SHORT-TERM MODULAR HOUSING

for bushfire-affected Victorian households while they rebuild
Short-term modular housing

Short-term modular housing is an option available for a number of families who lost their primary place of residence in the 2019/20 Victorian Bushfires.

The housing will be delivered to your property, or another location as agreed by authorities, property owners and the resident. You will be able to live in these homes for a period of up to three years while you progress your permanent rebuild.

The modular homes available are one, two and three bedroom, ranging from 30 to 50 square metres.

An artist’s impression of the two-bedroom home is on the cover of this brochure and indicative floor plan is below. An actual floorplan and specifications will be provided as part of the proposal before you accept any offer.

Is this emergency housing?

Short-term modular housing is a ‘bridge’ between accommodation provided in the weeks and months after the fires, and the long-term rebuild of your home.

Everyone who lost their primary place of residence in the bushfires can access emergency accommodation by contacting the Victorian Bushfires Case Support Program. Through the case support program, everyone who needed emergency accommodation was offered it.

Some households have opted for alternative accommodation. Case support continue to work with them to ensure they have all the support they need.
What happens step-by-step?

1) A conversation with your case support worker

Your eligibility for short-term modular housing will be assessed with your case support worker. This will include things like verifying whether your original home was your primary place of residence and has been deemed uninhabitable by council, your current living arrangements, your intention to rebuild, and some other matters. It will also include a discussion about your household configuration, number of bedrooms and whether your site can be accessed.

2) A site inspection at your property

A site inspection will take place to assess whether installation of short-term modular housing can go ahead. Ideally, this inspection will be attended by you, your case support worker, a BRV representative, the modular housing supplier and the surveyor. During the site inspection, the logistics of delivering and installing a modular house – including how to connect power, water and sewerage, or how to provide these services – will be addressed.

3) A proposal that you can think about

If the assessment shows that installation of a modular house on your property is possible, you will be presented with a proposal that will explain the process if you want to go ahead. The proposal will answer all your questions about where the structure will go, how services will be connected, and how much it will cost. If the assessment shows that installation of a modular house on your property is not possible, then other options will be explored with you.

4) A hire agreement that you can sign

If you want to go ahead with the proposal to have a modular house installed on your property, you will sign a Hire and Construction Works Access Agreement. This makes it official. Your case support worker will also work with you to fill out a Council Planning Consent form.

5) Your modular house gets built and delivered

When the hire agreement is signed, BRV will arrange the construction and delivery of your modular house. This will include works on your property to prepare the site for installation. The standard timeframe from signing the hire agreement to delivery of the modular house is expected to be 6 to 8 weeks.

6) You move in - and start your permanent rebuild

Your hire period starts when the modular house is ready for occupation. That’s when you can move in. The hire period will finish when you’re ready to move into your rebuilt home, or after three years, which is the maximum hire period allowed. Once you have rebuilt and moved into your permanent home, the modular house will be removed at BRV’s cost.
How do I know if I’m eligible?

The Case Support Program will work with you if you are identified as potentially needing short-term modular housing. You will be eligible if:

- You are engaged in the Case Support Program.
- Your primary place of residence was destroyed or damaged and has been deemed uninhabitable.
- You owned and occupied or rented your primary place of residence.
- You intend to build a primary place of residence on site within three years.
- Case support determines there is no alternative suitable accommodation within 30 kilometres of your primary place of residence.
- There is at least one person over the age of 16 who will occupy the home.

What will it cost?

As short-term modular housing is publicly provided, occupants will pay hiring fees benchmarked to current public housing rates for modular homes of $145 a week for a one-bedroom home, $175 a week for two bedroom and $205 a week for three bedroom.

Financial hardship arrangements will be in place if needed, meaning hiring fees can be reduced to ensure they do not exceed 25 per cent of a household’s total income.

The Government will cover reasonable costs for delivery, installation and removal. These reasonable costs are based on an average estimate and will be applied on a case-by-case basis.

The number of bedrooms occupants are entitled to is based on need. Generally, a single person or a couple will be eligible for a one bedroom, and if a couple has two children over the age of 16 years they will be entitled to a three bedroom house. Case Support will work with you to review your individual circumstances and confirm your entitlements.

What are my other options?

The modular housing option is designed to support and complement existing DHHS housing provision. If you don’t want to take up the option of short-term modular housing, case support will continue to work with you to ensure you are in DHHS-supported emergency accommodation or that you have access to alternative private arrangements that are safe and secure.

What’s most important is that the option is there for you if you want it. Case support workers will continue to find the solutions that work best for individuals and families in need.
Do I need permits?

Families who lost their home in the bushfires can install ‘temporary housing’ for up to three years on their property without a planning permit, subject to a number of requirements. The Victorian Government made this change to make the process easier for households.

You will still need to apply for a building permit through your local council before building temporary housing. Planning and building support services will be available through your local Recovery Hub.

Families who lost their home in the bushfires won’t need to undertake a BAL (Bushfire Attack Level) assessment to build short-term modular housing. This modular housing will meet a BAL rating of high. For more info, visit the planning.vic.gov.au page on building in bushfire prone areas.

What if it can’t go on my land?

There are some situations where modular housing may not be able to be installed on a site, for example, if there is no longer safe access to the site or if the ground is deemed unsafe.

In these situations, case support will work with you, council, and other third-party landowners to locate an alternative site for the modular housing.

How long can I live in it for?

You will be able to occupy the short-term modular housing for up to three years whilst you plan the construction of your permanent residence.

Purchase of the structure at the end of three years cannot be guaranteed. Any structure placed on land at the end of three years for ongoing occupation will have to be approved via normal planning permits.

Am I locked in if I accept?

You’ll be able to talk through the option with your case support worker and come to a decision at a time that’s right for you. But to finalise the process, you will be required to sign a hire agreement. The hire agreement will contain all your rights and responsibilities and will detail your options should you no longer wish to proceed with the build or continue living in the house.

Who can I discuss this with?

You can discuss all of this with your case support worker. They are there to answer any question you may have. Decisions like this aren’t easy, particularly given all you have been through since the fires.

Case support is here to support you every step of the way with whatever option you choose. You can reach out at any time to your case support manager, or directly to Bushfire Recovery Victoria and the case support program at 1800 560 760.