



FACTSHEET

Application for Exceptional Hardship Support Payment for Individuals or Small Business

Am I eligible?

You are eligible for the Exceptional Hardship Support Payment if, as a result of the 2009 Victorian bushfires, you have freely and selflessly provided substantial, exceptional and unique support or services to bushfire affected communities through the operation of your business or utilisation of your skills in business, and you are suffering hardship as a result of providing that support and charity.

You are not eligible for this payment if, as an individual, you provided this support or service as a member of a volunteer emergency service or under any other duty to render assistance, or as a part of your normal employment for which you have been paid.

You are not eligible for this payment if, as a small business, you receive the Commonwealth/State National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangement (NDRRA) for businesses directly affected by the bushfires. If you consider you may be eligible for assistance under the NDRRA please contact Rural Finance Corporation (www.ruralfinance.com.au or ph. 1800 255 925).

You are not eligible for this payment if you are seeking compensation for volunteer relief work or lost income incurred due to the provision of volunteer relief work, compensation for the provision of services that supported commercial operations or compensation for donated goods.

What assistance is available?

If you are eligible for the Exceptional Hardship Support Payment you will receive a lump sum charitable payment of \$8,000.

Payments will be made to your nominated bank account, please talk to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund about alternative arrangements.

[Note: that the Australian Tax Office has confirmed that payments would not be assessable in the hands of recipients.]

How do I claim?

To claim the Exceptional Hardship Support Payment, you will need to complete the attached form and include all supporting documentation.

What information do I need to provide?

The Government recognises the extraordinary circumstances that individuals and organisations are facing and will work with individuals to ensure that any necessary information can be obtained in a flexible and sensitive manner. The Government will need you to reasonably provide:

- Proof of identity.
- At least 2 references from organisations and individuals that confirm the support provided by you/your business. These references should identify you/your business specifically, describe the service/support given and the duration over which it was/continues to be provided.
- At least one reference must be from a recognised charity (eg. Red Cross, Salvation Army) or other official organisation (eg. Victoria Police, Department of Human Services, Country Fire Authority, State Emergency Service, etc)
- Evidence that financial hardship has arisen that is directly attributable to your provision of support in response to the bushfires.
- Acknowledgement that the services were not provided in connection with the marketing of yourself or you business.

If you require assistance with providing required information please contact the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund on 1800 180 213.

Who can witness a statutory declaration?

People authorised to witness statutory declarations include lawyers, police, pharmacists, school principals, ministers of religion, bank managers, doctors, vets and Housing Services Officers.

If you require assistance with getting your statutory declaration witnesses please contact the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund on 1800 180 213.

How long do I have to claim?

You have until 30 June 2009 to lodge a claim for the Exceptional Hardship Support Payment. Applications beyond this date will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What if I need assistance with completing this form?

You can contact the Victorian Bushfires Appeal Fund on 1800 180 213.