



## **The Victorian Council of Churches**

### **Report to the Expert Reference Group Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority**

**16th. July 2009**

## **CHURCH & CHURCH AGENCY RECOVERY INITIATIVES**

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### **General**

The Victorian Council of Churches (VCC) is the peak body which, in emergency, represents all faith communities .

Church Welfare Agencies underpin many government programmes and provide a vehicle for the action of local congregations.

The churches of Victoria are currently engaged in providing significant social and personal support services as well as extensive community development initiatives. A number of churches have initiated and resourced new programmes and some agencies have employed additional staff.

The following summary reports bushfire recovery arrangements and actions currently in place. It is by no means comprehensive and does not include the initiatives of a number of independent unaligned faith communities.

### **Church Funds**

Smaller churches which do not operate social welfare agencies have conducted appeals and are making direct grants through local congregations and clergy.

To date over \$10 million dollars has been raised by faith communities and applied by the churches.

Although the Greek Orthodox and Presbyterian churches have made direct donations to Red Cross and the Salvation Army the churches have not received a distribution from Red Cross to assist their under-funded initiatives.

## Reporting Churches & Agencies \*

ANGLICAN:	Anglicare; Brotherhood of St. Laurence; Gippsland Family Services
BAPTIST:	Baptcare
CATHOLIC:	St. Vincent DePaul Society; Centacare Family services
CHURCHES OF CHRIST:	Careworks
GREEK ORTHODOX	
LUTHERAN	
PRESBYTERIAN	
UNITING CHURCH:	<i>Uniting Care (UC); UC Cutting Edge; UC Community Options; UC Wodonga; UCKildonan; Kilmany UC; UC Goulbourn NE; Connections UC; Wesley Mission Melbourne; Bendigo UC; Wimmera UC</i>

## Church & Agency Recovery Initiatives

1. EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION  
Catholic Baptist and Uniting Churches.
2. CASE MANAGEMENT (VBCMS) Extra managers employed  
Anglican, Baptist, Catholic and Uniting Churches
3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Development officers appointed by Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches.
4. CLERGY for pastoral care and bereavement services  
Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches provided full time funding for part time locally employed clergy and appointed extra support clergy.  
School chaplains are provided through Access Ministries and the Anglican dioceses of Melbourne and Wangaratta
5. COUNSELLING  
Personal, financial and legal Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT)  
Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches
6. GRANTS (*Personal hardship and small business grants*) made by:  
Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Lutheran, and Presbyterian Churches

\* *The Salvation Army has not been included in this report as it has a contractual obligation under the State emergency arrangements. However it is a member of the Victorian Council of Churches and its contribution to the response of Faith Communities is recognised.*

7. LEGAL SERVICES

Wills advice, Royal Commission submissions preparation assistance; insurance, fencing issues; VOCAT applications preparation assistance.)

Anglican, and Uniting Churches

Anglicare Note:: *there is an increase in Family Law issues and Family Violence.*

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Baptcare ( *Coordinating material relief and outreach visiting for Nillumbik*

9. PARENTING and child care programmes

Anglicare, RC Centacare and Kildonan Uniting Care

10. PARISH PARTNERSHIP programmes ( *direct links to specific locations*)

Anglican church

11. PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS ( *integrated with Primary Mental Health teams*)

Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches

12. RESPITE Centres and Holiday programmes

Anglican and Catholic Churches

13. SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES ( *with cooperation of the Education Department*)

Anglicare Art in schools; Kildonan Uniting Care

14. MATERIAL AID ( *Separate to the Salvation Army SEP Arrangement*)

Personal material aid:

Brotherhood of St. Laurence, St.Vincent DePaul, Uniting Care

Practical material aid:

Fencing volunteers -

Large number of teams from Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches

First Aid kits distributed by Anglicare

Temporary Recovery Villages - Uniting Church

Tools and equipment - Anglican and Uniting churches

Tool sheds initiated and located by Anglican Church

15. CHURCH APPEAL FUNDS RECEIVED

Anglican	1,674,000
Baptist	1,205,500
Catholic	3,900,000
Churches of Christ	400,000
Greek Orthodox	400,000
Lutheran	250,000
Presbyterian	300,000
Uniting Church	1,900,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,029,500</b>