

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY GRANTS
Collated by Tourism Alliance
Current as of 17/01/07

RATE-RELIEF

Purpose: To help tourism businesses in the region manage cash flow pressures following bushfires.

Grant: Rate-relief from local Council

Eligibility: Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City and Wellington Shire are offering rate relief to tourism operators directly affected by the bushfires

Application: Apply as part of Local Governments' Financial Hardship Policies

Contact: Local Government

Baw Baw Shire 5624 2475

East Gippsland Shire 5153 9500

Latrobe City 1300 367 700

Wellington Shire 1300 137 218

PERSONAL HARDSHIP GRANT

Purpose: For immediate assistance to individuals unable to access their principle place of residence either through damages or loss of property.

Grant: Up to \$360 per adult, and \$180 per child, to a total of \$900 per household paid by cheque. The grant provides for temporary accommodation, clothing, food, personal requisites and one-off transport costs.

Eligibility: The grant is 'needs based', is not means tested and is not affected by the insurance status of the applicant.

Application: Must undertake an assessment interview with an assessment officer from the Department of Human Services. Emergency Grant assessments must take place within seven days after the emergency event (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

Contact: Department of Human Services Offices

Gippsland 5177 2500

Hume 5722 0555

TEMPORARY LIVING EXPENSES GRANT

Purpose: To assist households with the cost of temporary accommodation and living expenses when a principal place of residence is unfit to live in or inaccessible for more than one week.

Grant: Up to \$730 a week to a maximum of \$7,300, depending on the size of a household. The grant provides for temporary accommodation, clothing, food, personal requisites and reconnection of essential services.

Eligibility: The grant is income tested and can cover temporary accommodation and transport costs not covered by insurance. Also based on a needs assessment.

Application: Must be interviewed by an assessment officer from the Department of Human Services. Applications must be made within six months after the event (unless special circumstances apply).

Contact: Department of Human Services Offices

Gippsland 5177 2500

Hume 5722 0555

RE-ESTABLISHMENT GRANT

Purpose: To assist with the re-establishment of a household's principal place of residence by repair of structural damage and replacement or repair of essential household contents.

Grant: Two components of up to \$7,300 for necessary structural repairs and up to \$7,300 for essential household items not covered by insurance.

Eligibility: The grant is income tested and can cover replacement of essential items such as furnishings and electrical goods. Also based on a needs assessment.

Application: Must be interviewed by an assessment officer from the Department of Human Services. Applications must be made within six months after the event (unless special circumstances apply).

Contact: Department of Human Services Offices

Gippsland 5177 2500

Hume 5722 0555

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DISASTER RECOVERY PAYMENT

Purpose: For short-term financial assistance for those adversely affected by an officially declared disaster by Minister notice with specification of how 'adversely affected' will be determined. At present, 'adversely affected' is defined as primary residence burnt down.

Grant: Immediate assistance of up to \$1,000 per adult and \$400 per child to a total of \$5,000 per family, for people who have lost their principle place of residence or had it rendered uninhabitable. Usually paid as a one-off lump sum payment.

Eligibility: The Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has declared specific postcodes eligible which are regularly updated. (Until 17/01/07 they are 3885, 3893, 3895, 3896). No income or assets test. Available to people whose principal place of residence has been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable as a direct result of the bushfires

Application: Submit claim form for the AGDRP at the nearest Centrelink, within 14 days of the disaster. Telephone Centrelink on 180 2233, or visit your nearest Centrelink for a claim form.

Contact: Centrelink 180 2233 or 13 2850 or

http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/disaster_relief.htm

CENTRELINK CRISIS PAYMENT

Purpose: To help people in severe financial hardship because they have been forced to leave their home and find a new home because of an extreme event like their house burning down.

Grant: Crisis Payment is a one-off payment, equal to one week's payment of the normal Centrelink pension or benefit payment. It is limited to four payments for extreme circumstances in any 12 months.

Eligibility: Must be receiving, or be eligible to receive, a social security benefit or pension from Centrelink. Must be in severe financial hardship and must make a claim within 7 days of the extreme event.

Application: Submit claim form for Extreme Circumstances at the nearest Centrelink. Telephone Centrelink on 13 2850, or visit your nearest Centrelink for a claim form.

Contact: Centrelink 13 2850 or

<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/crisis.htm>

COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND:

Small Business Clean-Up and Restoration Grant

Purpose: To assist small businesses with bushfire recovery of direct damage by Gippsland and North East fire not covered by insurance for clean-up, removal of debris and business restoration.

Grant: One-off grant with an initial maximum of \$3,000 for immediate clean-up and debris removal. A further \$12,000 is available following a more detailed assessment and may be supplemented with a concessional interest rate loan.

Eligibility: All claims will be assessed on a case by case basis. It is a discretionary payment and although not income tested, it is based on need demonstrated through an assessment process. Applications must be made within 6 months of the impact of the fire.

Application: These grants are being administered by Rural Finance Corporation. Complete application form from appropriate Rural Finance Office
Contact: Rural Finance Corporation 5448 2600 or fax 5441 8901 or
Email: admin@ruralfinance.com.au
Gippsland Region 5176 1761
North East Region 5821 2655

Note: Rural Finance Corporation is also administering assistance loans to landholders whose principal residence has been destroyed or structurally damaged by bushfire. Contact appropriate Rural Finance Office for details.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND: Small Business Bushfire Assistance Loans

Purpose: Finance can be considered for small businesses that are assessed to be in need of concessional financial assistance as a result of losses or damage caused by the physical impact of bushfire.

Grant: Rural Finance Corporation will work closely with the banking sector to develop suitable packages to meet individual requirements and would expect to share any funding requirements with the normal provider of finance. Loans will bear interest at 2.9% per annum for an initial period not exceeding five years. Loans will generally be limited to \$100,000 for any single advance.

Eligibility: Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the business has reasonable prospects of trading profitably in the future including a capacity to service borrowings. Each case will be assessed on its merits.

Application: These grants are being administered by Rural Finance Corporation. Complete application form from appropriate Rural Finance Office
Contact: Rural Finance Corporation 5448 2600 or fax 5441 8901 or
Email: admin@ruralfinance.com.au
Gippsland Region 5176 1761
North East Region 5821 2655

FURTHER INFORMATION

Victorian Bushfire Information Line: 1800 240 667

Victoria Business Line: 132 215

OAMPS Insurance Brokers (TRIP):1800 245 558

Water assistance

Landholders experiencing significant hardship as a result of a reduction in essential water supplies due to firefighting efforts can seek assistance for water cartage and replenishment by contacting their local council.

Community appeals

A number of community appeals have been initiated:

- For information about the Bendigo Bank Appeal call 1300 304 541
- For information about the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund call 03 5177 4635 or 03 5176 1362