

Media Release

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Wednesday, 6 March 2019

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THE RECENT BUSHFIRES

The Andrews Labor Government is standing with Victorians affected by fires across the state.

More than 2,000 firefighters are still working to manage fires burning across the state, including in Bunyip, Yinnar South, Dargo, Licola and Cambarville in the Yarra catchment.

Emergency Relief Assistance grants of up to \$540 per adult or \$270 for children are available for eligible households for items like accommodation, food and clothing.

Relief payments totalling more than \$350,000 have already been made to 152 people requiring urgent assistance.

The Government urges anyone from fire affected areas who needs support to attend a relief or recovery centre and see departmental staff at that centre.

Community relief centres have been established at Pakenham, Drouin, Bairnsdale, Morwell and Sale, with more than 1,200 locals already attending. A recovery centre has also been established at the Bunyip Showground and Recreational Reserve.

These centres are providing locals with the latest fire information, as well as insurance and legal advice.

The Government has been in contact with the Insurance Council of Australia, who are committed to processing payments in a timely manner.

Agriculture Victoria has established a Relief and Recovery Incident Management Team based at Ellinbank to work with landholders to assess injured livestock and provide appropriate treatment.

We know that bushfires can have a devastating personal impact, so we're establishing tailored mental health and crisis support services at these community meetings and relief centres, and we're working with Lifeline Australia to make sure more staff are on hand to help those in crisis.

Lifeline Australia can be contacted on 13 11 14.

Quote attributable to Minister for Ageing, Disability and Carers Luke Donnellan

"I urge anyone who needs support for essentials such as accommodation, clothing or food to attend a relief or recovery centre and access the services available."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"Agriculture Victoria is providing immediate support through priority animal welfare and agricultural impact assessments, and we'll continue to stand side by side with affected communities as initial relief needs give way to longer term recovery programs."

Quote attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"I know there are families who have lost everything and are suffering. We are standing with them and will continue to give them the support they need to recover and rebuild."

Media contact: Patrick Lane 0437 884 010 | healthmedia@minstaff.vic.gov.au