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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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SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY AFTER WESTERN VICTORIA BUSHFIRES

The Albanese and Allan Governments are supporting small businesses and communities affected by the bushfires in Western Victoria with more than \$29 million in assistance to support immediate and long-term recovery.

The assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

More than \$24 million will deliver crucial support to Western Victoria businesses affected by the bushfires, including:

- a dedicated Business Bushfire Recovery Grant program to provide \$5,000 grants to small businesses and eligible primary producers that have experienced significant disruptions and revenue losses due to the bushfires.
- a Business Recovery Advisory service which will be available on the ground and through the Business Victoria website, providing free business support for impacted businesses so they can find the right strategies for long-term recovery.

- tourism marketing and promotional activities to boost visitor numbers to the Grampians region, which is on top of \$100,000 for Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism to deliver immediate, on-the-ground industry support activities for affected businesses in the region.

More information including program guidelines and how to apply will be available on the Business Victoria website soon. Businesses can sign up now to register their interest and receive updates at business.vic.gov.au/2024-25-western-victoria-bushfire-supports.

More than \$5 million for an early environmental recovery package will support the survival of key native species and the recovery and restoration of fire-impacted public lands, waterways and catchments within Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. These works will allow the Park to reopen safely to everyone, while also protecting its valuable and unique biodiversity.

A Gate Fee Rebate Program will also ensure community can dispose of waste from private properties relating to the impact of the bushfires free of charge. The program will be available in 4 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Horsham Rural City, Ararat Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire and Southern Grampians Shire.

This support follows the previously announced Emergency Relief Payments, which were jointly funded and delivered through the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP). More than \$1.3 million has been paid through PHAP.

Since the fires occurred, Emergency Recovery Victoria and the Victorian Government has been on the ground with communities to help get them on the path to recovery. This includes helping convene a taskforce with a focus on small business, tourism and mental health support, waiving liquor license renewal fees for eligible businesses, and helping locals deal with insurance companies.

Information on disaster assistance is available on the Australian Government's website at disasterassist.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Jenny McAllister:

“The bushfires in December and January last year have had an enduring impact on communities in the Grampians (Gariwerd) and Macedon Ranges.

“These programs will support small businesses in the area as they recover from these significant fire events.”

“We are working with the Victorian Government to assist impacted communities as they continue with their recovery.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward

“The work done since the fires began has been incredible. Everyone has done whatever they can to help — from our emergency services, councils, community groups and more.”

“It’s been a challenging and disappointing summer for locals after numerous fires and evacuations. The Grampians have officially moved from being in an emergency response to recovery — this support will help keep that momentum moving and encourage more people back to one of the most beautiful part of Victoria.”

**Quote attributable to Victorian Minister Small Business and Employment
Natalie Suleyman**

“We’re supporting our small businesses in Western Victoria to get back on their feet following the bushfires. Through recovery grants, tourism support and dedicated business advice, we can keep the doors open to one of the most beautiful parts of Victoria.”

**Quote attributable to Victorian Minister for Environment, Tourism, Sport and
Major Events and Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos**

“Today’s announcement will help bring visitors back to the communities dependent on tourism who have been hardest hit by this bushfire season. It’s an amazing part of the world and we’ll make sure visitors know it’s back open for business.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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