



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Office of the Premier

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BUSHFIRE APPEAL FUNDS TO HELP COMMUNITIES REBUILD

More than \$130 million in donations to the Bushfire Appeal Fund will be distributed to people whose houses were destroyed or partially destroyed by this year's devastating bushfires, the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund Advisory Panel Chair John Landy and the Premier John Brumby announced today.

Mr Landy said all homeowners whose principal place of residence was destroyed by the bushfires would receive a Rebuilding and Recovery Grant of \$50,000. This consists of \$35,000 for rebuilding and \$15,000 to replace contents.

Tenants whose principal place of residence was destroyed by the bushfires will receive a \$15,000 payment for contents lost or damaged.

Mr Landy said people whose homes were partially destroyed by the bushfires and who will need to relocate during rebuilding will receive a payment of \$15,000 for costs associated with repairs and rebuilding.

"These universal payments for all principal places of residence could come to a total of \$130 million," Mr Landy said.

A further, more limited, needs-based payment will also be made available to some homeowners whose principal place of residence was destroyed or partially destroyed by the fires.

Mr Landy said the needs-based payment was being further considered by the Panel and would be assessed on criteria which could include:

- the size of the household;
- special family needs that may entail additional building costs;
- limitations on a household's capacity to pay, such as reduced earning capacity as a result of the bushfires; and
- a household's lack of funds, including no or partial insurance.

Full details of the needs-based payment are being considered and will be announced shortly. The Department of Human services will assess eligibility for grants.

Mr Brumby said the Victorian Government would work with the banking industry to ensure compliance with the existing requirements for anybody with a mortgage to maintain appropriate insurance cover on their home.

"Victorians and people from around Australia and around the world have donated generously to the Bushfire Appeal Fund. I congratulate John Landy and his panel for settling on payments that reflect the generosity and compassion in which funds were donated," Mr Brumby said.

"The State and Commonwealth Governments have pledged to stand by communities affected by the bushfires and that we would rebuild those communities. These payments will be crucial to rebuilding bushfire affected communities."

Mr Landy said the Rebuilding and Recovery payment would help to meet initial rebuilding costs, with additional funds to be allocated on a needs basis.

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“This funding will provide assistance to survivors of the bushfires to rebuild not only their homes but their communities and their lives,” Mr Landy said.

“Individuals and families whose homes were destroyed have endured loss and hardship and will incur significant costs.”

Mr Landy said the Rebuilding and Recovery Grants made available through the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund would make a significant contribution to help them build new, safer homes.

“Donations that go towards making homes safer will leave an important legacy,” Mr Landy said.

Mr Landy said the unprecedented generosity of Australians, who had donated through the Australian Red Cross, had enabled the Fund to provide assistance to those whose homes had been destroyed or significantly damaged.

“Everyone who has donated to the appeal through the Australian Red Cross can be assured their donations are going to people who need it most when they need it most,” Mr Landy said.

“The Victorian Government is paying all administration costs so that every cent donated goes to the people and communities affected by this disaster.”

Today’s announcement brings to more than \$180 million the total allocated from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund.

People can receive further information and register by calling the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund 1800 180 213.