



MEDIA RELEASE

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Public forums for Beechworth-Mudgegonga fire areas a success

A report into the medium and long-term recovery needs of communities impacted by the February 2009 Beechworth-Mudgegonga Bushfires has identified five major priorities, following a public consultation with local residents.

Loretta Carroll, a local farmer from Mudgegonga, said the report, *Into Our Hands*, followed an extensive community consultation process aimed at canvassing ideas from residents about projects and programs they believe will best contribute to the medium and long-term recovery of their communities.

Ms Carroll is a member of the Community Advisory Committee set up to provide advice to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund's independent panel on a new \$16 million gift allocation.

"The aim of the consultation process was to ascertain the medium and long-term recovery priorities of the fire-affected communities of Bruarong, Running Creek, Dederang, Kancoona, Gundowring, Mudgegonga, Murmungee, Barwidgee Creek, Rosewhite and Stanley," Ms Carroll said.

The report identified 5 major priorities:

- **Community Foundation Fund:** To enable the communities to meet many of their needs over the medium and long term and would provide an enduring legacy;
- **Static water supply for community hubs:** To supply potable water and water for fire-fighting at 6 community hubs throughout the fire-affected area;
- **Whole of community landscape project:** To address damage to the environment and the protection of remnant trees, help establish a memorial trail, and design and build a more ecologically-functional and fire-safe landscape;
- **Community strengthening project:** To continue to connect residents within their communities and enhances community and recreational facilities;
- **Memorial quilts:** To extend local quilting groups across fire-affected areas, thereby creating arts quilts within communities and local schools as part of the historical record.

"The public consultation process has given residents the chance to have their say on how some of this \$16 million gift allocation from the Fund might be used to help the medium and long-term recovery needs of our fire-affected communities," Ms Carroll said.

"The *Into Our Hands* Report will feed into the deliberations of the Community Advisory Committee, which will in turn provide advice to the Fund Panel, who make decisions on the allocation of donated monies and oversee the management and distribution of these funds."

Similar consultations are being held in fire-affected communities throughout Victoria.

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