# FINANCIAL SUPPORT: outer gippsland

Information for parents and families on the financial support available in Outer Gippsland for those affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires.

## RETURN TO SCHOOL - Funding for schools, STUDENTs and families

### Government schools *-* State Schools’ Relief

State Schools’ Relief (SSR) may cover the cost of new school uniforms, shoes, books and more for students affected by the bushfires. State Schools’ Relief only takes requests from school principals, assistant principals or welfare coordinators. You can make an appointment with your child’s school to talk about your child’s situation.

For more information, contact your school, visit: [ssr.net.au](http://ssr.net.au) or call SSR on (03) 8769 8400.

### Non-government schools – Bushfire Hardship Grant

If your child goes to a non-government school and meets the eligibility criteria, you may be able to access the Department of Education and Training’s $500,000 Bushfire Hardship Grant. This can cover the cost of uniform items including school shoes, books and stationery, and other items that kids need to use at school. Your child's school will help you decide where to allocate the funding.

For more information, contact the Department on: 1800 338 663 or
email: bushfire.grants@edumail.vic.gov.au

### The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund gives payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families with a valid concession card, or temporary foster parents, are eligible to apply. A Special Consideration eligibility category also exists. Special consideration is given to families on a bridging visa, temporary protection visa, are in community detention or are asylum seeker families. Consideration is also given to students in out of home care and students in statutory kinship care.

For more information, see Camps, Sports and Excursions [education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx) 0

### Student Scholarships

Student Scholarships are generally awarded, but not limited to, students based on academic achievement, taking part in the school and local community, or financial need. The Department runs 35 student scholarships, equalling about 250 scholarship awards. Some scholarships have more than one award.

For more information, see: [eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/default.aspx](http://eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/default.aspx)

## OTHER VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS

### Emergency Relief Assistance Payments

Emergency Relief Assistance Payments are available to eligible communities affected by fire.

Payments of up to $560 per adult and $280 per child are available (up to a maximum of $1960 per eligible household). These payments help people directly impacted cover the cost of emergency food, accommodation, clothing, medication and personal items.

## To find out if you are eligible, visit a relief centre in your area. A list of relief and recovery centres is available at: [emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#relief\_and\_recovery\_centres](http://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#relief_and_recovery_centres)

### Emergency Re-establishment Payments

Emergency re-establishment assistance is available if your home is uninhabitable for more than seven days because of an emergency.

Grants of up to $42,250 are available per eligible household experiencing financial hardship due to fire at their primary place of residence. The grants are available for:

* clean-up
* emergency accommodation
* repairs
* rebuilding (a principal place of residence)
* replacing some damaged contents.

Re-establishment assistance is available for individuals or families who do not have building (home) insurance or contents insurance.

For more information visit the [Personal Hardship Assistance Program](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-hardship-assistance-program) on- [knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils](http://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils).

If you think you may be eligible contact the Department of Health and Human Services payment assistance helpline on 1800 961 054.

### The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program

The Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program is available to people in fire-affected areas in Gippsland and North East Victoria, and other parts of Victoria. There is no charge for the services provided by this program.

The program gives access to Case Support Coordinators who will establish links to vital support, offer information and advice, mental health support or financial counselling.

If you have been affected, contact a Case Support Coordinator by:

* Calling: 1800 560 760 or emailing::connect@brv.vic.gov.au
* Contacting your [local council](https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils) at: [knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils](http://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils)
* Visiting a [recovery centre](https://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#relief_and_recovery_centres) at: [emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#relief\_and\_recovery\_centres](http://emergency.vic.gov.au/relief/#relief_and_recovery_centres)

### Victorian Bushfire Appeal

The Victorian Government partnered with Bendigo Bank and the Salvation Army to create the Victorian Bushfire Appeal. This provides the following grants:

* **Bereavement:** Immediate payments of $50,000 to each family of people who have tragically died during Victoria’s bushfires.
* **Boundary fences:** $1 million, provided through BlazeAid, will help farmers replace boundary fences on their property, destroyed by bushfires.
* **Primary residence:** Funding of up to $4 million will support residents in bushfire-affected areas who have experienced loss of, or damage to, their primary residence. Funding from $1,000 to $4,500 will cover temporary accommodation costs, such as hotel bills.

To register your interest in these grants or for more information, please contact Bushfire Recovery Victoria on 1800 560 760.

### Financial counselling

Financial counsellors are available free of charge to help people affected by the Gippsland and North East Victoria fires, including

* phone and face-to-face information about financial issues
* face-to-face practical support including starting financial plans and budget planning
* information on entitlements and types of government assistance
* advocating and negotiating with financial institutions and insurance agencies on your behalf
* referrals to other community services or legal services if needed.

To access a financial counsellor, call Bushfire Recovery Victoria on 1800 560 760.

## COMMONWEALTH government SUPPORTS

### Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment – for damaged or destroyed homes or injury

$1,000 per adult and $400 per child is available for people who:

* were seriously injured
* lost their homes
* had their homes directly damaged by the bushfires
* are the immediate family members of a person who has died, as a direct result of the bushfires.

For more information and instructions on how to claim, see the [Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment) on [servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment)

### Disaster Recovery Allowance – for income support

Up to 13 weeks income support is available for those who have lost income as a direct result of the bushfires.

For more information and instructions on how to claim, please see the [Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment) page at: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/victorian-bushfires-december-2019-australian-government-disaster-recovery-payment) .

### Family assistance

The Commonwealth Government offers a range of payments and services to help families look after their children’s health, education and other family issues.

* The Child Care Benefit helps eligible families with the cost of outside school hours care, vacation care and registered care. For more information, see Centrelink Child Care Benefit at [.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/centrelink](http://.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/centrelink)
* To be eligible for the Family Tax Benefits, A or B, or a Parenting Payment, families must meet an income test. For more information, see: Centrelink: Families at: [servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/families](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/families)
* Depending on family circumstances, young people between 15 and 24 years of age may be eligible for [Youth Allowance](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance), [Newstart Allowance](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newstart-allowance) or [ABSTUDY](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy). These payments offer financial support while young people are looking for work, studying, training or doing an Australian Apprenticeship. For more information see: [servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink)
* [Health Care Card](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/health-care-card) provides help with the cost of prescription medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), Commonwealth-funded medical services, and access to state, territory and local government concessions. Families may be eligible for a Health Care Card if they receive specific Commonwealth payments or supplements or the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit A. See: [servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/health-care-card](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/health-care-card)
* [Centrepay](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/centrepay) is a free, voluntary service for Centrelink customers to pay expenses as regular deductions from their Centrelink payments. Centrepay can help families to pay for many types of bills, such as education fees and expenses, childcare, rent, electricity, gas and water bills, or medical services. See: [servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/centrepay](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/centrepay)

## OTHER SUPPORTS

### Red Cross Emergency Grants – for destroyed homes

People who have lost homes can apply to Australian Red Cross for an emergency grant of $10,000.

If your home was destroyed by a bushfire, apply for a grant at the [Red Cross immediate assistance grant](https://www.redcross.org.au/grants) page on [redcross.org.au/grants](http://redcross.org.au/grants).

## Additional support – reducing school costs

Your child’s school can give you information about support options for families to help make the costs of education more affordable.

### Lowering the cost of essential student learning items

Schools can engage suppliers in order to offer a broad price variety and ensure supplier costs are competitive.

Schools should outline to parents and families, which Essential Student Learning Items on their booklists can be supplied by families themselves, for example: substituted for low-cost or generic versions, or substituted for items that the family already owns, such as stationery, uniform items, school bag, or calculator.

Iron-on school logos should be available for uniform items that are purchased at a lower cost but need a school logo, for example, hats and skivvies.

Schools should make sure that costs are minimised on excursions and think about if there are:

* any ‘hidden’ additional costs built into the excursion that some students, may not be able to afford. For example, the opportunity to buy meals or souvenirs.
* different transport options – is it suitable for students to walk or take public transport between locations?
* any virtual excursion or conferencing opportunities that could enrich student’s engagement with the learning and teaching program.

### Second-hand strategies

Schools can provide information on second-hand options available for items commonly needed For example, uniforms, stationery, textbooks and calculators.

Second-hand options may include:

* A school-based uniform shop that sells both new and second-hand items
* Swap days at the start, middle and/or end of the year for items like uniforms and textbooks
* Trading in second hand items through the school uniform or book supplier
* Online platforms, such as:
	+ State Schools’ Relief at: [ssr.net.au](http://ssr.net.au)
	+ Sustainable school shop at [sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://sustainableschoolshop.com.au)
	+ trading websites such as Gumtree
	+ social media networks. For example, private Facebook groups.

### School loans

Some resources may be borrowed from the school for a certain amount of time, such as for a day or for a year. If you borrow resources, some schools may ask for a deposit or assurance that damages will be paid for. Items available for loan may include text books (digital and/or hard-copy), devices, and essential equipment such as graphic calculators.

For more information see: [education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/financial-help-school-items.aspx](http://education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/financial-help-school-items.aspx)