

FRRR 2009 Victorian Bushfire Response

BACKGROUND:

FRRR is leading a collaborative and coordinated philanthropic response to the 2009 Victorian bushfires, based on FRRR's experience as grantmaker in rural and regional Australia, as a provider of programs post natural disaster events and based on knowledge and experience of collaborative grants programs on behalf of a large number of partners.

RRR – A SECTOR RESPONSE

Philanthropy Australia and FRRR co-hosted a meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall on 17 February to discuss how the philanthropic community can best respond to the Victorian bushfires and support affected communities. This was well supported and included a key cross section of the philanthropic community in Victoria, as well as visiting Members from interstate.

FRRR developed a multi-level response in order to meet the needs that the philanthropic sector had identified through this process. The aim was to work under a single philanthropic banner for the benefit of bushfire affected communities. By working in this manner it will avoid replication of philanthropic effort and resources and fill the gaps as only philanthropy can.

In response to the needs identified by the sector FRRR designed a tailored response which operates on four different levels.

1. Clearing house role – through liaison within other funders including other philanthropic partners, VBARRA, service clubs and community fundraising FRRR refers proposals, applications and suggestions to the most appropriate source.
2. RRR – (Repair, Restore, Renew) Grants Program – an advertised program with stated closing dates and fast turnaround. Grants are funded from pooled partner funds. Depending on the funds available and the wishes of partners there can be geographic and programmatic responses.
3. Leverage programs – offer the opportunity to partner with other organisations (government, NFPs, individuals) and develop responses that meet community needs as well as partner needs. This offers the opportunity for proactive development of responses by working closely with communities and/or partners.
4. FRRR Regional Donation Account – where organisations or communities wish to, or have, raised funds to give into a specific community or for a specific purpose. FRRR has a unique ability to offer this program

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As a result FRRR has already made 37 grants to bushfire affected communities (see list provided) to the value of over \$800,000.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

FRRR received support from a range of partners very early on and was encouraged to take a leadership role in assisting the sector develop a cohesive response. One of the key partnerships in the early phase was The William Buckland Foundation, who have taken an active role in supporting FRRR not only in developing a collaborative grants program, but importantly in provide a dedicated resource to manage and develop the project in all its complexities on behalf of all the partners to ensure that Victorian bushfire affected communities benefit from philanthropy in the best possible way and in an appropriate manner. This provides FRRR with the resources required to research submissions and ensure the project represents the most effective use of philanthropic funding.

FRRR has also developed a strong partnership with the Community Enterprise Foundation, who also took a leading role in the bushfire recovery process and who have administered a very successful public appeal process and provided administrative support to the collaborative process as well as making a significant contribution to the RRR Program.

Other important partnerships include the Helen McPherson Smith Trust who established a \$2m bushfire grants program. FRRR also works closely with service clubs particularly Rotary and Lions whom have conducted very successful fundraising appeals for bushfire affected communities. FRRR has strong links within local districts across fire affected areas as well as at the state administrative level to assist with project development and funding

Another key relationship has been with the Salvation Army, who also conducted an independent appeal and who have been extremely active on the ground, and will continue to fund projects into the medium to long term.

One of the most significant partnerships FRRR has developed is with VBRRA with which we have a MOU. This has resulted in VBRRA providing FRRR with administrative support from the Donations Team as well as access to the formal community engagement process. The relationship also provides community groups and the community engagement coordinators with a sense of security knowing that a collaborative, flexible and responsive grants program will be available to the community groups in the medium to long term at the conclusion of VBRRA process.

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REPAIR – RESTORE- RENEW

The Repair-Restore-Renew (RRR) Victorian 2009 Bushfire Grants Program opened on the 28th September 2009. Grants from \$1,000 and up to \$30,000 will be available to not for profit community based organisations that can clearly demonstrate the following

- Projects which are identified as part of the community recovery plans and by Community Recovery Committees in Bushfire affected communities will receive priority
- Projects must be for a charitable purpose ie: for the broader community benefit. All applications for projects with a charitable purpose will be received and considered.
- Projects which contribute to community renewal and or rebuilding in the areas of social and community wellbeing, economic, environmental, health, education and cultural areas will be considered.
- Projects requiring assistance and can demonstrate a benefit in the medium to long term (12-36 months after the fires)
- Projects that avoid replication and are complementary to other funding sources

LEVEL OF NEED:

The sector has for the most part been awaiting the outcome of the Community Engagement process coordinated by VBRRA. Each region has created a comprehensive plan outlining projects that would provide assistance in the renewal and development process. These plans have only recently been completed, and will form a platform for the philanthropic sector to work with in partnership with government and the not for profit sector to address the identified needs.

However, it is important to note that FRRR has identified gaps in many communities that have not been identified in the formal process, and therefore a genuine need exists for an independent grants program as well.

FRRR has identified that the level of need in these communities far outweighs the funding currently available through government, VBAF, the service clubs, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and the philanthropic sector and it is our experience that many projects will not be identified at this early stage. It may take another twelve to eighteen months for many of these communities to regain their confidence and vision and the collaborative program will need to continue to seek support from the philanthropic sector for the next three years to support this process.

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RRR – PHILANTHROPIC PROGRAM PARTNERS

The Bamford Family Foundation

The Calvert-Jones Foundation

The Collie Foundation

The Community Enterprise Foundation

FRRR

The Grosvenor Foundation

The Jack and Robert Smorgon Families Foundation

Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation

Mars Stride Foundation

The Pratt Foundation

The RE Ross Trust

School Aid Trust

Sidney Myer Fund

The Thomas Foundation

The William Buckland Foundation

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RRR Bushfire Program Projects Funded as at January 2010

Organisation	Project Title	Grant
Dederang Rural Fire Brigade	Building Community Capacity: Recording community memories of Black Saturday	\$5,000
Neerim South Recreation Reserve	Water Storage	\$5,000
Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House	Purchase portable sound system and trailer	\$5,000
Mirboo North Community Shed Co-operative	Out of the Smoke – Needed briefing equipment	\$2,695
Community Association for Woods Point Inc	RSL Hall Project	\$4,750
Circus Australia Ltd	Circus Oz Bushfire Workshops	\$41,000
Kinglake Ranges Radio	Broadcast Equipment	\$30,000
Clonbinane CFA	Field Command Vehicle	\$36,245
Lions Club of Mordialloc-Mentone	The Growling Frogs Children's Retreat	\$30,000
Landcare Mudgegonga	Emergency Communication	\$29,708
Happy Valley Hall Committee	Emergency Communication	\$13,500
Churchill and District News	Upgrade – Extension of Computer Programs	\$7,881
Strathewen Primary School Parents and Citizens Committee	Strathewen Renewal Calendar	\$5,000
Boolara South Landcare	Materials and Equipment Upgrade	\$6,024
Drouin Music and Movement Playgroup	Kids on the Move	\$1,500
Kilmany Uniting Care	Computer Equipment for Outside School Hours Care at Mirboo North Primary School	\$5,000
Mirboo North Secondary College	Kitchen Garden	\$5,000
Running Creek/St Albans CFA	Emergency Communication	\$3,779
Acheron Valley Watch Inc	Triangle Community Steel band Project	\$6,000
Kinglake Football Netball Club	Kinglake Memorial Oval- Grandstand	\$8,500
Healesville Living & Learning Centre Inc	Men's Shed Program	\$30,000
Healesville Living & Learning Centre Inc	Community Cooking Program	\$10,000
Jindivick Progress Association	Nangara Reserve ARTraction	\$7,000
Lions Club of Marysville	Community Marquee	\$34,769
Traralgon South & District Association	Men's Shed Workshop Tools and Machinery	\$29,855
Scope-Vic Ltd	The Innerspace Program	\$13,098
Upper Goulburn Landcare Network	Kinglake Waterways Interpretive Signage	\$2,729
Jindivick Flower & Craft Show	Flower and Craft Show 2010	\$1,500
Marysville Cultural Community Inc	Triangle Roadside Wildflowers	\$28,280
Yea Preschool Inc	Bushfire Improvement Project	\$22,500
Strathewen Community Renewal Association	Then the Wind Changed	\$15,000
TOTAL		\$446,313

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Projects Funded through collaborative partnerships as at January 2010

Organisation	Project Title	Contributor	Grant
RRR – Back to School Program	Back to School vouchers for bushfire affected communities	Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation	\$35,000
Alexandra District Hospital	Buxton Community Health Centre Gym	Community Enterprise Foundation	\$10,125
Circus Australia Ltd	Circus Oz Bushfire Tour 2009	Community Enterprise Foundation	\$48,000
Jeeralang Hall Committee	Jeeralang Hall Reconstruction	Community Enterprise Foundation	\$30,000
Kinglake Ranges Radio	Permanent Transmitter Installation	Rotary International	\$30,000
Marysville Central	Small Business and Retail Sector Facility Upgrade	Rotary International	\$293,000
TOTAL			\$446,125