



**SENATOR THE HON JENNY MCALLISTER
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
MINISTER FOR CITIES
SENATOR FOR NEW SOUTH WALES**



**VICKI WARD
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES
MINISTER FOR NATURAL DISASTER RECOVERY
MINISTER FOR EQUALITY**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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**PERSONAL HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR BUSHFIRE
AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN VICTORIA**

The Australian and Victorian Governments are supporting communities affected by the recent bushfires, with personal hardship payments now available under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Through the Victorian Department of Families Fairness and Housing's 'Personal Hardship Assistance Program', emergency relief payments are available for residents in bushfire affected communities to support unmet immediate relief needs. These payments are available to individuals and families with homes in evacuation warning areas or property damaged by bushfire.

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 to help cover the costs of essentials like food, clothing, medication and accommodation.

If you think you may be eligible for a relief payment, please call the VicEmergency hotline on 1800 226 226 or visit an Emergency Relief Centre.

Support from the Australian and Victorian Governments for local government areas has been activated for Ararat Rural City Council, Macedon Ranges, Northern Grampians and Southern Grampians Shires also includes assistance with the establishment and running of emergency relief centres psychological first aid and council led financial counselling, and counter disaster operations (evacuations, cleaning up debris, road closures, establishment of temporary access routes).

Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) will continue to work with local councils to understand the assistance required to support communities due to these bushfires.

More information on disaster assistance is available on the VicEmergency website emergency.vic.gov.au/relief.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Jenny McAllister

“This assistance will provide support to Victorians who have had to evacuate or whose homes have been damaged by bushfire.”

“While it will be some time before we know the full impacts, we know families and households will be feeling the impacts particularly keenly during the Christmas period.”

“The Australian Government is working with the Victorian Government to ensure that people who need help can get it quickly.”

“We will continue to work closely with the Victorian Government as recovery needs become clear.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Minister for Emergency Services and Natural Disaster Recovery, Vicki Ward

“The recent bushfires have had an enormous impact on surrounding communities - this is felt most strongly by the families who had to leave their homes at Christmas time.”

“We’re working with the Australian Government to make emergency relief funding available for bushfire-affected Victorians - allowing them to focus on recovery without worrying about affording immediate food, clothing, medication and other necessities.”

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