



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Bushfire Disaster Appeal Update October 2009



Bushfire Temporary Villages Help Recovery

“The Department of Human Services (DHS) has indeed been fortunate to work in partnership with Uniting Church Camping in the management of the temporary villages at Flowerdale, Marysville and Kinglake. During the complex stages of building, allocating and settling clients in to their new accommodation DHS and UC Camping staff work side by side in a caring and flexible manner in order

to provide the very best outcomes for these people. UC Camping has taken on key responsibilities and has become the central contact for people living in the villages. The leadership displayed by UC Camping has been pivotal in the development of a complicated process that supports traumatised and displaced families”
- Leo Ryan, Housing Bushfire Response Manager, Hume Region, Department of Human Services.

In the days immediately following the Black Saturday fires, the Uniting Church declared its commitment to helping survivors in the long-term. As part of that commitment, Uniting Church Camping successfully tendered to manage the temporary villages at Marysville, Kinglake and Flowerdale, putting them at the forefront of the recovery effort.

The Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA) established the villages to house families left homeless by the bushfires. Around 50 houses have been allocated at Kinglake and Marysville, 15 at Flowerdale and 12 are now being established at Whittlesea.

Continued overleaf >



It is hard not to be deeply impressed with the profound generosity of spirit and compassion that is present in the stories contained in these pages. There is a vast gift that the Uniting Church carries and has been able to offer in the extremely demanding circumstances of the Black Saturday bushfires. It is grounded in respect for people as they are in whatever circumstances they find themselves.

Great organised systems are not at play in these accounts but fantastically creative responses to quite different and yet similar situations that find their origins in a wonderful humanity.

These are ordinary people like you and me who are doing extraordinary things but things that were made possible by the equally extraordinary generosity of ordinary people giving to the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal.

Many of us have been asking how we can do more; why haven't our offers been taken up? The extent of the support offered has been overwhelming; especially offers of goods. Donations of funds enable much greater flexibility at such fraught times.

As you can see by the stories, contributions to the Appeal have enabled some wonderful responses to grow out of the ashes.

I encourage you to take some time to read these stories with an ear to the spirit whispering there.

Yours Sincerely,

Raoul Spackman-Williams

Director

UnitingCare Victoria & Tasmania

... **Continued.** The villages have been pivotal to the recovery process by giving victims a safe place to live while rebuilding their lives. "Our approach to the temporary villages is to enable the empowerment of residents to manage their own recovery, says Andrew McGuckian, Director of UC Camping. We are there to walk alongside the community in order to see the recovery take place but we don't see our role as a 'manager', there to enforce rules and regulations".

Andrew acknowledges that everyone is at a different point and that the response of the village staff has been to proactively respond to the residents needs rather than try to predict what they think they need. He also says how heartening it has been to witness the profound impact the villages have had on the residents.

The week after the Kinglake village opened he was speaking to one resident who had only moved in the day before. When Andrew asked how she was going her response was 'today was the first day since the fires that I woke up and I wasn't angry. I'm now able to start planning ahead'".

Six months on, UC Camping has moved from the phase of building and housing people to supporting the community of the villages to participate in recreational and social activities. According to a Marysville resident "the residents and fire affected families are starting to

comprehend what we want to do next. We are tired of having things done to and for us and are now ready to engage in what's next".

UC Camping has responded to this shift in attitude by opening communal facilities at each village and initiating projects such as the establishment of a perma-culture garden at Kinglake, a poultry yard at Marysville and an artists studio at Flowerdale.

The villages also cater to the wider community as the shower and laundry facilities are available to everyone living on make-shift sites, often on their own land.

When reflecting on the last six months, and the journey to where they are today Andrew says, "we were all anxious in the beginning about throwing people together in villages and the problems it could cause. Through treating people with trust and respect the residents have risen to the challenge of living harmoniously in a village. There have been minimal challenging social issues. I'm really proud of the role the Uniting Church is playing in helping people recover and looking to the future with optimism".

Top UCA Bushfire Donors - \$10,000+

The Isabel & John Gilbertson Trust	Undisclosed
Uniting Church National Assembly	\$50,000.00
Wesley Mission Sydney	\$30,000.00
Presbyterian Church of New Zealand	\$20,623.24
UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide	\$20,000.00
Clayton-Wesley Uniting Church	\$10,380.00
Geelong East Uniting Church	\$10,196.30
Eldercare Incorporated	\$10,137.00
Resthaven	\$10,000.00
Sydney Cheil UCA	\$10,000.00

The largest donation from an individual was \$30,000.00

We gratefully acknowledge the 5,000 donations, the numerous volunteers and in kind support to the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal.



Fire Fencing Work Continues

Alan's big strong hands are deeply lined by a lifetime of hard work, lines which are now etched in dark dust: six months on there is still plenty of charcoal in the countryside hit by fires on Black Saturday. Alan and Don, two long-time mates and members of Benalla Uniting Church, are the voluntary team leaders of a continuous stream of willing volunteers who offer their time to help resurrect the boundary fences singed or flattened by the bushfires. Insurance will cover the replacement cost of the materials but not the labour, and not everyone was insured. Both Don and Alan live on land near Benalla, and when they realised the mammoth effort required if they had to re-fence even just the boundaries of their own properties, they applied for funding from the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal and set to work.

Robyn's property is only a couple of hills west of Marysville, in a valley through which a tornado of fire swirled on the afternoon of 7th February 2009. The small river running along the back of her property is still studded with towering shattered trees – the tops of which were wrenched off during the firestorm – or huge root-balls from forest giants now

pressed flat to the charred earth, both of which hint at the massive forces of nature at play on that afternoon. Robyn was across the other side of Melbourne on that day, and when she headed home became caught up in the Kinglake fires.

Everything in her home and most of her beautiful gardens were destroyed. She was left with her car, the clothes she was standing in, and the camera she had with her. Her mother and brother both lost their houses in the Marysville fire. Robyn had photos and computer records stored at her Mum's, 'just in case', but of course they were burnt out too. Robyn has lost friends, her own house and her childhood home in the Marysville fire, and willingly shares the raw emotion of life. Rebuilding her home and life is a long-term undertaking for Robyn. Resurrecting a fence around the perimeter of her land is a basic first step to starting again.

Note: A fencing team from the Uniting Church Riverina Presbytery of NSW also travel south each week to offer manual labour and Christian compassion in the Mudgegonga-Beechworth area.



Tapping into a Network of Support

Hundreds of farms and houses were lost, fences destroyed, and many cattle were left wandering in the bushfires at Beechworth and Myrtleford. UnitingCare Wodonga tapped into the Uniting Churches to the east and at Myrtleford to provide support to people affected.

They recognised that farmers are not comfortable asking for help, especially in the isolated valleys, and decided that rather than sending teams to cold call from Wodonga they would draw on the people who knew first hand those who were hurting. Visits were made to people affected by the fires and vouchers to the value of \$100 distributed. These vouchers could be redeemed in local businesses and people could go to specific stores at their leisure, with dignity.

Despite being a small project UnitingCare Wodonga were able to distribute \$50,000 in vouchers to 200 families - an outstanding success.



Listening, Responding and Providing Support

In the days following the widespread devastation of Black Saturday, it quickly became apparent that the badly affected areas of Healesville, Marysville, Kinglake and Whittlesea would require extra ministry resources to assist in the rebuilding of lives and communities.

Rev David Howie was appointed Community Minister to the fire-affected regions, a position funded by the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal. David's role is primarily a responsive one – he is there to listen and support individuals and communities as they come to terms with their loss, and embark on the journey of rebuilding their lives and homes.

A large part of David's role is visiting the families affected by the fires. Jenny

and Les Doveston and their family are owners of the Marysville Salmon and Trout farm. On the day the fires ripped through Marysville, Jenny and Les fought to save their property, but the fires were just too strong, and they lost their home, their son's home, their daughter's home, and their business.

Jenny and Les are currently living in a houseboat, transported from Eildon to the site where they are firstly rebuilding their business, then their home. They are overwhelmed by the enormity of the task before them, but are equally overwhelmed by the generosity and support they've received from many. David is a blessing to Jenny and Les, who live in relative isolation and welcome his visits.

David says that one of the most challenging and rewarding parts of his

role is acting as a conduit between the bushfire-affected communities and the many Uniting Churches and agencies involved in the recovery process.

“The scope of the church's involvement is extraordinary: I help congregations wanting to offer material donations and their own time to help those in need; I work with Bushfire Case Managers from UnitingCare agencies; and I support the staff and residents of the three resident villages managed by Uniting Church Camping at Flowersdale, Kinglake and Marysville” he says.

When asked how the recovery process has progressed over the last six months, David stresses that the process differs greatly from one individual to another.

“Often, people are angry and frustrated, but we all deal with grief and loss in

Jenny & Les Doveston's temporary home. Photos: Mike Emmett



Les Doveston Rebuilds



Whilst those affected by the bushfires have begun, in various ways, the journey of rebuilding their lives and communities, there is still a long way to go.

different ways. Some people are doing okay, others are struggling... Similarly, communities are trying to rebuild and plan for the future, but what is important to one bushfire-affected community may not be as important to another. There is no fixed solution, no "one way" of doing things. I listen and respond to the stories I hear, and provide support where it is needed."

David points out some positives borne from the tragedy, "Some people may not have known their neighbours; now there is a real bond between those affected by the bushfires, and people are finding ways to support one another and work together."

David is also inspired by the resilience of many, and talks of the individuals who, despite being severely affected

by the bushfires themselves, have worked tirelessly over the previous months to assist others: "There is one woman who lost her husband, yet has been very involved in supporting the local children in her area" he says.

Whilst those affected by the bushfires have begun, in various ways, the journey of rebuilding their lives and communities, there is still a long way to go.

Looking to the future, David says "Many people have suffered a significant loss of life and property, and they will never be the same. But I am hopeful that in time communities will become self-sufficient, people will grow, develop, and continue to care for one another."

Gippsland Regeneration

On September 1st, Rev Walter Scholl assumed the position of Community Chaplain to the bushfire affected areas of Gippsland, a position funded by the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal.

A major part of Walter's role is visiting individuals and families, and listening and responding to need. He has already identified areas that require more support and has begun to address these. He tells us, for example, that in Traralgon South there have been several activities aimed at supporting women, but men often seem to miss out. As a result, he is organising a short break to Uniting Church Camping's Norval site for ten men from the area, which will provide them with time to relax, recuperate and socialise.

Walter is also looking ahead to Christmas, and talks about organising hampers for families and toys for children in bushfire-affected areas.

Walter tells us: "On the whole, the recovery process in the Gippsland area is going very well. The support we have received has been fantastic, and the rebuilding of some homes is nearing completion."

However, whilst the rebuilding efforts may be underway, Walter stresses that there are far reaching effects on people and communities: "Families are under enormous pressure and there have been relationship breakdowns as a result of stress. This really is a major area of concern."

Over the next twelve months, Walter will play a significant role in supporting people and communities through the recovery process.



Black Saturday was my Dad's Birthday

It's hot! It's been hot forever.

It's dad's birthday too. He's really, really old today, he's 40.

I wonder how tall I'll be when I'm old.

I'm gonna go jump on him and show him the card I made.

"Happy birthday Daaaad!"

It's so hot outside we put ice cubes in the pond for the fishes.

Dad is cooking prawns and sausages on the barbecue. Mum says dad rules the barbie.

I like swimming in the pool with my big sister.

The sun is orange again today. Mum said it's from the fires up north but we're o.k. I've never seen up north but everyone keeps talking about it.

Yum! The sausages are finally ready. This pavlova cake for dad's birthday is great too.

Dad has been listening to the scanner and radio today. He said there's been lots of little spot fires but the CFA have got it under control.

Mum said we should pack a small bag of our most precious things, like my comic books, just in case there is a fire near us.

All my things are precious, I need a bigger bag.

I can smell smoke now. Like in winter when everyone has their wood heaters going, only stronger.

Now my sister wants me to watch the bath while it fills up. She needs to help dad with the buckets outside. Mum sticks her head into the bathroom and

says, "good man, we might need that water if we lose the mains."

She said that the first two things that go in a fire is the power and water. So we need to store as much water as we can, just in case.

The water is going so slow and the bath is so big.

Everybody else seems to be rushing around.

Amy comes running and says the neighbours are leaving and said we should get the heck out too.

Hayley comes running and says some guy came racing down the road and stopped and screamed at her to get out now there's a fire coming up the gully behind us. She looks really scared, I don't like it.

Outside there is a lot of smoke. It's noisy too. The wind sounds like that big plane landing at the airport when we went to pick up Uncle Robert last year. I asked Hayley why the wind was so loud.

It isn't, she said, that's the fire coming.

I can see orange fire down in the gully. I have to sit on Hayley's lap in the car.

I can see yellow fire out the front window. It's all across the kangaroo paddock.

Dad is at the back of the car trying to unhook the boat. He told mum we'd have to leave it because we don't know what we might run into out on the roads.

Mum keeps saying, "Hurry up Darren, hurry up."

Dad is yelling something about keys snapping in the padlock. He keeps banging at the back of the car and yelling, "Come on, not now."

Then something clunks, the car jolts and dad jumps into his seat.

We're all in now. The animals are in the back. The cat is meowing real loud in his basket. The dogs look squished.

Dad says, "Hang on everyone we're going."

As we race down the road there is orange fire and smoke everywhere. It's darker now.

As I look back I can see a black wall of smoke with big splotches of orange and red hiding in it, just behind our house.

Mum keeps saying we'll all be fine but she sounds wobbly. There is lots and lots of smoke.

There's a caravan in the middle of the road and dad had to go around it. Dad says that's why we left the boat behind.

There's a big tree all on fire next to the road.

I can hear mum say quietly, "please don't fall, please don't fall."

More smoke everywhere and then we come out of it and the trees aren't burning here.

Dad keeps driving and we stop at the old Chum Creek store, to tell the firemen our street is burning.

Now we're at Pam and Ray's. They have a computer with games on it.

Mum and dad are out the front looking at the hills on fire. I like playing games better than watching stuff burn.

Mum and dad are still outside looking at the hills. I'm sleepy now.

It's been weeks since the big fires and our house burnt down. All our friends have come to our place where the house used to be to help clean up all the burnt trees. They bought a bbq and cooked some sausages. Some of the dads brought their chainsaws. Everybody worked really hard.

I loved playing ash tiggy with the other kids and some of the grownups.

At the end of the day we all had black smudged faces with big smiles on them.

I miss my Lego and comfy bed but mum says I can have new ones soon. She says we're very lucky to have so many good friends to help us today.

I think she's right.

I miss all my toys but at least we're all here together, even if my big sisters can be annoying.

- Kate Wilson

1,000 copies of this children's book are being printed with funds from the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal. It will be distributed to schools in the bushfire regions and bushfire affected families.

About the Author

Kate Wilson is a published children's book author and previously a resident of Chum Creek, just outside Healesville.

She lost her house on Black Saturday and has written the following story about her family's experience as she recognises the need of children affected to have an outlet to discuss their feelings.

Kate believes there will be a lot of frightened kids next summer as they enter fire season again if they have not had their fears addressed. Kate acknowledges that in many cases adults don't talk to their children about the impact Black Saturday has had on their lives as they don't even know how to deal with it themselves, but she strongly believes that children need to have the opportunity to have honest discussion about it, to not just be told that everything will be alright but for the fact that they have genuine fears to be acknowledged.

As Kate says, "just because their vocabulary is simple doesn't mean they don't understand what's going on. We need to value their feelings and thoughts and give them an outlet. The kids need something to reference it by and my story could help get them talking".

Your donations to the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal are helping to provide youth, family, grief and financial counselling support.

Kildonan UnitingCare, UnitingCare Community Options, Wesley Mission Melbourne, Connections UnitingCare and Kilmany UnitingCare are all involved in the ongoing Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service. Experienced professionals are working with many children and families to cope with the stress involved following the fires.



Committed to Providing Ongoing Support

Immediately after the bushfires, Wesley Mission Melbourne provided debriefing and personal support to survivors, with trained staff volunteering their time to answer calls from people in distress through the ABC 774 office.

Soon after, Wesley Mission formed case management teams which were deployed to the North Western and Eastern regions. These teams provide practical case work and coordinate a range of services across bushfire-affected communities.

Ms Micaela Cronin, General Manager of Community Services at Wesley Mission Melbourne says, "The recovery process is going to continue for some time and these people will need ongoing support as they rebuild their lives and communities. Wesley Mission is committed to supporting the Victorian community through these difficult times, and will be providing ongoing support as one of the main case management teams over the next 12 months."

Take a Break Camps Provide 'Time Out'

'Take a Break Camps' provide families suffering stress and difficulty the opportunity to have a free holiday at a Uniting Church Camp site. The opportunity to get away and have a break has a vital impact on the families who attend the camps. 'Take a Break Camps' provide time and space for families to reconnect and share quality time together.

A five day camp was recently held at Grantville near Philip Island for 60 people from bushfire affected areas. Rev Michael Bastin, the camp leader, believed the families would not be looking for a tightly structured program, but there were a few key things he felt would make a difference. He contacted the local Uniting Church to see if some women would be willing to come and sit by the Coonara and knit. "It's a symbol of safety and longevity. When you knit you put things back together." Funnily enough it was the teenage boys who were the first to make their way over to the Coonara and sit with the knitters. They had their own projects started by the next day.

Meanwhile, on the Monday night local hairdressers had arrived and there were chairs set up with people getting haircuts. There was a mother of four young children getting her hair cut and watching her children get looked after nearby. Fathers and sons got their haircuts together, there was a lot of laughter, people relaxed.

"On the last night we had an Irish Band, there was a lot of foot stomping and jigging –it's amazing to have movement in a big group of people like this, people jigging and laughing, dancing with the kids."

Six camps have been held for families affected by the bushfires including a sailing camp during the school holidays for teenagers living in the Flowerdale area.



A Flexible, Responsive & Respectful Model of Care

Stella Avramopoulos CEO of Kildonan UnitingCare has covered a lot of distance since she took up the role twelve months ago. The Black Saturday bushfires were in the very heart of the region Kildonan serves. "Our people were up there the next day but it was the local people who responded first." says Stella, "They drove the immediate recovery and what we offered was practical, emotional and logistic relief while they were looking after their own. We were and still are following their lead."

Kildonan works on an integrated model of care. Flexible, responsive and respectful are key words Stella uses. "We needed people who could advocate, talk one on one, act as a resource, who could find out what you had to do to get your water tanks cleaned, or get your planning permit."

Thirty-two new staff have been employed in the last three months. Kildonan is one of three main providers of Case Managers as well as Counselors, Youth Workers and Financial Counselors.

Kildonan is running pilot grief support groups in consultation with the Loss and Bereavement Centre. There is a perception that it is mainly the women who take this up but Kildonan has also been working significantly with men. Stella says, "It is a validation when men



*Stella
Avramopoulos
CEO of Kildonan
UnitingCare*

feel no stigma seeking help. If we can do that we've succeeded."

Kildonan has also been working actively with the community to deliver programs that support young people affected by the bushfires. Youth Rebuild is an outreach program that provides young people with an opportunity to express their experiences of the bushfires, and explore possible coping strategies.

Another very practical initiative launched by Kildonan and funded by the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal is the Bushfire Homework Program. Stella tells us: "Young people are still struggling, especially VCE students who are trying to focus on their final year studies." She explains that although some families are now returning to properties in the Kinglake region, the accommodation they are living in is often not ideal. Many are living in temporary housing, caravans and portable buildings - all confined spaces with nowhere for young people to do homework.

The Bushfire Homework Program runs four nights a week (two at Kinglake, and two at Kinglake West), and can cater for up to ten students at each session. A hot snack is available, and qualified tutors are onsite to assist.

One of the tutors, Bronwyn Hocking, is herself a victim of Black Saturday. She and her family got warning of the fires mid-afternoon and fled taking virtually nothing with them. She tells us: "I became involved with the Bushfire Homework Program as I can imagine how hard it would be to study without anywhere to go. I also knew that it would be helpful for them to have someone who knew what they were going through."

The staff and volunteers of Kildonan have worked tirelessly since the bushfires in delivering a wide range of support services. When asked if she has had a break, Stella says, "I can't say I'm well rested yet. Like everyone, I am looking forward to a holiday, but the reality is that ensuring people are well looked after is our priority at the moment. Mainly I feel confident in the capacity we have as an organisation, and the privilege of the work we are doing."



From Little Things, Big Things Grow

When captain of the St Andrews CFA, Helen Kenney, e-mailed the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) Cookbook committee to ask for permission to copy some of their recipes, she had no idea that her request would be answered with a mammoth donation effort of cookbooks to fire-affected families.

When secretary of the cookbook committee, Pam Grant, received Ms Kenney's request for recipes she thought, "We can do better than that!". Ms Grant said that the idea of supplying cookbooks was so simple and led her to wonder, "Would it be possible to make a gift of the PWMU Cookbook to all families in Victoria who lost their homes in the February fires?".

Inquiries were made to the publisher, the Uniting Church in Australia and the Presbyterian Church in Victoria and all agreed to assist with a large-scale donation of PWMU Cookbooks. Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal the UCA and PCV were able to share the cost of donating the PWMU Cookbook to two thousand families who lost their homes.

The publisher, Hachette Australia offered the book at cost, and the cookbook committee, involving both the Presbyterian and Uniting churches, waived all royalties.

At a morning tea to present the cookbooks, Ms Grant assured Ms Kenney that the churches will continue to support the community in the recovery process.

"Both churches will be journeying with the communities into the future - this book will hopefully also journey with you," she said.



Horses For Hope, After The Fires

On September 20th, Cutting Edge's Horses for Hope demonstrated the inspirational 'After the Fires' program at Quarters Run in Kinglake. Attended by approximately one hundred adults and children, the audience witnessed the power of 'join-ups' between horses and humans effected by trauma or abuse. In several instances the trauma was directly related to the Black Saturday bushfires.

The Horses for Hope, After the Fires program is based on Monty Roberts' horse whisper principles and will address the immediate and long term effects of grief. Colin Emonson, the program manager, and Tiff Peverall, the program trainer, are trained and experienced in communicating with people and horses. They educate participants in gaining the trust and respect of a horse, and in doing so aim to connect a person with their inner feelings.

For some people in the audience, the demonstration evoked strong emotions and prompted them to share these

feelings with the program staff. At the conclusion of the demonstration, thirty five people had signed up for the program which will be formally launched in Kinglake, and will operate two days per week in Flowerdale and Marysville, dependent upon need.

If you are someone who has been affected directly or indirectly by the recent bushfires, or have a horse that has experienced bushfire (or other) trauma, this program may benefit you.

Enquiries about the program can be directed to Rowena Allen, CEO of Cutting Edge, or Colin Emonson Program Manager of Horses for Hope, or Tiff Peverall Program Trainer. Their contact number is **(03) 5831 6157**.

Note: The Horses for Hope program is run by UnitingCare Cutting Edge and has been successfully assisting people and horses for 3 years in the Shepparton area. It has now been expanded to bushfire-affected areas to help address the grief and suffering experienced by people affected by the Black Saturday bushfires.

... If you are someone who has been affected directly or indirectly by the recent bushfires, or have a horse that has experienced bushfire (or other) trauma, this program may benefit you.

Distribution of Bushfire Disaster Appeal Funds

Emergency response	\$212,806.00	Property and goods recovery	\$163,101.06
1. Yarra Yarra Presbytery	\$32,300.00	1. UnitingCare Wodonga	\$10,000.00
2. Western Vic Presbytery	\$5,000.00	2. UnitingCare Community Options	\$33,659.50
3. North East Vic Presbytery	\$40,000.00	3. North East Vic Presbytery	\$23,000.00
4. Gippsland Presbytery	\$30,000.00	4. Kinglake West UCA	\$15,000.00
5. UnitingCare Cutting Edge	\$26,006.00	5. UnitingCare Connections	\$35,000.00
6. Connections UnitingCare	\$14,500.00	6. PWMU Cookbook	\$6,441.56
7. Kilmany UnitingCare	\$10,000.00	7. Wimmera UnitingCare	\$40,000.00
8. UnitingCare Wodonga	\$16,000.00	Long term recovery	\$428,315.00
9. UnitingCare Goulbourn North East	\$1,000.00	1. Kildonan UnitingCare	\$47,815.00
10. Kildonan UnitingCare	\$38,000.00	2. Bendigo UnitingCare Outreach	\$50,000.00
Pastoral care	\$396,000.00	3. Wimmera UnitingCare	\$87,500.00
1. Yarra Yarra Presbytery*	\$225,000.00	4. Uniting Church Camping	\$131,500.00
2. Presbytery of Gippsland*	\$156,000.00	5. Cottage by the Sea	\$11,500.00
3. Kildonan UnitingCare	\$15,000.00	6. UnitingCare Cutting Edge	\$100,000.00
Counselling - family and youth	\$374,440.00	TOTAL GRANTS TO DATE	\$1,574,662.06
1. Kildonan UnitingCare	\$260,000.00	*Bushfire chaplaincy over 3 years	
2. Wimmera UnitingCare	\$65,000.00		
3. Wesley Mission Melbourne	\$40,000.00		
4. The Augustine Centre	\$5,000.00		
5. Creative Ministries Arts Fund	\$4,440.00		

We gratefully acknowledge the 5,000 donations, the numerous volunteers and in kind support to the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal.



Tricia Hill and her dog Ember in Kinglake after snow fell in the fire-hit region. Photo: Angela Wylie, The AGE



Eugene Howe and Paul Chamberlain keep warm by a bath-tub-cum-fireplace at Kinglake Photo: Craig Abraham, The AGE



Sue Bullock and the donated caravan, which sits where her home once stood. Photo: Angela Wylie, The AGE



Our Place, Six Months On

In the first Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal update we told you about Our Place, the community and bushfire recovery centre based at UnitingCare Outreach Bendigo.

Since its conception six months ago, Our Place has become a hub of activity

in the Bendigo area, an integral part of aiding the recovery process and assisting those affected by the bushfires in returning to normal life.

The Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal contributed \$50,000 to the establishment and ongoing costs of Our Place, and these funds have supported a range of inspiring events and programs, all operated by a dedicated team of nine full-time, and twenty-five part-time volunteers.

Events such as the “Saturday Pamper Day” for women who are physically and emotionally exhausted, and the “Retool Day” for men who lost all their tools in the fires, have not only offered some practical support, but have also provided survivors with an opportunity to take time out to relax, socialise and recharge.

Our Place also ran ‘Operation Keep Warm’, collecting over \$4,000 worth of electric blankets for those living in temporary accommodation over winter.

Yes! I want to help!

130 Little Collins Street, Melbourne VIC, 3000
GPO BOX 4355, MELBOURNE VIC, 3001
Phone: (03) 9251 5251 **Fax:** (03) 9251 5491
Email: shareinfo@victas.uca.org.au
Web: http://www.shareappeal.org.au

(Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr/Rev), First Name Surname (Please Print)

Address..... P/Code

Phone Email

I wish to make a contribution to the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal.

- I enclose my cheque/money order (made payable to SHARE) for \$
- Please debit my Mastercard Visa Amex

Name on Card

Number Expiry Date /

- A **one-off** contribution of \$
- I wish to pledge my support of the Uniting Church Bushfire Disaster Appeal by making regular contributions of \$ every (1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 6 / 12) month(s) (**please circle**) until further written notice.

The first month I want this deduction to be made is

Date / Signature