

Bushfire Recovery Aboriginal Reference Group

Information sheet for Community Members

What is the Bushfire Emergency Aboriginal Reference Group (Reference Group)?

- The recent bushfires have directly affected Aboriginal communities across Victoria, primarily in the south eastern, and northern areas of the State.
- On 6 January 2020, the Premier announced the establishment of Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV), a new dedicated Agency to guide Victoria's Bushfire Recovery. BRV is focused on the needs of communities, working closely with local residents to ensure that rehabilitation projects are both locally-drive and locally-delivered.
- The Bushfire Recovery Victoria Advisory Council (BRV Advisory Council) will inform the response to the immediate impact of the bushfires and ensure the health and wellbeing, and longer-term recovery for local communities and local economies.
- Aboriginal Victorians have a seat on the BRV Advisory Council and a voice through the Bushfire Emergency Aboriginal Reference Group (Reference Group).
- The Reference Group will inform and support its nominated representative, Jamie Williamson (Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC), to ensure Aboriginal communities across the state are adequately and sustainably resourced to recover from the state of disaster.
- The Reference Group members are listed on page 4.

What will the Reference Group do?

- The Reference Group will provide advice to the Advisory Council on:
 - Culturally informed and holistic healing:
 - Addressing health care concerns
 - Responding to mental health needs
 - Addressing vicarious trauma, fatigue and stress
 - Supporting collaboration of local Aboriginal organisations
 - Healing Country:
 - Aboriginal community led development and implementation of land management practices, including employment opportunities
 - Increasing knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal heritage values to inform future land and fire management activities
 - Ensure land rehabilitation works do not lead to avoidable damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage

- Caring for Elders and Carers:
 - Addressing the needs of Elders and carers
 - Providing additional supports to Elders and carers
 - Ensuring concepts of kinship are understood
- Cultural heritage restoration:
 - Site visits and surveys to identify the impacts of fires (including to register any new sites uncovered by the fires)
 - Remediation works to damaged sites, including sites damaged by bushfire protection activities
 - Put mitigation measures in place to reduce future potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Rebuilding Aboriginal community infrastructure:
 - Advise on the needs of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) that own infrastructure which has been damaged by bushfires.
 - Ensure communities have access to transport, security, backup power, alternative water and food supplies and emergency shelter.
 - Advocating for refurbishment of bushfire damaged infrastructure owned by ACCOs within the State of Disaster
 - Coordinating support for planning and building assessments to support rapid rebuilding of community infrastructure
- Resourcing support for the ACCO sector:
 - Advise on the resourcing and funding needs of ACCOs including long term economic prosperity and employment
 - Coordinate support to address loss of income by ACCO's/organisations due to:
 - i. Staff absences during fire season and reduced fee for service
 - ii. Closure of organisations due to danger caused by fire and smoke (effect on output/targets required for DHHS accreditation)
 - iii. Lack of supplies reaching organisations
 - iv. Inability to continue servicing all client and offering all programs.
 - Ensure communication between government departments, agencies, ACCOs and other community stakeholders is streamlined and consistent.
- Financial relief funding for Aboriginal individuals and families:
 - Facilitating centralised support to allocate and manage donations, supplies, services, etc.
 - Support for families to rebuild and repair damaged households
 - Reimbursement of the costs of relocation and evacuation
- Housing stress:
 - Temporary accommodation to support Aboriginal communities impacted and displaced by the bushfires

- Planning and building assessments to inform longer-term planning and support for Aboriginal community housing
- Residential Aboriginal communities:
 - Bushfire recovery, mitigation and future planning for Aboriginal communities, including Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust.

Does the Reference Group report to community?

- The Reference Group will provide progress reports to community and stakeholders every 3 months on key achievements and actions identified in the Actions Register.
- Other groups such as the LAN brokers can provide reports to the Reference Group through the Feedback Information and Invitation Form.

Does the community participate in the meetings?

- The Reference Group members (see table below) attend and participate in meetings.
- Community members can contact the Reference Group members to raise matters for discussion at the Reference Group.

Who is on the Reference Group?

- The Reference Group is community led and responsible for all decision making.
- The 12 nominated Reference Group members are:

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)	Roger Fenwick (Interim) Grattan Mullett (Ongoing)
Taungurung Land and Waters Council (Reference Group Chair)	Matthew Burns
Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC) (BRV Advisory Council Representative)	Jamie Williamson
Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service	Daphne Yarram
Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland Inc	Tammy Bundle
Far East Gippsland Representative	TBC
Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA)	Rebecca Abbey (Interim) Paula Morgan (Ongoing)
Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service	Suzie Squires
Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust (LTAT)	Jemma Owen
Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation	Mark Munnich
First Peoples Assembly	Leanne Miller (Interim)
Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation	Shantelle Gormly
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS)	David Noonan

Supports and Access

INITIATIVE	FURTHER DETAIL	SUPPORTING AGENCY	DETAIL OF SUPPORT	AGENCY CONTACT
Culturally informed and holistic healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing health care concerns • Responding to mental health needs • Addressing vicarious trauma, fatigue and stress • Supporting collaboration of local Aboriginal organisations 			
Healing Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal community led development and implementation of land management practices, including employment opportunities • Increasing knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal heritage values to inform future land and fire management activities • Ensure land rehabilitation works do not lead to avoidable damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage 			
Caring for Elders and Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the needs of Elders and carers • Providing additional supports to Elders and carers 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring concepts of kinship are understood 			
Cultural heritage restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits and surveys to identify the impacts of fires (including to register any new sites uncovered by the fires) • Remediation works to damaged sites, including sites damaged by bushfire protection activities • Put mitigation measures in place to reduce future potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage 			
Rebuilding Aboriginal community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on the needs of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) that own infrastructure which has been damaged by bushfires. • Ensure communities have access to transport, security, backup power, alternative water and food supplies and emergency shelter. • Advocating for refurbishment of bushfire damaged infrastructure owned by ACCOs within the State of Disaster • Coordinating support for planning and building assessments to support rapid 			

	rebuilding of community infrastructure			
Resourcing support for ACCO sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on the resourcing and funding needs of ACCOs including long term economic prosperity and employment • Coordinate support to address loss of income by ACCO's/organisations due to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff absences during fire season and reduced fee for service 2. Closure of organisations due to danger caused by fire and smoke (effect on output/targets required for DHHS accreditation) 3. Lack of supplies reaching organisations 4. Inability to continue servicing all client and offering all programs. • Ensure communication between government departments, agencies, ACCOs and other community stakeholders is streamlined and consistent 			
Financial relief funding for Aboriginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating centralised support to allocate and manage donations, supplies, services, etc. 			

individuals and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for families to rebuild and repair damaged households • Reimbursement of the costs of relocation and evacuation 			
Housing stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary accommodation to support Aboriginal communities impacted and displaced by the bushfires • Planning and building assessments to inform longer-term planning and support for Aboriginal community housing 			
Residential Aboriginal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bushfire recovery, mitigation and future planning for Aboriginal communities, including Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust 			

Further Information

If you have any queries about the Reference Group, please contact

Matthew Burns – Chair at mburns@taungurung.com.au

OR

Rose de Jong – Aboriginal Victoria - rose.dejong@dpc.vic.gov.au or on (03) 9651 2913

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