

Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund

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29 JAN 2010

Hon Fran Bailey
Federal Member for McEwen
PO Box 700
HEALSVILLE VIC 3777

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Dear Ms Bailey *Fran*

I am writing in response to your letter received 21 December 2009 regarding previous correspondence to the former Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF) Advisory Panel about support for secondary home owners on behalf of the Marysville and Triangle Development Group.

As you may be aware, under long-standing Commonwealth charities and tax laws, the support the Fund can provide for loss of secondary homes is limited. This is because generally the potential recipients were not made homeless by the fires and in most circumstances are not without other independent financial means. Therefore, this group is not considered to be in a state of distress that should be relieved by charitable assistance from a disaster relief fund.

The VBAF Panel has made several representations to the Commonwealth Government seeking changes in a number of areas of charity tax law, including support for secondary home owners. While we have been successful in having some changes made, such as being able to provide support to primary producers, no changes have been made to the laws applying to secondary home owners.

The Fund therefore has no ability to provide assistance to secondary home owners, except in the most extreme exceptional circumstances. In these cases, individuals who have suffered severe financial hardship as a result of the bushfires may be assessed on needs-basis, however VBAF believes that very few cases would exist.

I wrote to Mr Graeme Brown, Chairman of the Marysville and Triangle Development Group, regarding the significantly limited assistance available for secondary home owners on 16 December 2009. A copy of that letter is enclosed for your information.

Thankyou again for the ongoing support you have provided to residents of McEwen who have been affected by the bushfires.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Pat McNamara
Chair, Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund
Encl. Letter to Mr Graeme Brown, MATDG