

# FINANCIAL SUPPORTS 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 these supports when you are ready.

This factsheet highlights the types of financial supports available to help you rebuild.

## REBATES

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have made up to \$27,000 in rebates available for landowners whose properties were destroyed or significantly damaged by the 2019-20 Eastern Victorian bushfires.

There are three rebate programs available:

- Planning and Building Assistance Rebate Program
- Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program
- Geotechnical Assessment Rebate Program

You can read rebate program guidelines and apply for rebates on the Melbourne Water website.

### Planning and Building Assistance Rebate Program

This program offers rebates for professional services and property-based assessments and advice you need to support a planning or building permit application to rebuild or repair a dwelling.

This rebate provides up to \$5,000 per affected property, for services such as:

- preparation of a concept plan
- preparation of a planning permit application report and any related supporting technical reports, including those related to bushfire planning or hazard assessments and other environmental considerations
- land surveying, building set out, civil or structural engineering reports or equivalent
- arborist reports
- planning consultant fees
- building permit fees.

Applicants can submit multiple applications for rebates; however, the total value of your rebates will not exceed \$5,000.

### Rainwater and Septic Tank Replacement Program

This program helps replace rainwater and septic tanks on impacted properties. This builds longer term resilience and sustainability for households by supporting the purchase and installation of rainwater tanks and septic systems that meet current Australian standards and local council requirements.

#### The rebate covers:

Up to half the cost of purchasing and installing a new:

- Primary use rainwater tank system to residents rebuilding homes, up to a maximum of \$3,000.
- water tank for firefighting purposes or installation of appropriate outlets to current water tanks, up to a maximum of \$3,000.
- primary use septic tank system to residents rebuilding homes, up to a maximum of \$15,000

The full cost of:

- The initial refill of the rainwater tank installed as part of this program, up to a maximum of \$500.
- Assessments required for council approval to install or alter a septic system, including condition reports undertaken by a qualified plumber and Land Capability Assessments, up to a maximum of \$1,500.
- Any minor repairs or reconnections required if the tank systems are relatively undamaged and comply with current standards. **or**, any work required to reconnect to a reticulated (water mains) system, up to a maximum of \$2,500

Relevant associated costs, up to the maximum outlined above, including:

- Purchase of a rainwater or septic tank system.
- Purchase of associated plumbing and materials connected to the system.
- Installation costs and delivery charges.

## Geotechnical Assessment Rebate Program

This program provides rebates for up to 80% of the cost of:

- A standard soil report to support an application for a Building Permit, up to a maximum of \$400.
- A full geotechnical assessment, to satisfy the requirements of either:
  - » The Erosion Management Overlay in the East Gippsland Planning Scheme to the satisfaction of the East Gippsland Shire Council, up to a maximum of \$2,000, or
  - » the Steep Land local policy of the Towong Planning Scheme for a proposed building site with slope of 20 percent or greater, to the satisfaction of the Towong Shire Council, up to a maximum of \$2,000.

The support will be provided as a one-off rebate payment to eligible applicants for eighty percent of the cost of a geotechnical assessment required under the planning scheme, up to a maximum amount.

## PRIVATE OVERHEAD ELECTRIC LINE SCHEME

The Private Overhead Electric Line (POEL) Scheme fully funds the replacement of eligible private overhead powerlines with safer underground connections. Removing old private powerlines helps reduce powerline bushfire ignitions and increases community safety and resilience.

The scheme continues to support POEL undergrounding in the original three target Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Alpine, Towong and East Gippsland, the areas most affected by the 2019-20 bushfires. Eligible areas have been expanded to cover high bushfire risk areas in a further ten LGAs predominantly in the Hume and Gippsland regions, along with the program eligibility requirements being broadened.

For more information and to make an application, visit: [energy.vic.gov.au/electricity/powerline-replacement](http://energy.vic.gov.au/electricity/powerline-replacement) or email [safer.powerlines@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:safer.powerlines@delwp.vic.gov.au)

## FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SUPPORT

As you look at rebuilding, there is a lot of think about in terms of financing the build, accessing or drawing on insurance, and managing old and new debt obligations. Having structured, unbiased, free professional assistance with understanding those issues will go a long way to ensuring you are set up to do the rebuild on a sound and sustainable basis.

Financial counselling is a free, confidential, nonjudgmental and independent service available to anyone affected by the bushfires.

### East Gippsland

#### Anglicare Bushfire Financial Counselling

[Bushfire.FCPgipps@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:Bushfire.FCPgipps@anglicarevic.org.au)  
1800 286 260

### North East

#### Upper Murray Family Care Financial Counselling

[financialcounsellors@umfc.com.au](mailto:financialcounsellors@umfc.com.au)  
(02) 6055 8000 (Wodonga) or  
(03) 5720 0000 (Wangaratta)

*This program services the Ovens Murray, Murray and Hume regions.*

## YOUR LOCAL 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.

Get started today.

### East Gippsland Shire

[www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire\\_information](http://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Bushfire_information)  
(03) 5153 9500

### Towong Shire

[www.towong.vic.gov.au](http://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](http://brv.vic.gov.au/community-recovery-hubs)