

A further \$71,500 to help Black Saturday victims rebuild

Tuesday 22 September 2009: On Black Saturday more than 700 kilometres of fencing was destroyed in and around Redesdale. But, thanks to the support of generous donors and volunteers the fencing is now being replaced.

In May, a \$350,000 grant was given to the project, including \$150,000 from Community Enterprise Foundation™, \$100,000 from Elders staff and customers and a further \$100,000 in building materials, to assist the community erect new fencing.

Conservation Volunteers Australia then went to work, spending 200 days in the region, replacing many valuable kilometres of fencing.

Now, a further \$71,500 has been granted to the project to support another 45 volunteer days between now and December.

Heathcote and District **Community Bank**® Branch Manager, Les Owens, said the new fencing has provided a huge boost to the local community as it attempts to rebuild and recover in the wake of the fires.

"New fencing is making a huge difference to local property owners and farmers, who can now contain their livestock," Mr Owens said.

"On average it costs about \$10 to replace just one metre of fencing and it would be a huge and expensive task for the local community to replace this alone.

"With the help of Community Enterprise Foundation™ our community has been able to co-ordinate the resources needed to replace what we've lost.

"But the most valuable resource has been the volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia and thanks to their help the task at hand seems achievable," he said.

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Regional Manager, Phil Whiting, said the combined effort has been outstanding.

"The events of the 2009 Victorian bushfires left a lasting impression," Mr Whiting said.

"Many Victorians faced the full front of the fires, losing property, treasured possessions and even their lives.

"But the nation was generous and the Community Enterprise Foundation™ accepted \$8 million from more than 32,000 generous individual donors, businesses and community groups across Australia.

"The funds have been administered by the foundation, that is working with the bank's community partners to identify groups and programs in need of support in the rebuilding and recovery process."