

REBUILDING SAFELY FACTSHEET

Rebuilding after a bushfire is a big job. Everybody has different circumstances and will make different choices, and that's okay. We know that not everyone wants to rebuild straight away. You can access support when you are ready. When you do decide to rebuild, it is important to understand the standards you need to build to and why.

This factsheet highlights the importance of rebuilding to building standards and why we need to build back safer.

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE AND BUSHFIRE RESILIENT

As our climate warms, Victoria will become hotter and drier, increasing the frequency and severity of heatwaves and bushfires.

To keep our communities safe and resilient in future natural disasters like bushfires, new builds need to comply with current planning and building standards.

These standards aim to improve our level of bushfire protection. The standards are based on an understanding of how bushfire impacts a home and the threat of bushfire.

CHANGES SINCE 2009 BLACK SATURDAY BUSHFIRES

The 2009 Black Saturday bushfires had significant impacts, with loss of life and over 2,000 houses destroyed.

The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission into the Black Saturday bushfires made 67 recommendations to strengthen preparedness and response to future bushfire events. Nineteen of these recommendations related to Victoria's planning and building system, and improvements to how planning applications for bushfire rebuilds are assessed.

In response, these changes have been made to the planning and building system which respond to bushfire risk and keep us safe.

For more information visit:

www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/bushfire

BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT OVERLAY

The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) is a planning control that applies to high-risk bushfire landscapes.

Land identified as BMO in the planning scheme is normally also a Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) under the Victorian Building Regulations 2018.

Most properties in East Gippsland Shire and parts of Towong Shire are covered by the BMO. To build a house in the BMO a planning permit is needed and will be referred to Country Fire Authority (CFA) for assessment against the requirements of the planning scheme.

The planning application must ensure bushfire protection measures are addressed, including construction to a bushfire rating (Bushfire Attack Level), defendable space and ongoing vegetation management, firefighting water supply and fire safe access for emergency vehicles.

SHORT-TERM MODULAR HOUSING

It's important that while you rebuild, you and your family have safe and suitable accommodation. There are temporary housing options available in Victoria.

Short-Term Modular Housing is one option available for those who lost their primary place of residence in the 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires. The program is flexible and aims to get people back on their land.

The Short-Term Modular Homes come in standard designs that accommodate most temporary accommodation needs. The design can be customised to meet specific needs such as mobility access requirements. BRV will work with recipients of Short-Term Modular Housing to understand and respond to specific needs.

To date, our Short-Term Modular Housing Program has delivered 57 high quality modular homes allowing them to stay connected to their communities while they rebuild.

Thursday 30 September 2021 is the cut-off date for new registrations for Short-Term Modular Housing.

If you're residing in a Short-Term Modular Housing unit, the registration cut-off date doesn't affect you. If you've registered for Short-Term Modular Housing and are waiting for it to be processed, the registration cut-off date doesn't affect you and your application will continue to be processed.

If you need to discuss your temporary housing options or are unsure whether you meet the criteria, BRV can consider your circumstances.

Please call 1800 560 760 to speak to a Bushfire Recovery Support Worker by **Thursday 30 September 2021**.

REBUILDING EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR COMPLEX SITES

For a small number of properties, rebuilding to meet current building and fire safety standards will be more difficult due to high levels of bushfire risk. These sites are called complex sites.

The Complex Site Taskforce is a free independent service that has been established to support property owners with complex sites. It exists to ensure every option has been explored to rebuild safely, and to meet current standards. Where rebuilding safely may not be achievable, then there is support for owners of complex sites to resettle. This includes voluntary purchase of land by Government through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Retreat and Resettlement program.

You can read more about complex sites and the experts available to support you on the *Expert Advice factsheet*.

YOUR LOCAL REBUILD SUPPORT SERVICE (RSS) IS HERE TO HELP

The RSS is a free one-stop-shop that provides support to people who are rebuilding.

Through the RSS, you can access:

- Dedicated planning and permit information, support, and advice.
- Advice from building experts.
- Information on financial assistance options.
- Other services you may be eligible for.

The RSS is delivered by the East Gippsland Shire Council and Towong Shire Council.

To get started, contact your Rebuild Support Service.

East Gippsland Shire

www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information
(03) 5153 9500

Towong Shire

www.towong.vic.gov.au (select 'Upper Murray Fires 2020')
1800 518 222.

LAST UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 2021

The rebuilding journey can be overwhelming

If you would like to talk to someone about this, Recovery Support Workers are here to listen and link you to experts who can help.

To talk to someone today, call **1800 560 760**, or visit your local recovery Hub. To find your hub online and check opening hours visit: brv.vic.gov.au/community-recovery-hubs