



This paper has been prepared to provide philanthropists with an understanding of what the bushfire recovery process will involve and the role they can play in it.

Affected communities and support services are still coming to terms with what has happened and how they will respond to the bushfire crisis

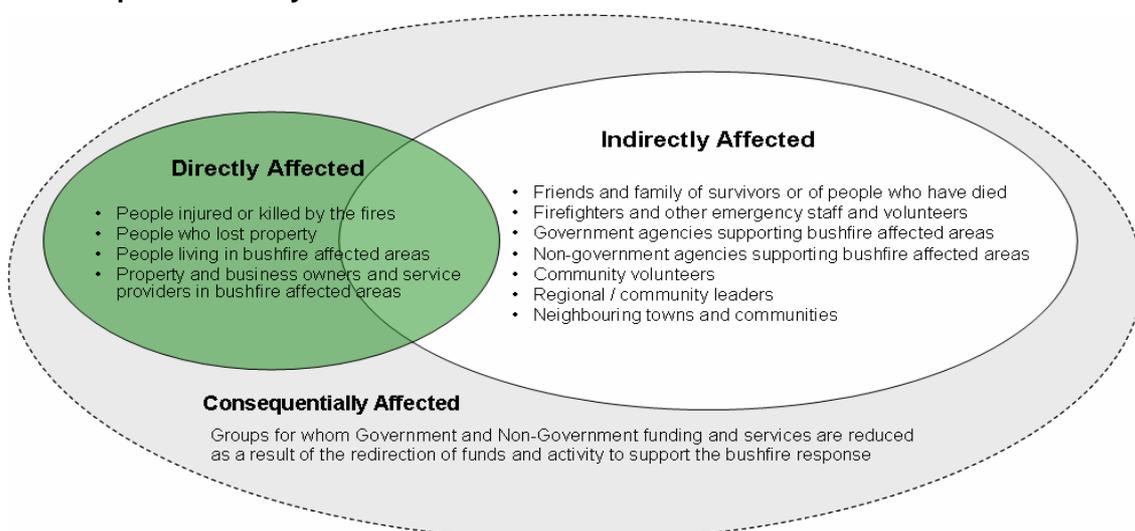
The recent Victorian bushfires have been the largest in Australia's history. They have caused unprecedented loss, leaving over 200 people dead, 7,000 homeless and 400,000 hectares burnt across thirteen local government areas. (A map of the affected LGAs is provided in Attachment 1.)

The bushfire crisis has come at a time when there are many new needs for philanthropic dollars, with a number of communities already affected by drought and flood and Australia facing a serious financial downturn.

Communities devastated by the bushfires are still coming to terms with their experience and what they will need to do to recover and rebuild.

Government and non-government agencies are also still in the process of understanding community needs and it is likely to take another six to eight weeks before affected communities and support services get a real handle on what is required.

**Figure 1 - People affected by the bushfires**



Determining how best to respond to the crisis is complex, not least because of the:

- Sheer scale of the crisis
- Number of different groups affected
- Range of support and reconstruction needs required to be met and
- Number of different stakeholders - both Government and non-government - required to be involved in meeting those needs.

Significant support will be required over a long period

It is clear that communities affected by the bushfire crisis will need significant support. The recovery process will be a long one - a matter of years not months. The challenge will be maintaining awareness and support over the longer term.

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have set up the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority to be headed by outgoing Victoria Police Chief Commissioner, Christine Nixon, to coordinate bushfire recovery activity across Victoria. The Authority will be responsible for coordinating Local, State and Commonwealth Government agency and non-government activity to help affected communities to recover and rebuild.

Action has also been taken to set up the Victorian Bushfire Appeal to help fund recovery activity. The speed and scale of donations into the Appeal has been encouraging with over \$200M being raised to support individuals and communities directly affected by the bushfires.

Government has also provided a range of grants to people and communities affected by the bushfires.



The Victorian Government has set up a database for donated goods and services to match donations with the needs of each of the affected areas. Info Victoria has established a 1300 telephone line for volunteers and the Victorian Government is playing a key role in managing volunteering in bushfire affected areas.

Emergency relief services are starting to be complemented by activities focused on returning some sense of normality to affected communities. As things start to settle, communities will need to put in place transitional service and support arrangements to allow them to regroup before starting to rebuild their communities.

It will be essential for Government and non-government support services to work together to support individuals and communities through that process.

### The best role for philanthropy will become clearer as the recovery process gets under way

Philanthropy will also have a role to play in supporting those efforts by augmenting the activity of Government and supporting communities and non-government agencies.

It will be important for philanthropy to complement – not duplicate – Government activity and public support funded through the Bushfire Appeal. The best role for philanthropy to play in each of the affected communities will become clearer in the next few months.

Experience in Australia and overseas allows us to identify some principles that underlie effective community renewal. (See Attachment 2 for a summary of key success factors in disaster recovery and renewal.)

We know, for example, that responses to disasters such as the bushfire crisis are complex and therefore need to be **multi-faceted**. They need to rebuild social, built, natural and economic environments while at the same time helping communities to prepare for and mitigate against future bushfires. Responses need to work at both the **individual and community level**, operate over an **extended time horizon** and coordinate activities across all of the above areas in parallel.

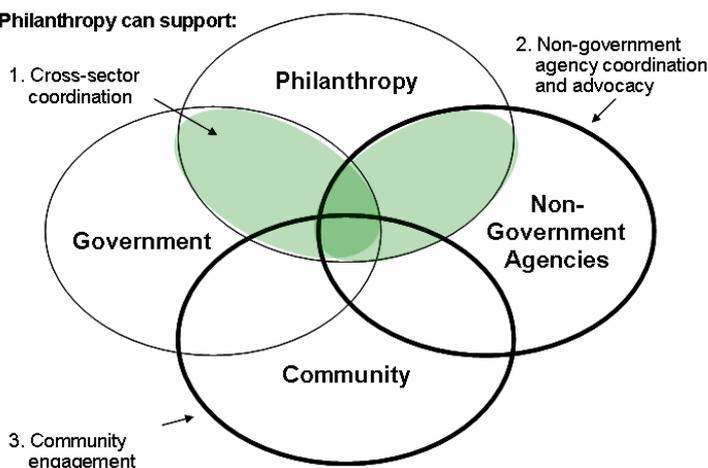
Community participation is critical. Community members need to be able to participate in decision making and planning processes about how they rebuild their community. In the best cases, community renewal activity is informed and – wherever possible - **led by the community**.

Community consultation, planning and coordination processes need to be appropriately structured and resourced to allow for genuine community participation. There needs to be clear coordination within and between Government and non-government sectors working in affected communities. Philanthropy also needs to be part of that coordination process - so that it can avoid duplication and reinforce the community renewal process.

### Figure 2 – Cross-sector coordination requirements:

Community recovery and renewal relies on good communication and coordination **within** and **between** the community, Government, non-government and philanthropic sectors

Philanthropy can support:



### Good grant making in a disaster context

Experience in Australia and overseas indicates that grant making in a disaster recovery context needs to be tailored to take into account the circumstances of the individuals and communities that are being supported. A summary of good grant making principles is set out in Table 1 on page 3.



**Table 1 – Good disaster recovery grant making principles:**

Key Success Factors		Description
1	Mixed funding timeline	Consider both one off and longer term grants in line with community needs
2	Accessible application process	Broad dissemination of information on availability of grants and application process Simple, coordinated application process that accommodates resource constraints and limited access to organisational records and reduces the need to write multiple applications or deal with multiple grant making bodies Timely consideration and response to applications Flexible acquittal and evaluation structures that accommodate resource constraints
3	Flexible funding parameters	Flexible funding parameters and distribution timelines to allow responses to be tailored to local needs Communities allowed to identify and prioritise recovery requirements Funding provided to both DGR and non-DGR entities
4	Promotion of good practice	Support use of good practice principles in the design and reconstruction of community services and infrastructure
5	Support of sustainable service delivery	Support organisations to resource and manage internal operations including resourcing, training, development and counseling of support service staff

As a general rule, grant making needs to be accessible and flexible. Application processes need to be simple. Grants need to be available to grass roots organisations. These can often be non-DGR organisations, the needs of which should be considered and accommodated wherever possible.

Funding criteria and application and acquittal timelines should be flexible and should allow applicants to identify and respond to local needs and priorities.

Ideally funding should be coordinated - to minimise duplication and make it easy for communities to access support. This could be done by:

- Channeling funding through a consolidated support fund such as the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund or a regional program such as the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal (FRRR) and / or
- Setting up a central clearing house function that allows affected communities to submit applications to one organisation that can process and sort applications and allow individual philanthropists or foundations to access applications and fund individual projects directly. (The benefit of using a clearing house approach is that organisations only need to write one application.)

In previous disaster responses philanthropic support has tended to be directed at:

- **Augmenting government support** - where there may be gaps in support or unmet levels of need given the scale of support required
- **Fast-tracking reconstruction of social infrastructure or services** - that may otherwise take some time to rebuild given the overall need for reconstruction, in particular community services and recreational infrastructure
- **Providing additional resources for non-government agencies to support service coordination and delivery** - through assistance with resource planning, additional or backfill resourcing, team building, training and staff counseling and support and
- **Supporting research and advocacy** - funding research and advocacy that informs and / or learns from the recovery and renewal process or addresses long term issues such as climate change and disaster mitigation.

Table 2 provides a summary of the activities required to support community recovery and renewal and identifies the areas where philanthropy has tended to play a role in past disasters.

Table 2 – Key community recovery and renewal support requirements:

Activity Domains	Emergency Relief (0-2 Months)	Short Term Recovery (2 – 6 Months)	Community Renewal (6 – 24+ Months)
<p><b>Key:</b> Listed activities are a government responsibility unless marked with * in which case they are non-government or mixed government and non-government responsibilities</p> <p>■ Opportunity for Philanthropic Support</p>			
<b>Social Environment</b>	Relief Centre	Recovery Centre and Outreach Program Set Up and Operation	
	Emergency Relief Services (health, housing, material aid, sanitation)	Transitional Public Service Provision (health, education, family services)	Temporary and Transitional Accommodation and Support Services (housing, material aid)
	Emergency Briefings	Information Services	Ancillary Education and Family Support Services* (play groups, extra curricular and after school programs, parenting / family support groups, youth activities)
		Personal Support Services (counseling, trauma support)	
	Emergency Financial Aid	Financial Assistance	Financial Counseling, Advisory and Support Services
		Advocacy Services* (individual and community advocacy)	
		Social and Community Support and Networking (community meetings, local festivals, cultural activities, community events and community projects)*	
<b>Built Environment</b>	Make Safe	Clearing and Clean Up (Public) Clearing and Clean Up (Private)*	Restoration (Public) Restoration (Private)*
		Essential Services Infrastructure (roads, water, sanitation)	
		Essential Services Infrastructure (power, communication)*	
			Public Services Infrastructure (health, education)
			Community Services and Recreation Infrastructure* (parks, playgrounds, libraries, community centres)
			Residential Housing (rebuild, repair)*
			Commercial Property (rebuild, repair)*
<b>Natural Environment</b>	Make Safe	Waste Decontamination and Pollution Management	
	Emergency Wildlife / Animal Care*		Environmental Restoration* (biodiversity, ecosystems, natural resources)
			Local Landscaping and Beautification
<b>Economic Environment</b>		Unemployment Benefits	
			Employment and Training Services (work placement / transition support, employment services, (re)training)
		Business Support (direct financial support)	Economic (Re)Development
			Social Investment / Enterprise*
<b>Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation</b>			Emergency Response Planning
			Bushfire Preparedness and Mitigation* (education, planning, equipment and training)
			Climate Change Mitigation*
<b>Reconstruction Planning and Coordination</b>	Emergency Coordination		
		Community Renewal Coordination & Governance Framework Set Up & Implementation	
		Community Consultation on Community Renewal	
		Community Renewal Planning (including urban design)	
		Third Sector / Support Service Resource Planning, Team Building, Training and Support*	
			Issue Based Research* (disaster mitigation, climate change, sustainable design, best practice community renewal, best practice service design and delivery, evaluation of community needs recovery and renewal)
			Issue Based Advocacy*



### Specific grant making options for philanthropy at this stage

Based on discussions that Effective Philanthropy has had with key Government and non-government agencies involved in the bushfire response effort, we recommend the following options for philanthropic support at this stage:

#### 1. Grass roots, community led activity

Make funds available to affected communities at a grass roots level in a coordinated and accessible way that allows communities to meet locally identified needs. This can be done through:

##### i. **Giving to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal**

Funding given to the appeal will be directed to support individuals and communities directly affected by the bushfires. Grants will be directed in accordance with criteria defined by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Panel chaired by John Landy overseeing the fund. Based on past experience they are likely to be targeted to support individuals and families affected by the fires.

At the time of writing \$50 million has been released for distribution to provide immediate relief to people directly affected by the bushfires to help with immediate personal, medical, housing repair or dislocation costs and to help people to replace tools of trade so that they can resume work.

More information on how the fund is being used can be obtained at:

ph: 1800 180 213  
email: vicbushfireappealfund@dhs.vic.gov.au.

Donations can be made at:

ph: 1800 811 700  
website: www.redcross.org.au

##### ii. **Giving to a consolidated, special purpose program established by FRRR**

FRRR is experienced in post-disaster grant making, it has experience managing funding partnerships and it can provide funding to local organisations that do not have DGR status.

FRRR will be establishing a special purpose program to provide support to communities affected by the bushfires. Programs will also be established to support communities affected by the recent floods in Queensland and New South Wales.

contact: Sylvia Admans  
ph: 03 5430 2305  
email: s.admans@frrr.org.au

##### iii. **Contributing to the establishment of a central clearing house** to process disaster recovery grants and provide a mechanism to coordinate philanthropic giving.

It is recommended that anyone interested in establishing such a function liaise with FRRR given its grant making expertise in this area.

#### 2. Sectoral coordination

Fund initiatives that assist non-government agencies to coordinate local recovery activity and engage effectively with Government - and philanthropy - to develop a coordinated response to the bushfire crisis. This can be done by:

##### **Supporting the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) to facilitate cross-sector coordination**

VCOSS is seeking to set up of an ongoing consultation process to:

- Identify what support non-government agencies need to assist in the local recovery process
- Liaise with Government - and philanthropy - to make sure that recovery and renewal processes recognise and meet those needs and
- Monitor support delivery and support agency requirements on an ongoing basis (6, 12, 18 and 24 months out) to make sure that ongoing recovery support requirements are met.

As the relevant peak body, VCOSS is well positioned to perform this function. It is noted that VCOSS does not have DGR status. Funding for such a project may therefore best be provided through a mechanism such as the FRRR fund.

contact: Cath Smith  
ph: 03 9654 5050  
email: cath.smith@vcoss.org.au



### 3. Research and advocacy

Fund research and advocacy on specific issues that inform and / or learn from the recovery and renewal process or address long term issues such as climate change and disaster mitigation.

The University of Melbourne's research and advocacy response to the bushfires is being coordinated by Dr Elizabeth Waters at the McCaughey Centre.

contact: Dr Elizabeth Waters  
ph: 03 8344 3183  
email: ewaters@unimelb.edu.au

### 4. Engaging in ongoing dialogue

If philanthropy is to play a constructive and informed role in the long term recovery process then there is real benefit in establishing a process through which the philanthropic sector can engage in an ongoing dialogue with Government and peak non-government agencies (such as VCOSS) to keep track of emerging recovery needs and understand how philanthropy can best support those needs.

This can arguably be done through coordination with the Bushfire Recovery and Renewal Commission being led by Christine Nixon or through the creation of a consultative committee (or affinity group) that includes key representatives from Government and the non-government sector.

Victorian State Minister for Community Development, Mr Peter Batchelor, has nominated the Office for the Community Sector within the Department of Planning and Community Development as the central contact point for the philanthropic sector. The Government is keen to establish partnerships with the philanthropic sector to support the bush fire recovery process.

contact: Lynne Wannan  
ph: 03 9208 3543  
email: lynne.wannan@dpcd.vic.gov.au

### Some final observations

The needs that have been generated by the Victorian bushfires are significant, as are the needs generated by the floods in Queensland and New South Wales.

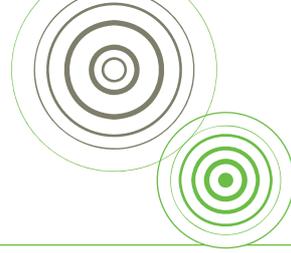
In order to respond to those needs, funding and services will – by necessity – be redirected from other areas. That means that there is likely to be a number of groups for whom Government and non-government funding will be reduced.

Non-government organisations focusing on supporting those affected by the bushfires – and fundraising for them – may now not be able to fundraise as effectively in other areas. At the same time they are likely to face increasing demand for their standard services as the effects of the financial crisis take hold.

Many philanthropic foundations and individuals have already shown enormous goodwill and generosity towards those affected by the bushfires. Given the range of needs that are likely to face the Australian community in coming months it will be more important than ever for philanthropists to take a broad view, keep the lines of communication open with those on the ground – and make sure that every dollar is spent effectively.

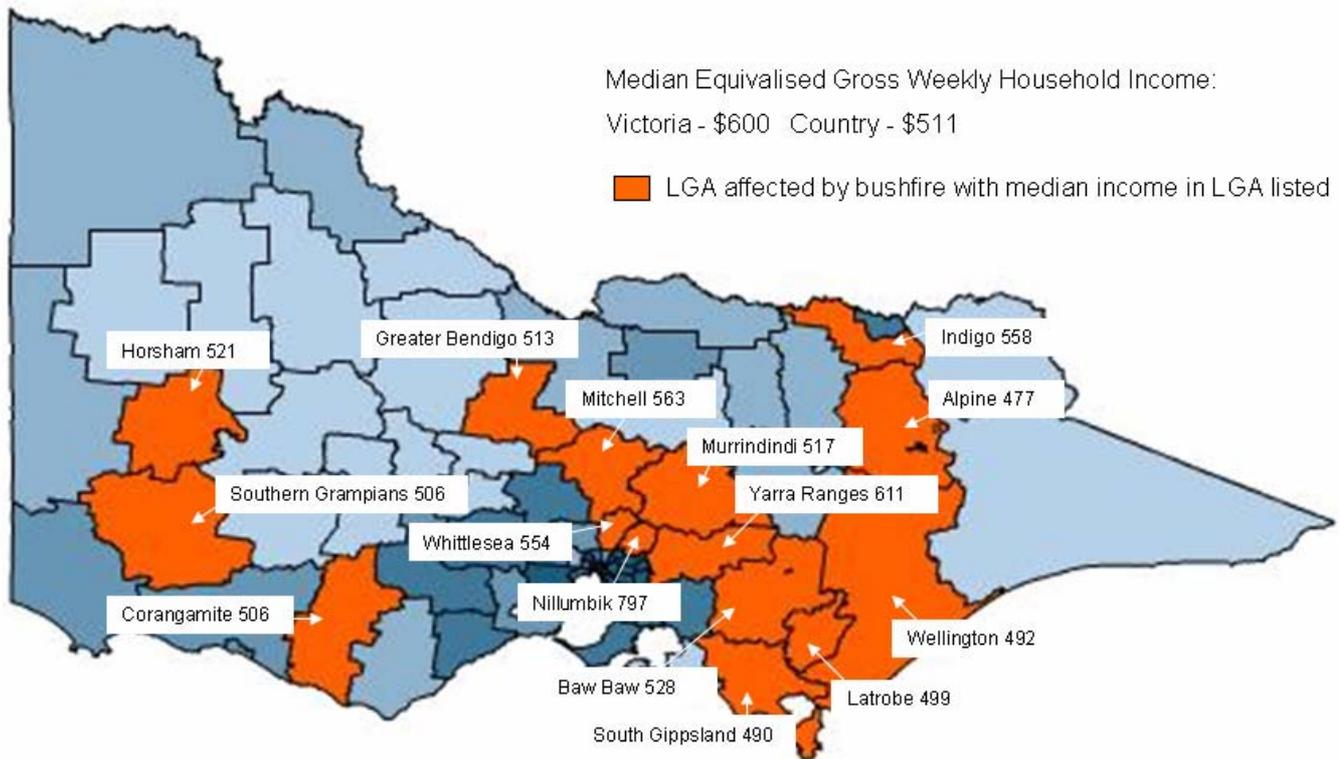
This article has been written by Effective Philanthropy on a pro-bono basis. It has been prepared based on discussions with representatives from the Victorian Government, the Victorian Council of Social Services, the Red Cross, The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and the other non-government agencies involved in the response to the Victorian Grampians Bushfires in 2006 including the Grampians Community Health Centre.

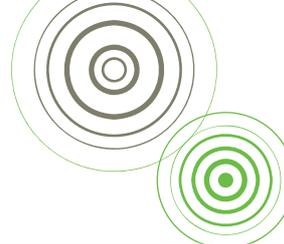
For further information please contact Effective Philanthropy at [info@effectivephilanthropy.com.au](mailto:info@effectivephilanthropy.com.au)



**Attachment 1 – Map of bushfire affected areas** (affected Local Government Areas as at 1 March 2009 highlighted)

Median equalised gross weekly income (2006) of each affected LGA shown as an indication of pre-existing socio-economic status (source: Community Indicators Victoria)





**Attachment 2 – Summary of key success factors in disaster recovery and renewal:**

Key Success Factors		Description
1	Long term commitment	Long term recovery timeline covering emergency relief, early stage recovery and longer term community reconstruction and renewal with adequate support and funding provided to meet long term needs
2	Localised, community based approach	Geographic, community based response with local solutions developed to meet local needs
3	Strong community participation and ownership	Strong participation by community members and local organisations in recovery response design and delivery
4	Multi-faceted focus	Ensure broad, whole of community development / renewal framework rather than a narrow physical reconstruction framework used when developing localised response plans Provide support to meet the social, emotional, economic and physical needs and wellbeing of individuals and communities Operate at both an individual and a community level Rebuild social, built, natural and economic environments in parallel Reduce future exposure to fire hazards and ensure that the community is prepared for future bushfire seasons
5	Integrated response	Wherever possible use activities in one domain to support / reinforce activity in other areas. For example use the redesign and reconstruction of the built environment to support economic renewal by using local suppliers and (re)training and employing local community members in the reconstruction process
6	Good practice design	Use good practice principles in the design and construction of community services and infrastructure
7	Flexible response structure	Flexible response structure, timing and delivery systems used to allow responses to be tailored to local needs
8	Decentralised decision making and implementation structures	Decentralised decision making, planning and implementation used to allow responses to be tailored to local needs and encourage community ownership and participation
9	Strong local governance and coordination structure	Strong local governance and coordination framework including Government, support service and community representatives Funding and resources provided to support community consultation and intra- and cross-sectoral coordination
10	Strong communication processes	Clear communication processes established to monitor community needs, keep community members informed and support participation in community consultation and coordination processes - strong investment in community consultation and stakeholder communication
11	Local resourcing preference	Recognise, support and build the capacity of community members and local organisations to participate in and drive local recovery - provide opportunities to participate in reconstruction and renewal process and wherever possible give preference to the use of community members and local organisations in community reconstruction and renewal work
12	Training and support	Training and support provided to local leaders, government and non-government service providers and staff to assist them to understand recovery requirements and to sustain ongoing service delivery

Based on: National Principles for Disaster Recovery Australia, NZ Holistic Framework for Disaster Recovery, ACT Bushfire Recovery Taskforce Report 2003, Report from the Victorian Ministerial Taskforce on Bushfire Recovery 2006 and 2007, COAG Enquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management Report 2005.