

Wednesday, 14 October, 2009

## **NEW GUIDE TO HELP TOURISM OPERATORS THIS BUSHFIRE SEASON**

The Victorian Government today launched a guide for tourism businesses to assist in preparing, responding and recovering from events like bushfires.

The Premier John Brumby, Tourism and Major Events Minister Tim Holding and Police and Emergency Services Minister Bob Cameron launched the Crisis Essentials Guide in Aireys Inlet as part of Fire Action Week.

Mr Brumby said the guide would be available to all Victorian tourism businesses ahead of the approaching fire season.

“The task for us all is to work together to prepare our State for a fire season that’s shaping up to be every bit as bad or worse than the season we’ve just experienced,” Mr Brumby said.

“This guide gives clear and decisive information about what tourism operators need to do to protect their business in the event of a crisis. It will be supported by a series of briefings and workshops for tourism businesses located in high fire risk areas.

“We want to ensure the safety of all Victorians and this guide is just one more way that we can arm tourism operators with the information they require to actively respond when in need.

“There are just 13 days until the start of the fire season and after 13 years of drought conditions remain dry across Victoria, despite the recent rain.”

The guide provides advice and information to tourism operators including:

- How to identify, assess and manage risks;
- Information on developing a brief plan that outlines how to respond in an emergency or bushfire situation; and
- Information on the importance and best ways to communicate with existing and potential customers.
- How to ensure business continuity immediately following an emergency situation.

“Bushfires can have a profound affect on a tourism business whether it directly impacts upon the business or simply occurs within the same region. Tourism regions are vulnerable to public perceptions of health and safety,” Mr Brumby said.

Tourism Victoria will also commence a campaign this summer aimed at raising visitor awareness of the bushfire safety risks in Victoria and understanding of what they need to consider when planning a holiday in high-risk bushfire areas.

Mr Holding said experience from previous bushfires in Victoria or other natural disasters is that we need to support tourism operators to respond and recover from these events.

“Unfortunately many tourism operators around Victoria have experienced bushfires and have witnessed first hand the impact that they can have on their business even if their property is not directly affected by the fires,” he said.

“By planning for bushfires in advance we can limit the impact it has on these businesses and jobs in the tourism industry and be ready for the return of tourists to these areas.”

Mr Cameron urged all Victorians to get involved in Fire Action Week initiatives.

“I urge all Victorians, no matter where you live or what your fire experience has been, to get fire ready – identify your risk, prepare your fire plan, clean up your properties and get involved in your local fire preparation activities,” Mr Cameron said.

The ‘Crisis Essentials’ guide will support the more comprehensive ‘Open for Business’ crisis management publication which will be available in late October. To get a copy of the ‘Crisis Essentials’ guide visit [www.tourismvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.tourismvictoria.vic.gov.au)