on the ground and through the Business Victoria website. Business Recovery Advisors will deliver free, confidential one-on-one support to business owners, tailored to their circumstances and supporting their long-term recovery.

The Small Business Financial Counselling service will provide free and confidential financial counselling to businesses who are in financial risk or at risk of it due to the bushfires.

More information will be available on the Business Victoria website: business.vic.gov.au.

Harcourt Cooperative Cool Store rebuild

Kickstarting Victoria's agricultural recovery is a priority, with \$500,000 going towards accelerating the rebuild of the Harcourt Cooperative Cool Store facility.

More than 95 businesses in Harcourt and the surrounding region rely on the facility to keep apples, pears, seed potatoes, wine, craft beer and beehives at temperature.

Public land and waterway recovery

Funding of \$16.1 million will support immediate repair works to public land and waterways, recognising the devastating impact the bushfires have had on the environment.

This includes making roads and bridges safe so they can open as quickly as possible, land management works, as well as pest control and critical mitigation of immediate risks to threatened species and biodiversity. It also includes catchment and waterway restoration activities undertaken with our Catchment Management Authorities, such as riparian fencing support for landholders, and immediate works to address water quality risks and remediate riparian areas.

Prolonged Power Outage Payments for businesses

Almost \$1.4 million will ensure businesses are able to access Prolonged Power Outage Payments if they have been without power for seven or more days within a two-week period.

Recognising the integral role small businesses play in communities and the impact of prolonged outages, payments of \$3,088 per week will be available for up to three weeks.

As previously announced, eligible households can continue to apply for payments of \$2,380 per week for up to three weeks.

Affected businesses can apply for a payment through their electricity distribution business. More information is available at energy.vic.gov.au/about-energy/safety/power-outages.

Recovery Water Tank Rebates

Financial assistance will be available for bushfire-affected rural households that are not connected to mains water supply, with new program to help ensure access to safe drinking water.

Eligible households will receive a rebate of up to \$1,500 for cleaning and decontaminating rain water tanks, roofs and gutters that are impacted by the fires. Residents who have already paid for cleaning are also eligible for reimbursement.

Mental health support

More than \$6.9 million will deliver additional mental health and wellbeing support for those in bushfire-affected communities.

\$4.9 million will expand the reach of existing Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals into areas affected by the bushfires – providing free treatment, care and support for adults.

A list of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals can be found at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-wellbeing-locals.

We know the mental health and wellbeing of young people can suffer significantly after a disaster due to trauma, loss, and disruption. A \$2 million investment by the Allan Government will ensure students in identified government schools affected by the fires can access additional mental health support.

How to help

The Victorian Emergency Relief and Recovery Foundation (VERRF) has launched the January 2026 Victorian Bushfire Appeal. Victorians can provide financial support directly to communities impacted by the fires by visiting vic.gov.au/2026-Victorian-Bushfire-Appeal

Goods and services can also be donated through the charity GIVIT by visiting givit.org.au.

Quotes attributable to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

“The Federal Government is working hand in hand with the Victorian Government to provide immediate support for communities impacted by the devastating bushfires.

“At the worst of times, we always see the best of the Australian character and we’re seeing that right here in Victoria.

“We’ve got their back, which is why we’re rolling out support now to support communities through the recovery.”

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

“This is a locally-led recovery, informed by what bushfire-affected Victorians need – and we’re backing them with the funding they need to get on and recover from these devastating bushfires.”

“We’ll continue to stand with communities as they start building back better and stronger.”

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