

14 August 2009

BUSHFIRE UPDATE

FROM CHRISTINE NIXON

CHAIR

BUSHFIRE RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY AUTHORITY

VICTORIAN BUSHFIRE ROYAL COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT

The Interim findings into the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission will be released on Monday 17 August. The Commissioners will present copies of the interim report to the Governor of Victoria and the Government will then table the report in the Victorian Parliament. Once it has been tabled, it will be available to the public.

Copies of the report will be available on-line at the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission with links from www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

Hard copies of the full report will be available from the Information Victoria bookshop, 505 Little Collins Street, from Monday afternoon. Further information about where people can access a copy of the report will be available on Monday.

NEW REFERRAL CARD MAIL

Bushfire affected households should have by now received the new referral card for accessing material aid.

Some people have been seeking duplicate cards for family members. These requests and other queries are being handled by case managers, by emailing: referral.card@dpc.vic.gov.au or by calling **1800 240 667**.

MOBILE BUILDING ADVISORY SERVICE – UPDATED SCHEDULE

As plans continue for the construction of new Rebuilding Advisory Centres at Kinglake and Marysville, a mobile Building Advisory Services has been put in place for those wanting advice about rebuilding or just for a chat about starting the process.

The VBRRRA Mobile Building Advisory Service is doing the rounds of nine of the Community Service Hubs on a rotational basis, six days a week.

During this time, experienced building professionals from VBRRRA will be on hand to provide rebuilding advice and information on behalf of the Authority, local government and the Building Commission. They will also be able to help with advice on planning, finance, insurance, architects, drafting services and legal matters.

Appointments for the service can be made through Hub Captains. A roster of initial operating times is detailed below.

Building Advisory Service Operating Hours *

Hub	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Strathewen / Hurstbridge		9am-11.30am			1pm-4pm	
Alexandra	9am-11.30am				9am-11.30am	
Flowerdale		10am-12pm, 1pm-4pm				10am-2pm
Kinglake	10am-12pm, 1pm-4pm		10am-12pm		10am-11.30am	10am-2pm
Kinglake West		1pm-4pm	1pm-4pm	10am-12pm		
Marysville		10am-12pm, 1pm-4pm	9am-12pm		1pm-4pm	
Whittlesea	1pm-4pm		1.30pm-4pm	9am-12pm		
Traralgon/Morwell	10am-12pm					
Labertouche	2pm-4pm					

Building Advisory Service operating hours are current as at 12 August 2009

DONATED HOLIDAYS STILL AVAILABLE

A range of donated holiday accommodation options are still available to bushfire affected people. Tourism Victoria is coordinating the offers, which include up to two nights stay in caravan parks, B&Bs, motels and hotels suitable for couples or families in popular holiday destinations.

Contact your Case Manager or local Donations Coordinator to register your interest through the Donations Management System.

Holidays can be taken from now until 20 December 2009, subject to conditions and availability.

To view the accommodation offers available, visit <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/bushfireoffer/accommodation/>

UPDATES

Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund --- While \$317 million of the total donated amount of \$382 million has been allocated, there is still millions of dollars available for individuals to access. Some eligible recipients have not yet applied for grants for a number of reasons, including still being distressed and unable to access funding at this time.

Applications for many of the gifts close on 31 December 2009, so people are encouraged to speak to their Case Managers or call the **Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund** on **1800 180 213** to apply.

Donations – The new Donations Management System is underway, ensuring that households can access a range of donations including store vouchers, flights and holidays on a needs basis. The Authority has employed Donations Coordinators to assist in the distribution of donated goods and services, primarily received from corporate and business donors.

The Donations Coordinators are working closely with the Case Managers to match these goods with people's needs. Individuals without Case Managers are welcome to contact the Donations Coordinator in their area.

Toilets and Showers – People staying in temporary accommodation on their properties can still register for portable toilets and showers via www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

As at 14 August, the Authority had received around 254 requests for toilets and 237 requests for showers.

Clean Up ---- The clean up register on the website has closed, but people can still apply to have their property cleared if they haven't already done so by calling 1800 240 667.

Around 99 per cent of registered clean ups have been completed.

For more information: 1800 240 667 or visit www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au

Media enquiries: Melissa Arch on 0428 634 194