

Current as at: 21/02/2024

Following a natural disaster it can be difficult to know what services are available from the various sources to assist with recovery. This Fact Sheet has been prepared by VFBV to assist members and their families to navigate the various sources of assistance that we are currently aware of in relation to the Victorian Fire and Storm events across Victoria earlier this month.

PLEASE NOTE - Information concerning relief and recovery assistance is very dynamic and frequently changing. This update provides a snapshot of current resources available to assist with member enquiries.

VICTORIAN RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The **Recovery Support Program** is a Victorian Government service that links individuals to recovery support providers and offers a broad range of support, based on you or your family's immediate needs.

Recovery support may be available for people impacted by the:

- February 2024 Victorian storms
- February 2024 Western Victorian bushfires
- December 2023 to mid-January 2024 Victorian storms and floods
- October 2022 Victorian floods.

Depending on what you need, recovery support can help you:

- apply for payments and get financial help.
- find services to support your recovery.
- progress an insurance claim.
- refer you to mental health or wellbeing services.
- learn tips to help you or your family cope with stress.
- get legal support.
- get support for your business.

You are eligible for recovery support if you were directly impacted by the events above. and they affected your:

- property
- business, or
- mental health.

Due to long wait times via the phone, the program prefers online contact via: vic.gov.au/recovery-support where you fill out a form and a person will then make contact with you to discuss options. Urgent recovery needs can be accessed through the hotline via 1800 560 760

Emergency accommodation can also be accessed through the hotline.

RELIEF LOCATIONS

PLEASE NOTE - Relief locations are organised by local councils and are available by contacting –

Cardinia Shire – www.cardinia.vic.gov.au - 1300 787 624

Yarra Ranges – www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au - 1300 368 333

South Gippsland Shire – www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au - (03) 5662 9200

Wellington Shire Council – www.wellington.vic.gov.au – 1300 366 244

Latrobe City Council – www.Latrobe.vic.gov.au – 1300 367 700

Baw Baw Shire or – www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au – 1300 229 229

Bass Coast Shire or – www.basscoast.vic.gov.au – 1300 226 278

Northern Grampians Shire Council – www.ngshire.vic.gov.au – (03) 5358 8700

Rural City of Ararat – www.ararat.vic.gov.au – (03) 5355 0200

For General Information and a list of all current relief centres -

https://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#february_2024_victorian_storms

EMERGENCY RELIEF PAYMENTS - FEBRUARY FIRES AND STORMS

Emergency relief payments are available for eligible community members whose homes have been damaged by the bushfires in Victoria.

Emergency relief payments are designed to provide immediate financial help for eligible Victorians experiencing extreme financial hardship due to the bushfires.

An emergency relief payment can help you to pay for things you need most, including:

- food
- clothing
- medication
- accommodation.

Emergency relief payments are based on a fixed amount for each member of your household.

The payment is not calculated based on how much money you earn.

Payments are **\$640 per adult and \$320 per child, up to a maximum of \$2240 per eligible family.**

You are eligible for a relief payment if:

- your principal place of residence is in an evacuation warning area, or the fires or storms have damaged your home, and
- you have unmet immediate relief needs.

Speak to your local council or call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on [1800 560 760](tel:1800560760) for advice and support.

POWER OUTAGES – FEBRUARY STORMS

If you are impacted by extended power outages or damage to your residence due to the recent storm event, you may be entitled to compensation. For details of customer rights and to access compensation forms talk to your electricity supplier.

COMPANY	AREA	FAULTS	ENQUIRIES
Powercor Australia	Western suburbs and western Victoria	13 24 12	13 22 06
Ausnet Services	Outer northern and eastern suburbs and eastern Victoria	13 17 99	1300 360 795
United Energy Distribution	Southern suburbs and Mornington Peninsula	13 20 99	1300 131 689
Citipower	City and inner suburbs	13 12 80	1300 131 871
Jemena	Northern and north-western suburbs	13 16 26 SMS 0427 840 744	1300 131 871

https://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#february_2024_victorian_storms

If your household or small business has experienced a power outage for at least 7 days, you may be eligible for a **Prolonged Power Outage Payment**. Eligible customers will be notified by their power distribution business.

Power outages help – Governments both State and Federal will provide a **Prolonged Power Outage Payment** – households without power for 7 days following the storm are eligible for **\$1,920 per week for up to 3 weeks**.

Victorian Guaranteed Service Level payments. Assistance is in the form of electricity bill credits – the amount customers are entitled will depend on individual circumstances.

For more information on eligibility visit, esc.vic.gov.au/electricity-and-gas/information-consumers/guaranteed-service-level-payments-energy-outages.

OTHER

The **Services Australia Emergency Information line**, assistance is available if you are unable to access internet services or have trouble using your MyGov account call **180 22 66** between 8am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

In addition, the waste levy will be completely waived for storm impacted residents across 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) until 30 April 2024.

You can check if your LGA is participating - [Know Your Council | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au)

Residents from these areas will be able to dispose of storm disaster waste at their local tip free of charge. In collaboration with councils and the waste industry, the Victorian Government is ensuring all impacted communities have access to a facility or site to dispose of their waste quickly and safely.

VFBV WELFARE FUND

Operating since 1913, the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria welfare Fund provides fast small grants to CFA volunteers, long serving former volunteers and their families, who are experiencing significant financial hardship.

The Welfare Fund is run under Australian Tax Office rules, independently audited, and grant decisions are made by a committee of long serving CFA volunteers. The Fund has helped almost 1,300 volunteers, with more than \$2.3 million in grants made over the years.



- Grants up to \$5,000
- Available to all members and long serving ex-members and their families of subscribing Brigades
- Contact the VFBV Welfare Fund Secretary on (03) 9886 1141 welfare@vfbv.com.au or your VFBV Support Officer or State Councillor to discuss eligibility and application process.

VFBV Support Officers can be contacted via:

North East - Peter Sharman – p.sharman@vfbv.com.au - Phone 0428 751 652

South East – Colin Booth – c.booth@vfbv.com.au - Phone 0456 554 593

South West – Jason Willis – j.willis@vfbv.com.au – Phone 0409 109 447

West – John Lloyd – j.lloyd@vfbv.com.au – Phone 0407 334 685

North West – Max Blackmore – m.blackmore@vfbv.com.au – Phone 0409 119 477

CFA MEMBER WELFARE AND SUPPORT

Support services are available to all members and their immediate families:

CFA WELLBEING SUPPORT LINE
1800 959 232
Providing CFA members and their immediate family access to 24-hour support 7 days a week.
Psychologists – Counsellors – Peer Support - Chaplains

Lifeline: 13 11 14 - provides crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36 – to talk with a trained mental health professional

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 – information and assistance for young people and children