

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Emergency Services



**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Monday, 3 September, 2018

## MARKING THE 2009 VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The Andrews Labor Government will give communities a voice to commemorate the ten-year anniversary of the 2009 Victorian bushfires in their own way, with funding to be provided for anniversary activities.

The catastrophic 2009 bushfires devastated the state, with 173 people losing their lives in the tragedy. Many more were injured and lost their homes, with the memories of the events still impacting communities to this day.

The Labor Government has today announced \$4.4 million in funding to support anniversary activities in communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

The funding will support a state memorial service and a grants program for local community commemoration and creative arts projects. A range of mental health and psychological services and supports throughout the commemoration period will also be provided.

As part of the commemorations, bushfire-affected communities will be able to collaborate and support each other in remembering the victims of the disaster. It will also be an opportunity acknowledge the first responders who bravely served their community during the catastrophe.

The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria, has been appointed as the Patron for the state's commemorations of the anniversary. As Patron, the Governor will visit bushfire affected communities to hear about their challenges and help celebrate their achievements in recovery.

An advisory panel, chaired by former Premier John Brumby and including former Deputy Premier and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Pat McNamara, Ms Susan Pascoe AM and Mr Ben Hubbard has been created.

The panel will provide advice to the Government on anniversary planning to ensure the needs of impacted communities, as well as the broader Victorian public, are met.

The Government has made additional resources available for support services throughout the anniversary period, including for schools and emergency personnel. Visit [vic.gov.au/2009-bushfires](http://vic.gov.au/2009-bushfires) for more information about the ten-year anniversary including grants programs, and details of the State Memorial Service.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Emergency Services James Merlino

*"These catastrophic events still impact on many of our communities today and it is important we allow those communities to commemorate this anniversary in their own way."*

*"Remembering these tragic events is important so we can honour those who died, those who lost their homes and were displaced, and the people who prevented further loss and destruction."*

*"We look forward to working closely with bushfire-affected communities and local government over the next six months to ensure the commemoration of this time reflects the community's wishes."*

**Media contact:** Matthew Dixon 0438 190 148 | [matthew.dixon@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:matthew.dixon@minstaff.vic.gov.au)