

# Regeneration

Rebuilding after Victoria's bushfires  
Edition 1



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message from



## Rob Hunt

Patron | Community Enterprise Foundation™

The events of the Victorian bushfires have left a lasting impression upon the psyche of our nation.

Many Victorians faced the full front of the fires. Many lost property and treasured possessions. Many lost family, friends, neighbours and loved ones.

And throughout this time our nation rallied. We were generous with our time, our compassion, with our financial resources and in our love and support for those whose lives so profoundly changed during the time of the fires and in the weeks that have followed.

In the weeks following the fires, the Community Enterprise Foundation™ accepted \$7 million from more than 33,000 individual donors and business and community groups across Australia.

These donations represent our collective commitment and responsibility to assist in rebuilding the neighbourhoods, the towns and the communities that hold our memories, our history and our future.

It is times like these when we see the incredible strength and generosity of the Australian spirit.

As patron of the Community Enterprise Foundation™ I can assure you that we are in there for the long term. We are committed to working with fire-affected areas in a manner which ensures the future shape of these communities is determined by the vision and foresight of its citizens.

**Rob Hunt**

# First donations making a difference

Thanks to the community's overwhelming generosity, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank started to distribute money from its Bushfire Appeal within a week of the Black Saturday fires.

More than \$250,000 was immediately released to assist those most in need.

Funds given to the appeal are being administered by the Bank's philanthropic arm, Community Enterprise™ Foundation, which is working with the Bank's community partners to identify groups and programs in need of immediate support and to distribute donations.

In fact, a pool of \$1.97 million was contributed by generous community members and the Bendigo Bank's community partners for specific fire affected regions. The Foundation is now working with these partners to ensure money is distributed for the benefit of intended recipients.

Already, initial donations have been made to the groups listed.

These donations are just the beginning and we look forward to distributing your donations to assist more communities and organisations in the coming months.

## state-wide

National Association of Loss & Grief  
(counselling services)

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Victorian Relief Food Bank (food for fire victims and emergency workers)

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Rotary Australia World Community Service (shelter boxes for emergency accommodation).

More than \$350,000, including \$200,000 from Futuris and Elders staff and customers, is now being used by Conservation Volunteers Australia to replace the thousands of kilometres of fencing destroyed by the fires. CVA will provide expertise and coordinate local volunteers as part of projects in Redesdale, the Yarra Ranges and Marysville.

## gippsland

Victorian State Emergency Service Warragul Unit (community building activities)

## central victoria

Loddon Mallee Housing Services (emergency housing in the Bendigo area)

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Bendigo Community Health Services (care packages and counselling services for fire victims in Bendigo and Redesdale)

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Future Employment Opportunities (back-to-school packs for Eaglehawk students)

## yarra valley

Victorian Animal Aid Trust  
(animal welfare)

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# Fire ravaged **Community Bank**<sup>®</sup> branches rebuilding

Valley Community Financial Services limited operates the Hurstbridge & Districts and Diamond Creek **Community Bank**<sup>®</sup> Branches.

The company has been providing ongoing financial support to its local CFA, donating thousands of dollars in branch profits to the fire fighters who protect Kinglake, St Andrews, Strathewan, Hurstbridge and Diamond Creek – towns that were hardest hit by February's bushfires.

Valley Community Financial Services, Chairman, Barry Henwood, said several board members and staff were directly affected by the fires.

“This has been a devastating experience. People in our immediate banking family have lost homes, livelihoods, even their lives.

“We lost many customers and friends and the full extent of our communities’ loss is still uncertain,” Mr Henwood said.

Despite enduring these hardships the **Community Bank**<sup>®</sup> Company has launched an Information Centre in Kinglake to help locals affected by the Black Saturday bushfires.

The Information Centre will provide Kinglake residents with support as they apply for financial assistance programs.

The Centre will also become a sub-branch from 6 July, providing a local banking outlet for the Kinglake community.



◀ **Back row from left to right:** members of Valley Community Financial Services Limited at the opening of the Information Centre for Kinglake residents: Julie Reid, Barry Henwood (Chairman), David Wheeler, Malcolm Hackett and Ingrid Crichton.

## Partners in the recovery process

The Company has donated almost \$200,000 to help bushfire affected communities and estimates that the Information Centre cost \$80,000 to establish.

“All this has been made possible by the incredible support over the last eight years of our local customers, which includes people living in Kinglake,” Mr Henwood added.

Hurstbridge & Districts **Community Bank**<sup>®</sup> Branch Manager, Dion Shirley, said it will provide information for those affected by the bushfires on cash assistance programs, banking and insurance products.

“To secure a cash grant, bushfire victims must participate in a one-on-one financial information session. By establishing a presence in Kinglake, locals impacted by the fires no longer have to travel to apply for grants,” Mr Shirley said.

“Our staff are local and many have experienced first-hand the devastation caused by the bushfires.

“We understand what people are going through and have developed expertise in dealing with bushfire grants and recovery programs,” he said.

Representatives from local, state and federal government agencies have been working with **Community Bank**<sup>®</sup> boards in the Yarra Ranges for almost two years to initiate and match funds for a variety of projects.

The Yarra Ranges Partnership forum has now moved its attention to the task of assisting fire affected communities to rebuild and to ensure that projects are coordinated and, where possible, funding is matched by the various levels of government.



▲ Representatives of the Yarra Ranges Partnership at work at a recent forum.

# \$4 million fund to rebuild communities

The Brumby Government, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank and its charitable arm, the Community Enterprise Foundation™, have joined forces to set up a \$4 million fund to help rebuild community infrastructure and promptly provide jobs in Victoria's bushfire-affected communities.

Regional and Rural Development Minister, Jacinta Allan and Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Managing Director, Rob Hunt launched the Bushfire Recovery Community Infrastructure Program in April.

Providing grants up to \$300,000 to regional, rural and interface council-and-community projects, the program will be equally funded by the Government and the Foundation, which will commit \$2 million in community donations to help support Victorian communities impacted by the damaging fires.

"The Brumby Government is delighted to join with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank to take action to help these communities rebuild by replacing or improving essential community infrastructure," Ms Allan said.

"This funding will enable councils and local groups to immediately undertake vital activities in rebuilding and helping their communities recover from February's devastating bushfires."

Mr Hunt said the Bank's close ties with local communities made it a good partner for Government in the rebuilding process.

"People donated \$7 million to our Foundation bushfire appeal because they know the money will be directed to projects of long-term value that are identified by the communities themselves.

"Collaboration between the community, local councils, the Government, the Bendigo and its Foundation will almost certainly improve the outcomes achieved.

"This particular program will be essential in helping communities to rebuild because infrastructure forms the basis from which all future community prosperity can be generated," Mr Hunt said.

The fund is targeted at projects that:

- > replace lost or damaged facilities or improve existing community infrastructure
- > contribute to economic development
- > demonstrate wide community use and benefit



Works such as renewing historic buildings, developing township entrance points, streetscaping, developing rail trails and walking tracks, meeting places, tourism infrastructure and water-use efficiency projects are being targeted.

Community groups are encouraged to work with their local councils and charitable groups in developing projects and applications.

▲ Community Enterprise™ Foundation Patron, Rob Hunt and Victorian Premier, John Brumby at the launch of the Bushfire Recovery Community Infrastructure Program in April.

Community Enterprise™ Foundation  
adopts the principles of disaster grant  
making supported by Philanthropy Australia.

- > First, do no harm.
- > Stop, look and listen before taking  
action.
- > Don't act in isolation.
- > Think beyond the immediate crisis to  
the long term.
- > Bear in mind the expertise of local  
organisations.
- > Find out how prospective grantees  
operate.
- > Be accountable to those you are trying  
to help.
- > Communicate your work and use it as an  
educational tool.



## Make a donation

The Bushfire Appeal is still accepting donations.

To contribute to the appeal visit any Bendigo Bank  
Branch or donate online at [www.bendigobank.com.au](http://www.bendigobank.com.au)

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

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the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Group ABN 11 068 049 178 AFSL 237879. (S24385) (06/09)