Upper Murray Bushfire Recovery Information Pack

Contact
(02) 6071 5100
info@towong.vic.gov.au
Agistment
Farmers in need of fodder or agistment should contact the VFF on 1300 882 833 to register for assistance.

Agriculture Recovery
The Corryong Community Ag Recovery Drop-in centre is at the Corryong Neighbourhood Centre (42 Hanson Street) and is open Monday to Friday, 10.30am-3.30pm.
A vet and specialist ag recovery staff are there with advice relating to land management, erosion control, animal welfare and feed budgeting.
Private rooms for confidential one-on-one discussions are also available.
For more information contact AgVic on 136 186 or agriculture.vic.gov.au/animalemergencies

Case Support Coordinators
To access a bushfire case support program that provides a single point of contact for information, financial support, insurance, counselling and small business advice call 1800 560 760 or email bushfirerecovery@windemere.org.au

Communications
For NBN outages information - downdetector.com.au/status/nbnco/map/

Family Violence
There is an increased risk of family violence after an emergency. For help call 1800 737 732 or visit vic.gov.au/family-violence-support

Fencing
- BlazeAid – 0417 552 116 (Rhonda) or blazeaid.com.au
- Rotary – 0400 872 799 (Barry) or 0419 603 024 (Peter)
- Uniting Church – 0412 578 237 (Alan) or 0458 646 544 (Cath)
- VFF – 1300 882 833

Financial Assistance
DHHS staff are working from relief centres, including Corryong, providing financial and emergency accommodation assistance to people evacuating impacted areas.
People who cannot get to a relief centre can call 1800 961 054 (9am-5pm).
Red Cross is providing emergency grants of $5,000 to people whose homes have been destroyed in the bushfires.
Applications for an emergency grant must be made online at redcross.org.au/grants.

Fodder
Farmers in need of fodder, stock water or agistment should contact the VFF on 1300 882 833 to register for assistance.

Garbage Collection/Damaged Bins
- Towong Shire Council – (02) 6071 5100

Health
- Corryong Health Services – (02) 6076 3290
- Emergency – 000
- NURSE-ON-CALL – 1300 606 024

Livestock Welfare
For fodder or agistment support contact the VFF on 1300 882 833 to register for assistance.
For urgent animal welfare and needs for pets, horses and livestock call 1800 226 226 or visit agriculture.vic.gov.au
For livestock disposal contact Towong Shire Council on (02) 6071 5100.
Mental Health
It is important to look after yourself, your family and your friends. Red Cross has a number of publications at redcross.org.au/emergency-resources#recover-from-disasters that can help you recover from a disaster.

It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions following a distressing event.
There is always help available through your doctor and local mental health professionals.

Call the following for support at any time:
- Corryong Health – 02 6076 3200
- Lifeline – 131 114
- Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
- Mens Line – 1300 789 978
- Kid’s Help Line – 1800 55 1800
- Parent Line – 132 289
- Bushfire Counselling Line – 1300 514 811
- Mental Health Crisis Line – 1300 881 104
- Headspace – 1800 650 893

Parks and State Forests
As a result of the fire ALL Parks and State Forests are closed to the public until further notice. For more information visit parks.vic.gov.au

Power
- Ausnet – 131 799 or ausnetservices.com.au

Roads and Access
For access through Traffic Management Points:
- Residents should carry some proof of residency and Photo ID, such as a driver’s licence.
- Essential services are required to show some evidence of the service they are providing (such as an invoice). Police will then let you travel through.

Arterial roads in the fire area are progressively being opened as tree hazards are removed.

If you require access on to roads that are closed to the general public, contact the Traffic Management Desk on (02) 6043 4674 so your case can be assessed, and your details recorded.

Please drive carefully and observe speed limits.
For more information contact VicRoads on 131 170 or visit traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Trees – Damaged and Burning
- Towong Shire Council – (02) 6071 5100

Waste Transfer Stations
- Towong Shire Council – (02) 6071 5100

Water

Potable drinking water
Bushfire affected residents can seek emergency drinking water (up to 5,000L and tank flush) through South East Water.

Call 131 851 (press 9) or visit southeastwater.com.au/NewsEvents/Pages/Emergency-water-relief-for-bushfire-affected-residents.aspx

Stock water
For required stock water, contact your nearest water contractor to arrange (such as Landmark or Murray Goulburn).

Replacement of water used in firefighting efforts
To request essential water replacement for water used in firefighting efforts contact DELWP 136 186 or visit ffm.vic.gov.au/recovery-after-an-emergency/public-land-recovery

Wildlife Welfare
Report injured wildlife to the Wodonga Incident Control Centre on (02) 6043 4600.
Financial assistance is available to eligible fire-affected residents in Towong Shire from the Australian and Victorian Governments and a number of other organisations.

**Bushfire Case Support Program**

The Victorian Bushfire Case Support program is available for people for fire-affected people of North East Victoria. The program offers support workers as a first point of contact, providing information, financial support, insurance, mental health support and small business advice and practical support for residents. They can also help with paperwork, grants and navigation of services through local, state and Commonwealth governments.

Call 1800 560 760 or email bushfirerecovery@windemere.org.au

**Support for Individuals and Families**

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DISASTER RECOVERY PAYMENT**

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is a one-off payment to help you if a declared disaster significantly affects you. It is not for minor damage or inconvenience. If you’re eligible you will receive $1,000 per adult and $400 for each child under 16 years of age.

Visit humanservices.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency/bushfires

**VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PERSONAL HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PHAP)**

The PHAP is offering payments of up to $560 per adult and $280 per child (up to a maximum of $1960 per eligible household).

The payments are designed to help eligible people experiencing personal and extreme financial hardship due to the fires.

Relief payments are intended to help meet immediate needs, including emergency food, accommodation, clothing, medication and personal items.

Visit services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-hardship-assistance-program or call 1800 226 226

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DISASTER RECOVERY ALLOWANCE**

Offering up to 13 weeks income support for those who have lost income as a direct result of the bushfires. Equivalent to Newstart or Youth Allowance.


**AUSTRALIAN TAX OFFICE SUPPORT**

If you have been impacted by bushfires and you live in one of the identified impacted postcodes, the ATO will automatically defer any lodgments or payments you have due. You, or your agent, do not need to apply for a deferral – it will be automatically applied. Income tax, activity statement, SMSF and FBT lodgments, and their associated payments, will be deferred until 28 May 2020.

Visit ato.gov.au/Individuals/Dealing-with-disasters or call 1800 806 218

**SALVATION ARMY**

The Salvation Army can provide short term hardship payments to individuals and families who have been evacuated from their homes for several days, lost power or water, or lost their homes. Payments vary depending on individual circumstances.

Call 1300 662 217 or email sal.disasters@salvationarmy.org.au

**VIC ROADS**

Vic Roads is offering assistance to help with your registration and licensing services, including

www.towong.vic.gov.au
cancelling registration of fire damaged vehicles to claim a refund.

Residents may also be eligible for a discount on duty payable for replacement vehicles of up to $2,100 for up to two replacement vehicles registered in your name.

Visit a VicRoads Customer Centre, or write to VicRoads GPO Box 1644, Melbourne Vic 3001 before April 1 2020.

Primary Residence

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY RE-ESTABLISHMENT PAYMENTS

Up to $42,250 per eligible household.

Emergency re-establishment assistance is available if your principal place of residence (your home) is uninhabitable for more than seven days because of an emergency. The grants will be available for clean-up, emergency accommodation, repairs, rebuilding (a principal place of residence), and replacing some damaged contents. Re-establishment assistance is available to individuals or families experiencing financial hardship and who do not have building (home) insurance or contents insurance.

Visit services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-hardship-assistance-program

RED CROSS

If you have lost your home in a bushfire since July 2019, you can apply for an emergency grant of $5,000.

Visit redcross.org.au/grants or call 1800 733 276

Small Business & Organisations

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF PACKAGE

Businesses and organisations that have sustained damage as a result of the fires can access up to $50,000 in grant funding (tax free).

Loans of up to $500,000 will be offered for businesses that have suffered significant asset loss or a significant loss of revenue. The loan is for up to 10 years and used for the purposes of restoring or replacing damaged assets and for working capital.


COMMBANK BUSHFIRE RECOVERY GRANT

Up to $50,000 grants available to assist the longer term recovery of organisations directly affected by the bushfires. To be eligible to apply for a CommBank Bushfire Recovery Grant, each organisation must:

- Be a community organisation, fire service, school, sporting club or non-government organisation in a bushfire affected area, not an individual
- Need to replace or repair facilities or property which was lost or damaged by bushfire during the 2019-20 bushfire season and is not likely to be covered by insurance
- Be able to identify how repair or replacement of the facilities or property will benefit the community.

Applications close 31 March 2020


VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT WILDLIFE SHELTERS AND CARERS

Licensed wildlife shelters and foster carers who are receiving animals as a result of current bushfires are eligible to apply for a Victorian Government grant of up to $1,000 by completing a simple online application form.

These grants are for the most immediate and basic supplies and services to support your wildlife emergency response. Feed, consumables and veterinary consultations are eligible items.
Closes 30 April 2020.

THE REECE GRANT
The Reece Group are supporting Bushfire Rebuild projects, beginning with $150k directly donated. If you, or a tradesperson you know is involved in a project to help rebuild a bushfire affected community, apply at reecegrant.com.au/bushfires

Clean Up of Damaged Property
Victorians who have had their homes, shops and sheds destroyed in this season’s bushfires can have their properties cleaned up at no cost, so communities can start rebuilding as soon as possible.


Agriculture Support
VFF DISASTER RELIEF
Support with fodder relief, stock water, agistment and fodder transport. Call 1300 882 833

FENCING
A number of organisations are available to offer support to rebuild fencing, with some limited access to donated supplies.
BlazeAid 0417 552 116 (Rhonda) or blazeaid.com.au
Rotary 0400 872 799 (Barry) or 0419 603 024 (Peter)
Uniting Church 0412 578 237 (Alan) or 0458 646 544 (Cath)
Victorian Farmers Federation 1300 882 833

Other Support
DHHS staff are working from relief centres, providing financial and emergency accommodation assistance to people evacuating impacted areas.

People who cannot get to a relief centre can call DHHS on 1800 961 054 (9am-5pm).

FREE LEGAL INFORMATION
Disaster Legal Help Victoria can provide free information to Victorians affected by the recent bushfires to support you with issues including:
- dealing with insurance claims
- replacing lost or destroyed documents, including wills and titles
- tenancy issues, such as disputes with landlords and outstanding rent
- debt and other financial problems resulting from loss of employment and the cost of dealing with the aftermath of a disaster.

Call 1800 113 432 or visit disasterlegalhelp.org.au

BANKS
Contact your bank to find out what support is available.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS
Optus and Telstra are also supporting bushfire affected customers, depending on circumstances. Information is available via their websites.

Where can I find out more?
Further information is available at: emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/thegrantshub.com.au
Emotional assistance

If you’re returning home after a bushfire, it can help to prepare mentally for what you’re going to see. People have all kinds of emotional and physical reactions – they are normal and part of the healing process. Relief, uncertainty, distress, anger, grief are all normal.

If you or a loved one need support during this difficult time visit your GP or call the Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program for more information about the mental support services available in your area.

Call: 1800 560 760 - 8am – 6pm weekdays and 9am – 5pm on weekends
Email: bushfirerecovery@windermere.org.au

It can be really helpful to talk to someone who’s independent but still understanding. Here are some services that are here for you or others you know.

- LifeLine – phone 131 114 - A 24-hour telephone service that offers confidential support and advice to help you deal with stress and personal challenges.
- Beyondblue information line – phone 1300 224 636 - An information line that offers expert information on depression; how to recognise the signs of depression, how to get help, how to help someone else and how to stay well.
- Mensline – phone 1300 789 978 - A telephone support, information and referral service, helping men deal with their relationship problems.
- Nurse-on-Call – phone 1300 60 60 24 - A 24-hour telephone service that allows people to discuss any health-related issue with a registered nurse for the cost of a local call.
- Parentline Victoria – phone 13 22 89 – Available 8am – midnight, 7 days a week a telephone service for parents and carers of children from birth to 18 years old, which offers confidential and anonymous counselling and support on parenting issues.
- Kids Help Line - phone 1800 551 800 – A 24-hour telephone service that provides phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

Bushfires Case Support Program

There are so many things to be done after a bushfire – from cleaning up to applying for support to making a plan for the future. It’s sometimes hard to know what to do first.

Bushfires Case Support Program can provide you with practical support following the bushfires. This is a FREE service for people in East Gippsland and North East Victoria who have been impacted by the fires. To access this program or find out more:

Call: 1800 560 760 - 8am – 6pm weekdays and 9am – 5pm on weekends
Email: bushfirerecovery@windermere.org.au

Case support coordinators can help you with:

- discussing your needs and the next steps you could take
- information and support to access recovery and mental health services
- completing paperwork
- community information
- financial counselling and assistance with insurance
- advice for business owners
- small amount of financial support to help with immediate needs.

Support can be provided face to face, over the phone or at a location that suits you.

Insurance

If you have property or contents insurance you should contact your insurance company as soon as possible after the fire.

- Ask your insurer for advice on actions you should take
- Do not discard or throw away damaged items without first consulting your insurance company
- Make a list of items that have been damaged and take photographs if possible
- Keep receipts for any emergency repair work

For assistance with insurance contact the Insurance Council of Australia on 1800 734 621 (24 hour hotline). You can find information on lodging a claim following a disaster here: www.disasters.org.au.
Safely accessing your property
Houses, sheds and other buildings or structures burnt in a bushfire can leave potential health hazards. These may include fallen or sharp objects, smouldering coals, damaged electrical wires, leaking gas and weakened walls.

- Wear protective clothing before entering your property after a bushfire.
- Where possible, try to avoid taking children onto fire-damaged properties. If you do, make sure they remain protected at all times.
- Hazardous wastes, such as asbestos materials and burnt CCA-treated timber, need special care during handling and disposal.

Smoke and ash
Smoke can contain fine particles, which present a health concern because they can be breathed into your lungs. These are the particles that can be present in ash and soot. Ash and soot can be irritating to the lungs and the skin. Breathing these fine particles deeply into the lungs can cause breathing problems and worsen pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease.

Signs of short-term irritation such as itchy eyes, skin irritations, sore throat, runny nose and coughing usually clear up in healthy adults once you’re away from the smoke.

If these symptoms don’t improve quickly once you’re away from the smoke, contact NURSE-ON-CALL (1300 60 60 24) or seek medical advice.

- Take medications if you have pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma or heart disease.
- Wash ash off your hands, face and neck.
- If ash gets in your eyes, gently wash them out with clean water.
- Practise good hygiene, and wipe down surfaces with soap and water

Managing waste removal after bushfires
Prevent further damage to your environment by disposing of bushfire waste responsibly.

- Call your Bushfire Recovery Victoria case manager on 1800 560 760 for more information on how to handle any waste from your property, home or business.
- We recommend you do not inspect burnt building rubble or take any waste to landfill yourself.
- If you decide to inspect, protect yourself by wetting down the area to reduce dust and wear protective clothing including a P2 mask.
- The Department of Health and Human Services can provide protective clothing to community members returning to fire affected areas. These kits can be collected from local relief centres or from local councils.
- At this stage, do not commence clean-up by taking trailer loads of bushfire waste to local landfill facilities, as only appropriate facilities will be able to receive your bushfire waste.

Asbestos
- It is recommended that you use a licensed asbestos removalist to perform cleanup work. They know how to remove and dispose of asbestos safely, and without risk to you and your neighbours. If you are using a contractor to remove asbestos, they must be licensed by WorkSafe Victoria.
- Worksafe’s website (worksafe.vic.gov.au/asbestos) has a list of licensed asbestos removalists. You can also contact Worksafe on 1800 136 089.
- EPA can provide you more information about the disposal of asbestos as a waste product. Visit epa.vic.gov.au or call on 1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC) for more information.

Injured livestock and pets
- If you have any injured livestock, please report it to Agriculture Victoria on 1800 226 226 so that Agriculture Victoria animal health staff can assist with assessing and managing livestock.
- If you have injured pets, please seek advice immediately from your local vet.
**Food safety**

After a fire, smoke and other contaminants can potentially affect food.

- When in doubt, throw it out!
- Be thorough when inspecting your kitchen for damage from smoke, heat, water, and firefighting foam.
- Throw out all food items, sealed or unsealed impacted by the fire, as they could be contaminated. This includes food in cans and jars even if they appear OK, any raw food, and food packaged in cardboard and plastic wrap.
- Get rid of food that is smelly, slimy, mouldy or discoloured.
- Throw out food from a refrigerator if the power has been off and the food is no longer cold to touch (less than 5°C). Throw out the food if you are unsure whether the power has been off more than four hours.
- Once cold or frozen food has warmed or thawed, it should be thrown out.
- Many kitchen appliances such as fridges, freezers, and microwaves may be damaged, even if they seem to be functioning right after the fire. Inspect them thoroughly. They may need to be replaced. Contaminants may accumulate on sensitive electronic circuits, that may cause short-circuiting.
- Carefully check dishes, pots, pans, cutlery and kitchen equipment that might have been damaged or contaminated by the fire.
- Throw away any damaged or cracked items, items made from porous material such as wood, plastic or rubber including wooden chopping boards as they cannot be adequately sanitised.
- Wash cooking utensils and clean cupboards and counters in hot soapy water, then sanitise with 1 tablespoon of chlorine bleach per 2 litres of hot water and rinse with drinking quality water before use.

**Water tanks**

- If you suspect your tank water is contaminated, or the water tastes, looks or smells unusual, do not drink, use for food preparation, brushing teeth or give to animals (pets or livestock) as it may be affected by the following:
  - fire retardants or water from water-bombing, which may have been used around your property. There is a potential that these may have entered your tank.
  - ash or debris on your roof catchment. Disconnect your downpipes prior to a rain event. This will help prevent further debris and ash entering your tank.
- Use bottled water for drinking.
- Boiling water does not remove fire retardants or other chemicals from your water. Fire affected water in your tank can still be used for irrigation and firefighting purposes. Water testing is not necessary.
- If your tank needs to be cleaned, get a professional tank cleaner. Never enter a tank. Tanks are confined spaces and are very dangerous; the risks include loss of consciousness, asphyxiation and death.
- Once the tank has been professionally drained and cleaned, refill with water from a source known to be safe for drinking.

**Emergency water**

- Residents in bushfire affected areas who are without drinking and domestic water supply due to tank contamination can contact South East Water who are providing bushfire aid to tank water users in the affected North East Victoria and East Gippsland regions.
- Eligible permanent residents in the declared bushfire affected areas of East Gippsland and some parts of the Wellington Shire will be provided a tank water flush and top-up of 5,000 litres.
- Anyone seeking emergency water assistance from the bushfire affected areas should contact South East Water on 131 851.

**Septic tanks**

If you have a septic tank, remember it may have been weakened in the fire so do not drive or walk over it. If you suspect your septic tank has been physically damaged, contact a licenced plumber to have it assessed.
Legal assistance
Disaster Legal Help Victoria provides free legal advice, assistance and referrals to people affected by a disaster. If you have been affected by the recent bushfires, they can help with issues such as insurance claims, tenancy disputes, debt and other financial problems.
For assistance, please phone Disaster Legal Help Victoria’s free helpline on 1800 113 432. This phone line is open throughout the year between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Temporary accommodation
Where possible people are being encouraged to arrange their own accommodation with family and friends.
If you need accommodation please call the Bushfires Case Support Program
Call: 1800 560 760 - 8am – 6pm weekdays and 9am – 5pm on weekends
Email: bushfirerecovery@windermere.org.au

For more information:

Supporting children
Like any of us, children can feel overwhelmed and devastated when directly affected by bushfires or from the scenes that emerge afterward. Sometimes, they don’t have ways of understanding what they see and can be particularly vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, stress and sadness.
At the same time, children can also have a natural ability to be resilient and adapt to challenging events.
Here are some signs to look out:
• a child becoming more clingy towards a parent or carer – for example wanting to be held more than usual, wanting to be with parents or carers, asking about fire, seeking reassurance
• changes to sleeping or eating patterns, or both
• the emergence of new physical complaints – such as stomach ache or headache
• changes in mood – such as being more easily irritable, or shutting down
• changes in a child’s behaviour or learning at school
• appearing on edge and frightened – for example, being more easily startled, developing new fears, having nightmares or regression in behaviour.
If you (or one of your child’s carers) notice these or other changes then it is important to ask the child what they are worried about. Talk to them in a way that is open and appropriate to their age. Listen to their questions and fears and show them that you understand.
If you are concerned and need assistance you can get help from your doctor, local community health centre, psychologist, Beyond Blue Tel. 1300 224 636 Parentline Victoria Tel. 13 22 89, Kids Helpline Tel. 1800 551 800, Lifeline Tel.131 114, and NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours 7 days).
What is the Bushfire case support program?

After a bushfire, sometimes people are unsure of what to do next. The Bushfire case support program provides practical support for people who have been affected by the Victorian bushfires.

Case Support Coordinators can help you with:

- discussing your needs and the next steps you could take
- information and support to access services
- completing paperwork
- community information
- financial counselling and assistance with insurance
- advice for business owners
- a small amount of financial support to help with immediate needs.

Support can be provided face to face, over the phone or at a location that suits you.

Who is it for?

People from bushfire impacted areas in East Gippsland and North East Victoria.

How much does this program cost?

This is a free service.

How can I access this program?

To access this program or find out more:

Call: 1800 560 760 - 8am – 6pm weekdays and 9am – 5pm on weekends

Email: bushfirerecovery@windermere.org.au

More information

The Bushfire case support program is funded by the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and the Victorian Government.
January 2020 Update

We are providing an update on services available through our Rural Financial Counselling and Small Business Support Programs for your information and referral of clients experiencing or at risk of financial hardship.

Our Rural Financial Counselling and Small Business Services are free, independent and confidential; able to go to clients’ place of business; staffed by qualified people who understand farming and business.

We can help people affected by drought, low commodity prices, natural disasters, structural adjustment, family farm succession, industry downturns, low equity or tight cash flow, changes in personal circumstances, family accidents or illness.

Our counsellors work with clients to understand their business and assist to improve their financial position by supporting them to explore options, develop and implement an action plan and access relevant eligible programs.

Victorian Bushfires

VFF Disaster Relief  Help or Donate – 1300 882 833
The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is coordinating relief for farmers affected by bushfires in Gippsland and the Upper Murray.

The VFF encourages you to call 1300 882 833 to register if you:
- Need fodder
- Need agistment
- Can donate good quality fodder
- Can transport fodder
- Can take animals on agistment
- Want to make a tax deductible donation to the VFF Disaster Relief Fund

The VFF has secured an agreement with the Victorian Government to facilitate the transport of fodder to affected regions. This includes fuel subsidies for transport of donated fodder. Farmers/transporters must register with VFF within 48 hours of the dispatch/delivery of any fodder to claim the rebate.

The VFF Disaster Relief Fund is assisting in the recovery efforts, including rebuilding fences, access to stock water and emergency fodder requirements.

Report Livestock Injuries:  Agriculture Victoria 1800 226 226
Disaster Recovery Toolkit  For businesses impacted by the recent bushfires, CPA’s award winning Disaster Recovery Toolkit is a valuable resource. Understandably, the immediate concerns remain on community safety, food and shelter. In the weeks and months ahead, it will be the time to focus on supporting and helping communities to rebuild. When the recovery phase commences, this toolkit can assist with the many elements of business recovery.

Further information will be provided regarding fire recovery and assistance in upcoming newsletters.

Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria – North East Programs

*New*  On-farm Drought Resilience Grant Program GMID  The Victorian Government has established this program to assist irrigation farm businesses (including those that have transitioned from irrigation production systems to dryland production since 1 July 2018) in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) to invest in on-farm drought preparedness and to seek business advice. Infrastructure grants of up to $5,000 require a co-contribution however no co-contribution is required for business advice grants. Available until funds are allocated.

*New*  Wangaratta Floods and Storms Concessional Loans  Concessional interest rate loans are now available to eligible primary producers, small business and not-for-profit organisations in the Wangaratta Local Government Area that have been affected by the December 2018 floods and storms event. Applications open to 22/5/2020.

*New*  CWA of Victoria Drought Relief Program GMID  The Victorian Government has established a Household Financial Relief program to provide immediate assistance to farming families affected by drought and dry conditions in the GMID. Payments of up to $3,000 are to assist with meeting urgent household expenses such as residential rates, food, school expenses, rent, household and medical bills.

*New*  St Vincent de Paul Drought Community Support – Strathbogie Shire  Funding is now available for farmers, farm workers and farm suppliers/contractors facing hardship due to drought. It can be used to spend in local communities or to cover urgent bills such as food, petrol and utilities. The $3,000 per household can consist of up to $2,000 in cash and $1,000 in vouchers.

*New*  Farm Employment Exchange  – A new program to be delivered by the VFF to facilitate employment opportunities for farmers and farm workers seeking alternative farm work during to drought. To register your interest please email: drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Rural Skills Connect  – A partnership between Regional Development Victoria and Murray Dairy to re-establish the Rural Skills Connect program to support dairy farming families and farm workers seeking off-farm income to develop new skills and use their existing expertise to gain new employment. Call Agriculture Victoria on 136 186.

Catchment Management Authority Drought Employment Program  This program provides off-farm employment and training for farmers, farm workers and individuals affected by drought and dry seasonal conditions to expand or obtain transferrable employment skills.

Farm Household Allowance (FHA)  Department of Human Services Allowance to help meet basic household needs for families experiencing hardship. Our Rural Financial Counsellors can assist with application.

Dedicated Dairy Support Program  ‘Helping Northern Victorian dairy farmers make the big decision’

The big decision could be to leave the industry, scale back (or up), family succession or maybe transitioning to another agricultural enterprise.
*Update* **On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme**  Australian Government rebates of up to $25,000 (GST exclusive) or 25% of the cost associated with the purchase and installation of on-farm water infrastructure that improves resilience to drought. The scheme is now available for the purchase and installation of emergency water infrastructure for permanent horticultural plantings which may include the costs associated with drilling new horticulture groundwater bores and desilting dams. Available to 30/6/2020.

*Update* **Regional Investment Corporation Concessional Loans**  The Drought and Farm Investment loans are low-interest loans that allow farm businesses to access up to $2 million to improve long-term strength, resilience and profitability with 50% of the debt being retained by the client’s commercial lender:

- The current Drought loan terms have been enhanced to offer **2 years interest free**, 3 years interest only and 5 years principal and interest.
- The interest rate on the Farm investment loan will be reduced from **1st February 2020 to 2.11%**.

**Farm Debt Mediation Scheme**  Under this scheme it is compulsory for banks and other creditors to offer mediation to farmers before commencing debt recovery proceedings on farm mortgages. Early engagement with a Rural Financial Counsellor is advised.

**On-farm Energy**  Grants to assist Victorian farmers improve energy efficiency e.g. equipment or infrastructure that is more efficient or enables generation of own energy. Apply by 31/03/2020.

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**AgBiz Assist Small Business Support**

**AgBiz Assist Small Business Support Program**  With the support of the Victorian Government we are providing free, confidential and independent service to small business owners who are impacted by poor business performance resulting in reduced turnover, low profitability, tight cash flow, unpaid debtors/creditors and difficulty accessing finance.

*Coming soon* **Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Small Business Concessional Drought Loans**  up to $500,000 for businesses that provide goods and services to primary producers i.e. carriers, contractors, machinery suppliers and repairers. 1800 875 675

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**Rural Financial Counselling Victoria - North East**  rfcsvicne.org.au  1300 834 775

**Small Business Support Program**  agbizassist.org.au  1300 032 332

**Counsellors based in Wodonga, Shepparton, Numurkah, Benalla and Seymour**

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**Tax deductible donations to AgBiz Care are channelled directly to rural families in need of support**

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**NSW Southern - Rural Financial Counselling Service**  1800 319 458  farmhub.org.au
NEED TO PREPARE OR REPAIR IN TOUGH TIMES?
We understand that running a small business can be challenging. When the going gets tough, it is often difficult to know how to manage a changing environment.

There are many ways which businesses can manage through tough times and position the business for the future.

Our Small Business Support Specialists have extensive experience with a wide range of skills that can help you navigate through challenging business times.

Call us now to find out how we can help or to make an appointment with one of our experienced Small Business Support Specialists.

HOW TO CONTACT US
P: 1300 032 332
E: info@agbizassist.org.au
W: www.agbizassist.org.au

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

Small Business Financial Counselling is funded by the Victorian Government

NEW PROGRAM

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAM

1300 032 332
THE SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAM PROVIDES

Free, independent and confidential assistance
Flexible – appointments can be at your business or other suitable location or you can come to our offices

ELIGIBILITY
Must have a registered Australian Business Number (ABN)
Currently operating a small business
Based in North East Victoria or the Goulburn Valley

WHO IS THIS SERVICE FOR?

Businesses impacted by poor business performance resulting in reduced turnover, low profitability, tight cash flow, unpaid debtors/creditors and difficulty accessing finance.

Businesses affected by natural disasters, economic downturn, market disruptions, changes in personal circumstances, family accidents or illness

We can work with businesses operating in the following areas:

- Campaspe
- Greater Shepparton
- Strathbogie
- Moira
- Benalla
- Wangaratta
- Indigo
- Wodonga
- Alpine
- Towong

CALL US TO DISCUSS ELIGIBILITY

SERVICES PROVIDED

- Understanding your financial position and the viability of your business
- Identifying options for business improvement
- Developing a plan to implement your chosen options and assistance in the implementation
- Providing information to assist you to make decisions relating to your business
- Support to businesses working with stakeholders such as lenders and creditors, including assistance with applications, and referrals to professional service providers where required
AusNet Services is your electricity delivery service, we own and operate the electricity network that supplies power to you.

Our thoughts are with the people and families impacted by the devastation of the Victorian fires. We know that some of our customers are still without power and we are working tirelessly to get them back on as soon as possible.

**YOUR SAFETY**

If you’re returning to your property in a bushfire impacted area, please take extreme care and do not approach damaged or fallen powerlines as they can cause severe injury or death.

Our crews are working around the clock to restore power and replace damaged infrastructure where possible. Access to fire areas has been limited due to safety issues.

Please seek the advice of police and other emergency services on whether it is safe to return to your property.

**CUSTOMER BUSHFIRE SUPPORT LINE**

We’ve set up a Customer Bushfire Support line for our customers affected by the bushfires across the state.

Please call 1300 561 171 from 8am to 8pm Monday to Sunday AEDT.

If you’re experiencing a power fault or emergency and need help now, please call our 24-hour Faults and Emergencies line on 131 799.

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

For the most up to date information on outages in bushfire affected AusNet Services areas go to www.outagetracker.com.au

Keep an eye out on AusNet Services’ Facebook page for community updates.

For general information about bushfire affected areas go to www.emergencies.vic.gov.au/respond
GETTING YOUR POWER BACK ON

Our crews are starting to reconnect power in bushfire affected areas and we’ll be working street by street to assess the damage and commence restoration activities. Many areas are badly damaged and we still can’t access them, because they are not safe. This may mean we haven’t yet been able to restore your power.

Where possible, we’ll connect you as soon as electricity supply is restored to your area. There may have been some damage to your property. If we can’t get your power back on, we’ll leave a letter at your property advising of that. You’ll need to contact a Registered Electrical Contractor (REC)* before the electricity connection can be made.

If your property has been damaged/destroyed and you want to have a temporary electricity supply connected to your property, to power a caravan for example, please contact an REC to arrange this.

Once your REC has completed works on your property, they will call the retailer to arrange the connection. The REC will supply the retailer an Electrical Works Request (EWR) and a Certificate of Electrical Safety (CES) for connection to be made.

If you don’t know who your retailer is please call the Customer Bushfire Support line on 1300 561 171, Monday to Sunday 8am to 8pm AEDT, and we’ll help.

If you no longer want power to your property, e.g. completely disconnected due to fire damage, please call the Customer Bushfire Support line.

*If you have trouble contacting a REC, have questions regarding installation hazards or the use of generators, please contact the National Electrical and Communications Association on 03 9645 5533.

SERVICE STANDARDS

You may be entitled to a Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) payment from us if we do not meet service standards for supply restoration or reliability.

If you have been off supply for more than 20 hours you could be entitled to a GSL payment. More information on GSL’s can be found here: www.ausnetservices.com.au/Residential/Electricity/Service-Standards

If you have experienced loss or damage as a result of the bushfires, you should first contact your insurer.

For enquiries or assistance with making a claim, call the Customer Bushfire Support line on 1300 561 171, Monday to Sunday 8am to 8pm AEDT.
FAQs
For communities affected by the Victorian bushfires

What needs to happen to get the power back on in my community?
Before we can restore power to communities impacted by the bushfires, we need safe access to assess the damage. Access times will vary depending on local conditions. Where possible, we have been flying our helicopters over these areas to assess our network before we gain access by roads.

Once access is granted, we complete our assessment, clear unsafe vegetation (that poses a risk to crews or the network), and commence work on repairing or replacing damaged poles and wires. It is important to note that damage may not always be visible and all of our networks need inspecting before we can restore power. Where communities face lengthy outages, we try to organise large generators which power multiple homes and businesses to restore supply while any repairs are undertaken.

Our works focus primarily on safely restoring electricity supply to the main feeder (i.e., the backbone) of the network which will restore power to most customers. We then work on the smaller off-shoots from this feeder. Sometimes restoring power to these smaller sections can take a while. This process explains why you might have power, but your neighbour does not; you may be receiving power from a different line or section of the network.

What happens if there is damage to my electricity connection/premise?
If damage to your electricity connection or installation has been identified, we need to remove the main service fuse for the safety of you and the community. Operating damaged equipment may cause further damage or serious injury. We will leave a letter at properties we’ve identified with damaged connections to advise you of this.

If you receive one of these letters, we recommend that you contact a Registered Electrical Contractor (REC) to check the electrical integrity of your connection and, if required, carry out repair works before power can be safely turned on. The REC must provide you with a Certificate of Electrical Safety (COES) following assessment and repair of any problem.

Further information on REC requirements and COES is on the Energy Safe Victoria website: esv.vic.gov.au

Once checks and any repairs have been completed, the REC should call us on our dedicated Customer Bushfire Support line on 1300 561 171 Monday to Sunday 8am to 8pm AEDT or our Faults Line on 131 799 outside of these hours, to arrange for your power to be turned back on. Restoration of bushfire impacted communities is our priority.

Are you concerned about yours or your communities electrical safety?

Whom should I call to arrange the restoration of my electricity supply?
If there is no fire damage to your premises and repair and replacement works to the network are complete, please call our Faults Line on 131 799, and we will arrange a fault crew to attend to your property to restore your power.

Do not approach damaged or fallen powerlines as they may be live. If you’re experiencing a power fault or emergency or see a powerline down please call our 24-hour Faults and Emergencies line on 131 799.
FAQs - for communities affected by the Victorian bushfires

What do I do if I have solar panels?
If you have solar panels and you live in a town that is currently being supplied by one of our generators, you may be asked to switch off your solar. We’re looking at each community where we have placed a generator to determine if any solar systems need to be switched off temporarily. If we find systems which need to switch off temporarily, we will reach out to these customers individually. Customers in communities that are not being supplied by a generator can run their systems as normal.

How do generators and solar systems interact?
We’ve installed temporary diesel generators in some communities until we can access fire impacted areas to inspect, and if required, repair our network. These generators aren’t designed to take on excess power from other generators (including solar systems). That means the generator supplying power to the town may trip and interrupt supply for everyone linked to the generator.

For this reason, we’re looking at which solar systems will need to be switched off temporarily. We will get in contact with you if this is required.

Can I use my generator?
For information on the safe use of a private generator during a power outage, Energy Safe Victoria have published a ‘bushfire safety advice’ page which includes important information on generators.


Can I access Government relief funding?
If you have been adversely affected by the bushfires in Victoria, visit the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment by visiting this website:

You can also contact the Department of Health & Human Services on 189 22 66.

Before digging on your property
It is very important you check for any underground infrastructure to avoid accidents or damage.

To do this, please contact the ‘Dial before you dig’.

Phone number: 1100
Website: www.1100.com.au

More information
Can’t find what you are looking for – or have more questions? Please call the Customer Bushfire Support line on 1300 561 171, Monday to Sunday 08:00 am to 08:00 pm (AEDT) and we will do our best to assist you.
We understand that farmers and farm businesses sometimes need a helping hand.

We know that good businesses can experience financial difficulties despite their best efforts and through issues beyond their control.

How to contact us:
Mail: PO Box 1619 Wodonga Vic 3689
Phone: 1300 834 775
Fax: (02) 6100 6123
Web: www.rfcsvicne.org.au
Email: info@rfcsvicne.org.au

Call 1300 834 775 to find out what assistance we may be able to provide you, or make an appointment with one of our experienced Rural Financial Counsellors

AgBiz Assist Ltd t/as Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria-North East

Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria-North East

- Free independent and confidential service
- Help for farm business and related small businesses

AgBiz Assist Ltd t/as Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria-North East is supported by the Australian and Victorian Governments
What we do

Rural Financial Counselling Services are:

- Free independent and confidential
- For primary producers of livestock, milk, honey, fruit, crops, wool, meat, vegetables, eggs, fish, plants, trees and logs
- For small business who mainly support primary production such as: fencing, shearing sheep, controlling weeds or agricultural pests, manage stock, plant crops, etc.
- To assist farm or small agribusinesses that are experiencing or at risk of financial hardship
- Able to come to your place of business, at a suitable location, or you can come and see us
- Staffed by qualified people who understand farming and business - minimum qualification is Diploma of Rural Financial Counselling
- Our RFC’s are qualified and have years of experience in assisting farming businesses

Help for rural businesses

Affected by:

- Drought / water issues
- Low commodity prices
- Natural disasters
- Structural adjustment
- Industry downturns
- Low equity / tight cash flow
- Difficulties with lenders or access to finance
- Unpaid creditors / debtors
- Market disruptions
- Changes in personal circumstances
- Farm accidents or illnesses
- Share farming / succession agreements / contracts

How can we support your business:

- Understand your financial position and the viability of your enterprise
- Identify options to improve your financial position
- Develop a plan to implement your chosen options and implement that plan
- By providing information to assist farmers to make decisions relating to their enterprises
- By assisting farmers to deal (whether through meetings or otherwise) with lending institutions in relation to
  - Applications for loans and finance restructure and
  - Processes relating to farm debt mediation
- By providing information, referrals and support to farmers to access government or industry grants / programs
- By assisting farmers to identify the need for advice from and to prepare for meetings with professional service providers

Call 1300 834 775
2020 Victorian Bushfire Recovery Transport Support Program

Program Guidelines

1. Purpose

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have established the 2020 Victorian Fire Recovery Transport Support Program under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018 to provide financial assistance to primary producers that were affected by the bushfires which occurred in December 2019/January 2020 (bushfire event).

The support is available to bushfire affected primary producers in the local government areas of Ararat, Alpine, Ballarat, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Indigo, Mansfield, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Southern Grampians, Towong, Wangaratta, Wellington and Wodonga.

The transport support aims to assist primary producers (including apiarists) affected by the bushfire event to meet immediate animal welfare and safety needs and to recover from the effects of the bushfire event.

2. Program details

A transport subsidy of up to 50 per cent of the total eligible transport costs incurred to a maximum (or combined total – where multiple trips apply) of $15,000 (GST exclusive) per farm business in 2019-20.

Applicants can apply for a combination of eligible transport activities to a total of no more than $15,000 (GST exclusive).

A maximum distance of 1,500 kilometres applies per movement, except for the movement of water for which the maximum distance per movement is 500 kilometres. If stock or fodder is moved a distance in excess of 1,500 kilometres, the subsidy is paid on 1,500 km.

Eligible primary producers (including apiarists) can claim the support for eligible transport costs that directly address immediate animal welfare and safety needs, including:

- Transport of emergency fodder for stock to fire-affected properties
- Transport of stock to agistment including returning stock
- Transport of stock to sale or slaughter
- Transport of emergency stock drinking water.

When transporting livestock, owners must comply with the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock and the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986. Stock must not be transported that are unfit for travel except under veterinary advice and supervision. If livestock owners need to transport livestock affected by fire they should
Applicants cannot claim subsidies on transport activities that are funded through other natural disaster assistance such as the Clean-Up and Restoration Grants.

3. Eligible activities

**Transporting of emergency fodder for stock to fire-affected properties**

- The subsidy is available for transportation of emergency fodder from the point of purchase of emergency fodder to the affected property and applies only to the loaded portion of the journey.
  - The movement of fodder must be to a landholder’s property, a travelling stock reserve or leased/agisted property.
- Fodder must only be obtained for the feeding of bushfire-affected stock. The amount purchased per order must only be for a maximum three (3) month feed period for the stock on hand, and not for long term storage purposes.
- No subsidy will be paid on the transport of fodder weighing less than 500 kilograms.
  - Loads below 500 kilograms are not eligible for a subsidy under this program.

**Transporting of stock to agistment (including returning stock)**

- The subsidy is available for the forward and return journeys from the fire-affected property to the location of agistment and applies only to the loaded portion of the journey.
  - The stockowner must have no prior arrangement, agreement or contract to sell or otherwise dispose of the stock to the owner of the agistment property prior to the bushfire event.
  - Subsidy is available for the forward and return journeys.
- The minimum load must be equivalent to 20 dry sheep equivalents (DSE). Loads of less than 20 DSE will be assessed on a case by case basis (e.g. transporting bulls or bees).
- The movement of stock to or from agistment must occur between the bushfire event and up to 30 June 2020.
- If the owner is forced to move stock off the agistment property due to extreme circumstances (or a shortage of feed for bees), additional claims will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Transporting of stock to sale or slaughter**

- The subsidy is available for the forward journeys form the fire-affected property to the location of sale or slaughter and applies only to the loaded portion of the journey.
  - The stockowner must have no prior arrangement, agreement or contract to sell or otherwise dispose of the stock to the owner of the agistment property prior to the bushfire event.
- The movement of stock to sale or slaughter must occur between the bushfire event and up to 30 June 2020.
- The minimum load must be equivalent to 20 dry sheep equivalents (DSE). Loads of less than 20 DSE will be assessed on a case by case basis (e.g. transporting bulls or bees).

**Transporting of emergency stock drinking water**

- The subsidy is available for emergency stock water cartage, from the nearest practicable source to the fire affected property.
Water cartage to stock on a travelling stock reserve or agistment property is also eligible for subsidy.

- The minimum load is 500 litres per transportation.
- The movement of emergency stock drinking water must occur between the bushfire event and up to 30 June 2020.
- Transport subsidies will not be paid for the transport of water for irrigation, domestic water usage or fixed charges related to water.

4. Eligibility criteria
To be eligible for assistance the primary producer must:

- have suffered the direct impact of the bushfires that commenced December 2019/January 2020
- be located in the local government areas of Ararat, Alpine, Ballarat, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Indigo, Mansfield, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Southern Grampians, Towong, Wangaratta, Wellington and Wodonga have a right or interest in the land property affected by the bushfires (ownership or lease)
- be classified as a primary producer (refer to definitions)
- be responsible for the cost of transport
- have re-established or intend to re-establish the primary production enterprise in the same area.

Primary producers who have applied for Clean-Up and Restoration Grants are not precluded from eligibility, but applicants cannot claim subsidies on transport activities that are funded through the Clean-Up and Restoration Grants.

In the case of leased land, only one grant may be paid to the livestock owner/manager responsible for watering stock. Under these circumstances a joint application by the owner and the lessee is to be lodged.

Subsidies are not intended to replace the need for insurance or to provide compensation for loss of revenue.

- Any transport that has been covered by an insurance claim are not eligible for a subsidy.
- Any transport that is subsequently covered by an insurance claim is to be repaid.

Any applicant found to have provided information of a fraudulent nature may be liable to prosecution and will be required to repay the subsidy.

The transport support is being delivered by Rural Finance in line with the joint State and Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Apiarists and primary production related to bees

Eligible apiarists are eligible for a transport subsidy under all streams of transportation.

Applicants must sign a statutory declaration that the movement of beehives is abnormal to their usual management practices and is entirely as a result of the bushfire event.

Where the bushfire affected site is on:

- private land, a statement from the property owner that the land is bushfire affected must accompany each claim
• public land, a copy of the bee site licence must accompany each claim.

If the movement is undertaken by the owner for the purpose of buying bee food, receipts for the purchase of bee food are to be provided with the claim.

• Honey producers must obtain bee foods from the nearest practicable source to the bees.
• For bee food the movement may be from the location where purchased to the new site where the bees are located.

5. Definitions

Primary Producer
An eligible primary producer is one who:
• is registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and has an ABN,
• has a right or interest in the land for the purpose of primary production,
• contributes a significant part of his/her labour and capital to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, derives more than 51 per cent of his/her individual income from the farming enterprise and therefore is running a bona-fide commercial scale operation. As a guide it is anticipated that farm turnover would exceed $50,000 per annum under normal business conditions.

Normal Business Conditions
Normal business conditions refers to a year with no adverse climatic conditions (drought/flood/fire) in which average yields/productivity is achieved. Normal year income is based on this productivity and long term achievable community prices.

Emergency fodder
Emergency fodder refers to the purchase of fodder/feed for livestock following a natural disaster (bushfires) where there is an immediate need to acquire feed for livestock directly related to the natural disaster. This may be due to the destruction of pastures or on-farm fodder reserves.

Fodder for livestock is taken to mean any crop grown for the purpose of feeding livestock (including pasture, hay, lucerne and silage). Fodder for bees is taken to mean mature flowering bushland and trees, sugar and pollen protein replacement.

Emergency fodder is different to purchases of fodder due to dry conditions or drought.

Emergency stock drinking water
Emergency stock drinking water refers to the cartage of water for livestock following a natural disaster (bushfires) where there is an immediate need to acquire drinking water for livestock directly related to the natural disaster. This may be due to destruction of, or the inability to access, on-farm water resources (groundwater, bores and dams).

Emergency stock drinking water is different to water cartage due to dry conditions or drought.

6. Application and payment process
To apply for the subsidy, a Victorian Bushfires 2019/2020 Transport Support Program Primary Producer – Application form will need to be completed and lodged.

The subsidy will be paid for road transport at a rate of 50 per cent of the total amount paid to the carrier or costs for an owner driver (for owner driver provisions, see below).
Costs for transportation must be paid prior to lodging a claim application.

The application must be for movements within the six months following the bushfire events.

The application must be accompanied with the following supporting documentation:

- Evidence (photographs or other) of fire damage.
- Evidence of the Local Government Area (Shire) in which you own, operate, share or lease your primary production businesses.
  - Lease documentation
  - Rates notice
  - Share-farming contract
  - Statement from the property owner that the land is bushfire affected (for bee sites on private land).
- Proof of payment of relevant tax invoices of completed transport activities.

Applications will be assessed in order of receipt against the eligibility criteria.

Applications must be submitted by 31 July 2020.

GST is excluded from any subsidy payment.

Payments are made by direct credit to the applicant’s nominated bank account.

Completed form and attachments are to be forwarded to:

Rural Finance
PO Box 1313
Bendigo Central 3552 or governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

Owner driver provisions

In the case of an owner/driver:

- payment will be provided in line with the kilometre rate table below
- the following evidence must be provided:
  - a copy of the registration certificate for the vehicle used for transport,
  - evidence that the vehicle is registered as a primary production vehicle for the fire-affected property
  - evidence that the owner/driver is associated with farm business
- copy of the log book entries for the vehicle used (claims under 100 kilometres do not require a log book).

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### 7. Further information

Further information can be obtained via:

Ph: 1800 260 425

Email: [governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au](mailto:governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au)

Fax: (03) 5441 8901

Web: [ruralfinance.com.au](http://ruralfinance.com.au)

Postal address: GPO BOX 1313, Bendigo Central, Victoria 3552

Further financial support to assist primary producers to recover from bushfire may be available through a Clean-Up and Restoration Grant.
What is the Victorian Bushfire Recovery Transport Support program?

The Victorian Bushfire Recovery Transport Support program covers up to 50 per cent of the total freight costs to a maximum of $15,000 (excluding GST) per farm business. Applicants can apply for a combination of the following transport activities, transport of:

- emergency fodder for stock to fire-affected properties
- stock to agistment including returning stock
- stock to sale or slaughter
- emergency stock drinking water.

The Victorian Bushfire Transport Support program is a Category B measure under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements which aims to assist farmers.

The program is providing financial assistance to farmers affected by bushfires to meet immediate animal welfare and safety needs.

How much support is available?

Eligible farmers can apply for a 50 per cent subsidy of the total freight costs to a maximum of $15,000 (excluding GST).

Who is eligible for transport support?

Producers (including apiarists) affected by bushfires in the following 15 local government areas will be eligible for emergency transport:

- Ararat
- Alpine
- Ballarat
- East Gippsland
- Glenelg
- Golden Plains
- Indigo
- Mansfield
- Northern Grampians
- Pyrenees
- Southern Grampians
- Towong
- Wangaratta
- Wellington
- Wodonga.

To be eligible for assistance the farmer must:

- have suffered a direct impact of the bushfires that commenced in December 2019-
- be located in an eligible local government area
- be a primary producer (this includes apiarists) who:
  - is registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and has an ABN
contributes a significant part of his/her labour and capital to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, derives more than 51 per cent of his/her individual income from the farming enterprise.

How far am I able to move my stock, fodder or water?

A maximum distance of 1,500 km applies per movement of stock and fodder.

A maximum distance of 500 km applies per movement of water.

The subsidy only applies to the loaded portion of the journey.

What is in the minimum load?

The minimum load for stock is equivalent to 20 dry sheep equivalents. Loads of less than 20 dry sheep equivalents will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (e.g. transporting bulls or bees).

The minimum load for water and fodder is 500 kg.

Are apiarists eligible for transport support?

Eligible apiarists are eligible for a transport subsidy under all streams of transportation.

Applicants must sign a statutory declaration that the movement of beehives is abnormal to their usual management practices and is entirely as a result of the bushfire event.

Where the bushfire affected site is on:

- private land, a statement from the property owner that the land is bushfire affected must accompany each claim
- public land, a copy of the bee site licence must accompany each claim.

If the movement is undertaken by the owner for the purpose of buying bee food, receipts for the purchase of bee food are to be provided with the application.

I’ve claimed my transport on insurance or another source, can I also apply for the transport support?

Transport support is not available for transport costs covered by other sources, such as insurance or other grants.

Can I receive transport support for multiple movements of stock, emergency fodder or emergency water?

Yes. Farmers can apply for a 50 per cent subsidy for a combination of transport activities under this program up to a maximum of $15,000 (GST exclusive).

Do I need to pay for the transport upfront?

Yes. Costs for transportation must be paid prior to lodging a claim application. The subsidy will be a reimbursement.

I transport fodder with my own vehicle, can I apply for transport support?

Yes. In the case of an owner/driver, payment will be provided on a dollar amount per kilometre based on your vehicle’s mass.
For details of the kilometre rate and minimum loads, contact Rural Finance on 1800 260 425.

**My property is affected by drought, can I apply for the transport support?**

Farmers in East Gippsland and Wellington are eligible for a range of drought and dry season conditions support.

Where a farmer in East Gippsland and Wellington is also affected by bushfires, they can access both drought and dry season conditions support and bushfire recovery support, which includes transport support.

Where a farmer in East Gippsland and Wellington is not affected by bushfires, they are not eligible for bushfire support but can still access a range of immediate support and support to build resilience.

For further information on drought support available, contact the department’s customer contact centre on: 136 186 or email drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au

**How do I apply for transport support?**

To apply for the subsidy, a Victorian Bushfires 2019/2020 Transport Support Program Primary Producer – Application form will need to be completed and lodged via Rural Finance.

**When can I apply for transport support?**

Applications for transport support are available now and will remain open for six months.

Purchases must be made before 30 June 2020.

Applications must be submitted by 31 July 2020.

**How can I find more information?**

For further information on transport support, contact Rural Finance:

Ph: 1800 260 425

Email: governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

Fax: (03) 5441 8901

Web: ruralfinance.com.au

Postal address: GPO BOX 1313, Bendigo Central, Victoria 3552
# VICTORIAN BUSHFIRE 2019/2020
## TRANSPORT SUPPORT PROGRAM
### PRIMARY PRODUCER

Prior to completing this form, please refer to the Victorian Bushfires Transport Support Guidelines at ruralfinance.com.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. APPLICANTS (please give details of all owners, partners, shareholders, lessee or sharefarmers)</th>
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Have you applied for a Victorian Bushfire Clean-Up and Restoration Grant 2020?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

*If yes, please fill in your ABN and contact details below, and skip to section 3.*

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<tr>
<th>Trading Name (if applicable)</th>
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| ABN: |
| ____ |

| Principal Applicant: |
| ____ |

| Farm Address: |
| ____ |

| Postal Address: |
| ____ |

| Telephone No: | Mobile: | Email: |
| ____ | ____ | ____ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. FARM PROPERTY</th>
<th>Please describe details of your farm operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affected Property Address:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Affected Property Owner:** |
| ____ |

| Property Size (ha): | (include all properties farmed) |
| ____ |

| Affected Area (ha): | (approximately) |
| ____ |

| Primary Industry: |
| ____ |

| Shire: |
| ____ |

| Normal Scale of Operation: (e.g. 2,000 sheep, 150ha barley): |
| ____ |

| Specify your expected farm turn over (gross income) under normal seasonal conditions: | $ pa |
| ____ |

| Nominate the source and amount of any other income: | Source: |
| ____ | ____ |

| Normally, is the gross income from your farm your primary source of income (more than 51%)? |
| ____ |

| Normally, is the majority of your labour and capital devoted to the farm? |
| ____ |

| Has your farming enterprise suffered direct damage as a result of the Victorian Bushfires? |
| ____ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. DETAILS OF TRANSPORT SUBSIDY CLAIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants can apply for a combination of transport activities undertaken before 30 June 2020. The program will cover up to 50 per cent of total transport costs, to a maximum of $15,000 (excluding GST) per farm business. Is this claim for:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Transport of emergency fodder for stock to fire-affected properties |
| ____ |

| Transport of stock to agistment (including returning stock), sale or slaughter |
| ____ |

| Transport of stock drinking water. |
| ____ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. TYPE OF TRANSPORT SUBSIDY CLAIM:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you applying for claims for: (please tick all that apply)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ☐ Owner Driver | Gross Vehicle Mass: | Total Kilometres Travelled: |
| ____ | ____ | ____ |

*(Please submit a copy of vehicle registration certificate and copy of log book entries.)*

| ☐ Carrier | Carrier Business Name: | Total Amount Paid: |
| ____ | ____ | ____ |

*(Please submit proof of payment of relevant tax invoices of completed transport activities.)*
### 5. INSURANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you Insured?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are your transport claims covered by insurance?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Insurance Company Name: ________________

Phone: ____________________

### 6. CHECKLIST

**Please attach ALL of the following mandatory items:**

- Proof of payment of relevant tax invoices of completed transport activities
- Photographs of the damage caused or other supporting documents
- Rate Notice to show ownership of affected property
- Lease or share farm Agreement (if applicable)

**If applying as an Owner/Driver:**

Copy of Registration Certificate and Log Book entries for the vehicle used for transport

### 7. PAYMENT DETAILS

**Please provide your bank account details for the subsidy payment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Name in full (as it appears on your statement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Bank & Branch ____________________

BSB: ____________________

Account No: ____________________

### 8. HOW TO APPLY:

Please submit your completed application including supporting documents to Rural Finance by 31 July 2020 to:

**Post:** Rural Finance, PO Box 1313, Bendigo Central 3552

**Email:** governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

**Fax:** 5441 8901

### 9. PRIVACY CONSENT

I/We authorise Rural Finance a division of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd ABN 11 068 049 178 (“Rural Finance”), for the purposes specified in Rural Finance’s Privacy Statement, to obtain from and/or disclose to my/our accountant and other advisors, credit providers, insurers, rating authorities, government agencies providing me/us with support including Centrelink and other debtors, creditors, authorities and institutions named in data supplied to or otherwise obtained by Rural Finance in connection with this Application, any consumer or commercial information about my/our expenditure and my/our business including my/our assets, liabilities, income and/or expenditure.

I/We acknowledge that:-
- Rural Finance’s Privacy Statement is available on its website and at its offices;
- I/We can gain access to personal information (as defined in the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)) which Rural Finance holds about me/us in certain circumstances specified by legislation. 
- I/We acknowledge that failing to provide some or all of the information which Rural Finance requests about me/us may result in this Application not being processed or approved.

### 10. DECLARATION AND AGREEMENTS

- I/We declare that I/We own/operate a farming business as defined by the Australian Tax Office.
- I/We declare that my/our farming business has suffered financial loss as a result of physical damage from the specified December 2019-January 2020 Victorian bushfire event
- I/We declare that the grant will be used for the purpose of overcoming the immediate effects of the bushfire and to assist the re-establishment of my/our business.
- I/We declare that my/our claim for damage occurred on the date specified.
- I/We agree to supply receipts for expenditure on request.
- I/We hereby authorise persons described in the Privacy Consent to supply Rural Finance with any further information it may require.
- I/We appoint the Principal Applicant as my/our agent for all purposes associated with the Application. Rural Finance will be entitled to rely on this authority in its dealings with the Principal Applicant and in processing the Application.
- I/We agree to repay the grant in the event of receiving proceeds from my/our insurance for the same losses for which the grant is made.

### 11. CONSENT AND SIGNED DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL APPLICANT ON BEHALF OF ALL APPLICANTS

Disaster and Recovery Grants may result in financial, taxation, legal or other impacts. Applicants are advised to seek independent legal advice regarding these impacts. Applicants can apply for a combination of eligible transport activities to a total of no more than $15,000 (GST exclusive) and cannot claim subsidies on transport activities that are funded through the Clean-Up and Recovery Grants.

**Please tick** I declare that this application complies with the Transport Support Program guidelines, and I make this declaration on behalf of all applicants with the understanding that any applicant found to have provided information of a fraudulent nature may be liable to prosecution and will be required to repay the subsidy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name: ____________________</th>
<th>Signature: ____________________</th>
<th>Date: ____________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>