

Upper Murray Community Recovery

Upper Murray Weekly Recovery Update - 14 May 2020
www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery

Bushfire Rates Relief Package.

Towong Shire Council has received \$3.2M from Bushfire Recovery Victoria through the Victorian Government's Council Assistance Fund. The funding will support our communities in the wake of the Upper Murray 2020 Bushfires. The funds will be used by Council to credit part of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 rates and business registration fees, as well as fees related to rebuilding of private assets in fire-affected areas.

The relief is intended to help alleviate some of the financial hardship experienced by residents and businesses who have been impacted by the bushfires.

In determining the allocation of rate relief, Council has carefully considered the varying levels of impact resulting from the fires; from direct and severely impacted properties and lives, through to indirect social and economic impacts.

Council is confident the Package will go a little way towards easing the financial pressures for Towong Shire residents and businesses.

Ratepayers will receive their rate instalment notices this month, where Rate Relief credits will be automatically applied and shown on the notice.

Full details available at www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfireraterelief

1. Relief for Residents

Ratepayer accounts will be automatically credited based on the classifications below and this will be reflected on individual rate notices.

All credited amounts will be the equivalent of rates and fees in the 2019/20 Financial Year.

Tier 1: Severe Direct Impact Loss of Residence and/or Infrastructure (burnt)

Automatic once-off credit of rates equivalent to four (4) instalments.

Tier 2: Direct Impact Properties within the Fire Zone (burnt)

Automatic once-off credit of rates equivalent to three (3) instalments.

Tier 3: Indirectly Impacted Properties in the Upper Murray

Upper Murray properties that are not included in Tier 1 and 2 will receive a once-off credit of \$350.

Tier 4: Indirectly Impacted All Properties in Towong Shire

No rate increase will be applied for the 2020/21 Financial Year. Council will not be passing on the approved 5.55% rate increase to ratepayers in the 2020/21 Financial Year, thereby providing relief for all ratepayers.

Three sets of data have been used to develop the Tiers of impact and support:

- Mapping of the Fire Impact Zone by DELWP
- Certified Valuations (Post Bushfire) by Valuer-General Victoria
- Property Impact Assessments

Recovery Contacts

- **Towong Shire Council Recovery Helpline:** 1800 518 222 or email recovery@towong.vic.gov.au
- **Bushfire Recovery Victoria - Case Support Coordinators:** 1800 560 760 or email connect@brv.vic.gov.au
- **Register for the Bushfire Clean-Up Program:** 1800 560 760 or visit vic.gov.au/bushfire-clean-up-program
- **Resources and Updates:** Visit www.towong.vic.gov.au/bushfirerecovery or www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery-victoria

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While some of our residents and businesses in the Upper Murray continue to rebuild their lives, the last thing they need to worry about is paying their Council rates and fees. We hope the Relief Package alleviates that immediate concern.

Council also recognises that it is not just those in the direct impact zone who need a hand. Our entire Shire has been impacted and the package provides some relief for all ratepayers.

David Wortmann

Cr David Wortmann, Mayor

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2. Relief for Businesses

Business Rates

Automatic once-off credit of rates equivalent to four (4) instalments.

Business Registration Fees

Businesses that are classed as Food, Accommodation and Health Act Premises, will have their business registration renewal fees waived throughout 2020 and 2021. New businesses will also not pay a registration fee. While the fees are waived, Businesses do still need to renew their registration.

3. Support for Rebuilding and Development

While permits are still required, all Building, Planning and Septic Tank Permit fees will be waived in bushfire-affected areas throughout 2020 and 2021.

Further Support or Queries

If residents believe the extent of damage their property has sustained has been recorded incorrectly, please contact Council's Property and Rates Team on 02 6071 5100.

Residents who are continuing to face financial hardship are encouraged to contact Council's Property and Rates Team to discuss alternative arrangements, including interest free deferment of rates and instalment plans.

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