2018-19 BUSHFIRES
Final Recovery Plan
27 May 2019
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **FOREWORD** ........................................................................................................................................... 3

2. **BACKGROUND** ....................................................................................................................................... 4
   2.1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 4
   2.2. Purpose of Recovery Plan ..................................................................................................................... 4
   2.3. Recovery coordination arrangements ................................................................................................. 4
       2.3.1. State Recovery Committee ........................................................................................................... 5
       2.3.2. Affected Area Recovery Committee .......................................................................................... 5
       2.3.3. Tasmanian Government Partner Agencies .................................................................................. 5

3. **KNOWN IMPACTS** .................................................................................................................................. 6
   3.1. Social impacts ....................................................................................................................................... 6
   3.2. Economic impacts .................................................................................................................................. 6
   3.3. Infrastructure impacts ............................................................................................................................ 7
   3.4. Environmental impacts ........................................................................................................................ 8

4. **RECOVERY** ............................................................................................................................................. 9
   4.1. Early recovery ........................................................................................................................................ 9
       4.1.1. Supporting individuals, families and communities ........................................................................ 9
       4.1.2. Providing advice and assistance to businesses .......................................................................... 13
       4.1.3. Restoring essential infrastructure .............................................................................................. 14
   4.2. Medium to long-term recovery ............................................................................................................. 14
       4.2.1. Outcomes ....................................................................................................................................... 14
       4.2.2. Community Recovery Fund ..................................................................................................... 15
       4.2.3. Medium to long-term actions ..................................................................................................... 16

5. **TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS** ................................................................................................. 21
I would firstly like to thank our firefighters, support personnel and the many volunteers who assisted during the 2018-19 bushfires for their tremendous professionalism and hard work. These fires were different in many ways to previous events, in that they went on for a long time. There were people who had to evacuate from their homes multiple times as their community continued to be threatened. Evacuating at any time is stressful, but leaving your home again and again, and not knowing whether you would have a home to return to, is something that many people went through.

I also acknowledge those who lost their house or had property damaged. We know that it’s not just loss of property and possessions that causes distress to people after disasters, but the disruptions to normal life that people experience. Many business owners and workers across the tourism, hospitality, forestry and mining industries lost revenue or shifts as a result of the bushfires and have experienced financial impacts long after the bushfire threat has ended.

For some individuals and communities, the recovery from these fires will take many months. We know people need time, and the support of family, friends and their community to recover. After seeing the spirit, resilience and determination in the communities impacted by these bushfires, I am confident that recovery will be achieved and these communities will rebound.

The bushfires also had an impact on the State’s precious wilderness and reserve areas, and their natural and cultural values. These areas are of world renowned value and provide a beacon for attracting visitors and tourists to our regional communities. It is heartening to hear that many of our wild places have begun to renew after the fires, but there is more work to be done to restore and rebuild damaged assets.

The 2018-19 Bushfires Final Recovery Plan aims to assist communities to lead their own recovery. It will provide targeted assistance, where it is needed most, and a framework for supporting the recovery over the long-term. A centerpiece of the Recovery Plan is a $9.9 million Community Recovery Fund initiative, co-funded with the Australian Government under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, which will provide for the restoration of assets in our national parks and reserves; support tourism visitation to the affected municipalities; and enable the employment of Economic and Community Recovery Officers. These positions will support community development initiatives, assist affected businesses and progress projects directly related to the bushfire recovery.

The Tasmanian Government looks forward to continuing to work with the Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, Huon Valley and West Coast Councils to support community recovery and economic renewal after the 2018-19 bushfires.

Michael Stevens
State Recovery Coordinator, Bushfire Recovery Taskforce
2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

In December 2018 and January 2019, dry lightning strikes started a number of bushfires across Tasmania. The Gell River fire was started by lightning on 27 December 2018, 40 km to the north-west of Maydena in the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. On 15 January 2019, dry lightning ignited a large number of additional fires, including fires at Great Pine Tier (Central Plateau) and the Riveaux Road (Huon Valley). A combination of dry conditions, strong winds and inaccessible terrain prevented many of these fires from being controlled and a number of communities across the State were directly threatened by bushfires.

Smoke significantly affected air quality in parts of the State. Public health warnings were issued throughout January 2019, suggesting that vulnerable people affected by smoke seek respite with family or friends or go to a public place away from smoke. Air conditions continued to be variable throughout January and into February 2019.

In total, the burnt areas amount to 210,000 hectares, which is about 3 per cent of the total land mass of mainland Tasmania. The sustained impact and spread of the bushfires has meant that while property losses have been limited, the impact on the communities affected has been significant. This resulted in recovery commencing in parallel with the ongoing emergency response.

2.2. Purpose of Recovery Plan

The Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), has prepared this 2018-19 Bushfires Final Recovery Plan (the Recovery Plan) to guide the medium to long-term recovery priorities following the 2018-19 bushfires. It outlines the actions that will be undertaken by the Tasmanian Government to assist communities recovering from the effects of the bushfires. The focus of the plan is the four local government areas most affected by the bushfires – the Central Highlands, the Derwent Valley, the Huon Valley and the West Coast.

A key objective of the Tasmanian Government is to support community-led recovery. This Recovery Plan aims to support and empower the communities affected by the bushfires to identify their own recovery needs and drive recovery efforts over the long-term. To support this approach, some of the actions in the Recovery Plan will be initiated by the Tasmanian Government but led over the medium to long-term by local government. More broadly, the Recovery Plan has been developed in consultation with the Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, Huon Valley and West Coast Councils.

2.3. Recovery coordination arrangements

The Tasmanian Government established a Bushfire Recovery Taskforce in February 2019, led by the Bushfire Recovery Coordinator, to coordinate the recovery and provide affected communities with information and assistance. The Taskforce has provided a single point of contact within the Tasmanian Government for key issues related to the 2018-19 bushfires. This coordination role and the delivery of any remaining taskforce activities will be undertaken by DPAC’s Office of Security and Emergency Management (OSEM) and Tasmanian Government partner agencies from June 2019.

Longer-term oversight of recovery activities will be provided by the State Recovery Committee and the Affected Area Recovery Committee, as detailed below.
2.3.1. State Recovery Committee

The State Recovery Committee (SRC) will oversee implementation of the Recovery Plan. The SRC is established in accordance with the provisions of Section 9(2)(b) of the Emergency Management Act 2006. Its purpose is to oversee the development of state-level policies, plans and operational arrangements for recovery from emergencies and the implementation of state-level recovery arrangements, assistance measures and work programs.

The SRC is chaired by the Deputy Secretary, DPAC and reports to the State Emergency Management Committee.

2.3.2. Affected Area Recovery Committee

A Huon Valley Affected Area Recovery Committee (HVAARC) has been established to assist Huon Valley communities, particularly the business community, to manage their own recovery from the bushfires. Specifically, the HVAARC has responsibility for:

- providing advice to the Tasmanian Government and the Huon Valley Council to ensure that recovery programs and services meet the needs of the communities impacted by the fires;
- overseeing the delivery of projects that support recovery, where required, to ensure that they are community-owned and targeted to best support the recovery of impacted communities;
- providing a central point of communication and coordination for the actions of the recovery-related services and projects being progressed; and
- responding to recovery-related issues that arise in the community and ensuring appropriate action is taken.

The HVAARC is chaired by the Huon Valley Council Mayor, Ms Bec Enders, and includes members from local community groups and individuals from the Huon Valley region.

The HVAARC will liaise with the Economic Recovery Officer in the Department of State Growth and report to the SRC on its activities. The ongoing need for the HVAARC will be reviewed by September 2019.

2.3.3. Tasmanian Government Partner Agencies

Although DPAC is the lead agency for whole-of-government coordination of recovery, several Tasmanian Government agencies play key frontline roles in disaster recovery in line with their portfolio responsibilities, including the:

- Department of Health/Tasmanian Health Service – social recovery
- Department of Communities Tasmania – social recovery
- Department of State Growth – infrastructure recovery and economic recovery
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment – environmental recovery.
3. KNOWN IMPACTS

The majority of impacts from the bushfires have been social, economic and environmental. There was significant damage to some Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) walking tracks and associated facilities. The prolonged nature of the bushfires meant that some communities faced displacement, road closures and were on alert for several weeks.

3.1. Social impacts

There were no fatalities or significant injuries to members of the public as a direct result of the bushfires, however some response personnel did sustain injuries. Many individuals and families were displaced from their homes and had to seek temporary accommodation with families, friends or at evacuation centres. Six properties were destroyed, with many other properties facing significant clean-up.

Many individual stories of psychological impact and personal distress have been reported to the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce. The disruption and stress caused by the prolonged period of threat to communities can have lasting impacts. Some small business owners reported significant levels of stress due to financial pressures from the business downturn. Many workers in the tourism, hospitality and mining sectors experienced reduced shifts during and after the bushfires. Forestry workers also reported feeling stressed as a result of the uncertainty surrounding their ongoing employment. Financial pressures from reduced income, in some instances, led to families experiencing food stress (such as an increase in requests for food aid or children attending school without lunch).

3.2. Economic impacts

The 2018-19 bushfires struck during the peak summer tourism season and the extended nature of the bushfires caused a significant downturn for many small businesses across the affected municipalities. For example, small business owners in the West Coast municipality anecdotally reported a downturn in revenue of between 10 and 20 per cent during the bushfires and for several weeks after the fires as roads remained closed and visitor plans changed.

Based on the number of applications approved for business disruption and recovery grants, about 20 per cent of businesses operating in the affected municipalities were adversely affected by the bushfires. The impact was most acute in the Huon Valley, with about 25 per cent of local businesses in the municipality seeking financial assistance.

Notable impacts were experienced by the forest industry. The Southwood forest industry precinct in the Huon Valley was damaged, with sheds, an excavator and some product lost. Power to the site was also cut. Ta Ann, which operates a veneer mill at the Southwood site, is yet to decide whether to reopen the mill following the bushfires. Prior to the bushfires the business employed 42 permanent staff at its Southwood site. The closure of Ta Ann has affected other businesses in its supply chain. Neville-Smith Forest Products, which operates a saw mill at the Southwood site, was also impacted by the bushfires and could not operate for several months from 22 January 2019. The business employs 30 staff at the Southwood site. All staff were employed during the period of the closure.
Forest resources have been impacted, with around 40,000 hectares of the total public forest estate estimated to be within the fire footprint. This represents about 5 per cent of total production forest land in Tasmania. The total private forest estate estimated to be within the fire footprint is around 36,000 hectares, affecting about 150 land owners.

The mining sector on the West Coast experienced disrupted operations due to the bushfires. While the cost of these disruptions have been absorbed by the mining businesses, it resulted in many people losing shifts for between two and four weeks. This contributed to financial stress for these individuals and their families.

The bushfires had a significant impact on the Geeveston tourism industry due to damage to the Tahune Airwalk. The Tahune Airwalk is a premier tourism drawcard for the Huon Valley region, attracting around 110,000 visitors to the region annually. It is expected that the Tahune Airwalk will be closed for at least a year to allow for repairs to damaged infrastructure and rehabilitation and regeneration of the site. The business normally provides employment for over 60 casual and part-time staff over the summer season. The network of small tourism and hospitality businesses in the region that rely on the passing trade generated by visitation to the Tahune Airwalk has collectively suffered as a consequence of the loss of this attraction. The Australian and State Governments have contributed $2 million for a public art installation in the Huon Valley area that aims to attract tourists to the region, to offset the loss of the Tahune Airwalk.

Strahan was another tourist destination impacted by the bushfires. Businesses operating in the visitor economy experienced a significant drop in visitors during the fires and the following weeks.

It is likely that there will be longer term impacts to businesses from the damage to infrastructure and loss of natural heritage, such as the damage to the Tahune Airwalk. The damage to wilderness and other assets in national parks could impact visitation to the affected areas over the medium term.

In addition to tourism and hospitality businesses, other impacted sectors include perennial horticulture, rangeland grazing, processors, apiarists (beekeepers), wineries and small landholders. No major stock losses were reported, however some fencing and pasture were impacted which may have a flow-on impact into winter feed availability in parts of the State.

### 3.3. Infrastructure impacts

There was significant damage to transmission infrastructure supplying the Southwood site as a result of the bushfires. A total of 25 transmission related structures were damaged and around 11 km of new conductor wire was re-strung. Power to the site was restored in early April 2019.

The state road impacts as a result of the bushfires included removal of around 300 unsafe fire damaged trees from roadsides and replacement of several hundred fire affected guideposts. Some fire damaged infrastructure may be affected by increased maintenance requirements into the future as a result of the heating of the road surface. This may lead to premature failure, or impacts on drainage structure due to changes in the nature of ground water run-off.

The damage to property fences across the four affected municipalities has been extensive. Many property owners did not have insurance coverage for their fences and reported difficulty meeting the cost to repair the damage.

The greatest asset impacts are expected to be identified within PWS managed land. Within the fire boundaries there is about 170 km of walking track network as well as over 100 km of roads, four vehicle bridges, nine pedestrian bridges and numerous other built assets such as huts, toilets and signs. Restoring access to the various parks and reserves will be a significant task and will require the removal of fallen trees as well the identification and management of potentially hazardous trees.
3.4. Environmental impacts

The 2018-19 bushfires affected around 95,430 hectares or about 6 per cent of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) and approximately 36,000 hectares of other reserved land managed by the PWS.

In February 2019, PWS commenced a rapid impact assessment on the natural and cultural values of the TWWHA. The rapid impact assessment consisted largely of aerial assessments, with on-ground assessment conducted where conditions allowed. The impact assessment revealed a small amount of substantial damage to some natural values with most impacts primarily to organic soils and conifers.

Organic soils have been impacted differently across the landscape, and it is common to have areas of severely damaged soils adjacent to areas where the impact has been minimal or absent. Areas of alpine vegetation were burnt, with most of the observed vegetation of a type that contains species with fire resilient properties. While evidence of re-sprouting in alpine flora has been observed, steep severely burnt slopes are now prone to increased rates of soil erosion.

Many of the vegetation communities within the fire perimeter are adapted to, and rely on, fire. While much of the flora and fauna communities that have been burnt are adapted to fire and are expected to recover naturally, others are fire sensitive and may never fully recover. Recovery of fire damaged vegetation is likely to be slow in the harsh alpine conditions.

Re-generation may be hampered in locations where soil has been lost due to combustion and/or erosion post-fire. In the Central Plateau fire area, browsing pressure may contribute to slow vegetation recovery. As part of the aerial suppression activity, use of fire suppression chemicals occurred. A monitoring program has been initiated to determine any residual contaminants.

Substantial areas of native forest on forestry industry and private lands have been impacted by the bushfires with the environmental impacts not fully known. However, confirmed losses include crop from a seed orchard, including seed for rare and endangered eucalypts and a significant conservation stand of eucalypts. Also lost was the ‘Arve Big Tree’ and at least fourteen other recognised giant Mountain Ash trees (Eucalyptus regnans) of which around 48 giant trees are known to occur within the area burnt by the Riveaux Road fire. Some of Tasmania’s very tall forests in the Gell River fire area are known to have been impacted.

The Great Pine Tier fire burnt areas of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy’s ‘Five Rivers Reserve’. This expansive private reserve is managed at a landscape scale with substantial areas of the 11,000 hectare property included within, or adjacent to, the TWWHA. Researchers are studying the impacts of the bushfires on this reserve.

The fire burnt across karst country with inspected sites largely unaffected. It is considered likely that some cave (karst) features will experience increased runoff and sedimentation during rainfall events, due to their location downslope of burnt areas.

Fire impacts on cultural values are largely limited to the erosion potential that has been increased as a result of the fires, with no evidence of a direct heat impact on cultural values. In some locations, on-ground inspections will be required to be certain of the impacts.
4. RECOVERY

Recovery activities occurred in parallel with the response to the bushfires, with immediate recovery assistance initially being provided prior to the appointment of the Bushfire Recovery Coordinator who was announced on 31 January 2019. This Recovery Plan applies to the period commencing on the formal handover from response to recovery which occurred on 15 February 2019.

The Tasmanian Government’s objectives in recovery are to:

- support the restoration of social, economic, infrastructure and natural environments to minimise long-term consequences for individual and community wellbeing, the economy and the environment;
- facilitate community participation in recovery planning and decision-making;
- ensure that government and non-government support is targeted and appropriate;
- assist communities to rebuild in a way that enhances resilience across social, economic, infrastructure and environmental values and encourages risk management; and
- learn from experience and continually refine arrangements to enhance future recovery processes.

These objectives align with and build on the National Principles for Disaster Recovery, which provide a national framework for recovery management and coordination.

The Tasmanian Government’s approach recognises that recovery is most effective when communities are empowered to lead and manage recovery efforts. A key focus of the 2018-19 bushfire recovery effort has been to work with existing community structures and leaders, rather than imposing new structures on affected communities. Adaptive coordination has been important and has meant that the recovery efforts have been adjusted throughout the recovery period to meet evolving community needs.

4.1. Early recovery

The early recovery activities were led by the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, supported at the municipal level by the affected area councils. During this stage, the focus was on social recovery by supporting individuals, families and communities with recovery information and support services and economic recovery, by providing advice and assistance to affected businesses. In the context of restoring infrastructure and environmental recovery, the initial focus was to understand the impacts on natural and cultural values and infrastructure assets to inform the medium to long-term recovery response.

4.1.1. Supporting individuals, families and communities

*Recovery Hubs and outreach services*

The Bushfire Recovery Taskforce coordinated a range of personal and mental health support services to assist people who were experiencing trauma, distress or personal challenges following the bushfires.

The Huonville Recovery Hub commenced operation from the Huonville Library as a temporary base on 12 February 2019. This facility provided the local community with a central point to access a range of services, information and assistance. A longer term base was made available by Huon Regional Care at 121 Main Road, Huonville. The Hubs commenced operation at this location on 18 February 2019 and was open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am to 5 pm.
On the advice of Huon Valley Council staff and other locally based staff, the Hub operated out of the Esperance Community Health Centre (Dover) on Tuesdays, and the Geeveston Community Hall on Thursdays. This routine continued for three weeks until 8 March 2019, by which time visitation to the Hub had declined to the point that closure was appropriate.

The Hubs were staffed with personnel from a range of agencies and organisations, whose representation changed over time, based on need. Representation included:

- DPAC’s Bushfire Recovery Taskforce – Community Recovery Coordinator
- Department of Health – social worker
- Department of State Growth’s Business Tasmania – support officers
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment – support officers
- Australian Government Department of Human Services – Centrelink team member
- Red Cross – emergency support volunteers

Over the three weeks of Hub operation, approximately 100 individuals visited the three locations. On a daily basis, Geeveston was the busiest of the three (approximately 30 visits over two days), although Huonville had the highest total number (approximately 70 visits over 12 days).

The reasons for visiting the Hubs were varied, with many people dropping in for general information, including the status of the fires which were still burning. The majority of visits to the Hubs related to accessing grant funding, or for information relating to individual or family grant possibilities.

From 12 March 2019, responsibility for service coordination was transferred to a Department of Health social worker based in Huonville. The base for recovery services was moved to the Huonville Community Health Centre, with outreach provided in the Dover shopping centre on Tuesdays and the Geeveston Neighbourhood House on Thursdays.

In the Central Highlands, the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce worked with the Central Highlands Council to provide a range of recovery support and information sessions. These sessions were provided at Miena on 20 February 2019 and Bronte Park on 21 February 2019. The Taskforce was also present at the Bothwell SpinIN and the Hamilton Show. A total of 73 individuals visited the information sessions held in the Central Highlands. Information sessions were provided in the Derwent Valley in Westerway on 27 February 2019 and Maydena on 28 February 2019. A total of 26 individuals attended these sessions.

Outreach services to the Derwent Valley and Central Highlands commenced from 12 March 2019, with the transfer of service coordination to a Department of Health social worker. Individuals who required further support or assistance were able to make appointments directly with the social worker to discuss their needs.

The outreach services provided by the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce have been varied and included brief counselling for individuals in need, referrals to other support services, providing support for affected forestry workers and participating in community meetings and business group sessions. Close and ongoing liaison with the affected area councils was a priority. It was agreed with the West Coast Council that a hub or outreach services were not required.
In addition to the Recovery Hubs and outreach services, recovery information was available on the TasRECOVERY website and social media channels.

The TasRECOVERY website was launched on 18 February 2019 as the sister site for TasALERT and contains information about community events, financial assistance and grants, recovery resources, business information, donations and volunteering.

Between 18 February 2019 (the launch date of TasRECOVERY) and 6 May 2019 there have been:

- 16,435 page views of pages located within the TasRECOVERY website
- 1,502 likes and 1,534 followers on Facebook; and
- 54 followers on Twitter.

Financial assistance

During the bushfires, the Tasmanian Government activated a number of assistance measures for individuals under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), co-funded with the Australian Government. This included Emergency Assistance Grants of up to $2,000 per household ($500 per adult and $250 per child) to help individuals and families to purchase essential items such as food, clothing and personal items. About 8,580 Emergency Assistance Grants were paid to bushfire affected Tasmanians, at a total cost of about $6.2 million.

Due to the scale and duration of the bushfires, some impacted members of the community were unable to attend a location where the Emergency Assistance Grants were being distributed. Special Circumstance Emergency Assistance Grants were made available to people in this situation, who could also demonstrate they had suffered personal distress and hardship. Assistance was $500 per adult and $250 per child, capped at $2,000 per household. Around 330 applications were received for Special Circumstance assistance, with $280,000 in payments being made.

A small number of individuals that were experiencing financial hardship but were ineligible for the Emergency Assistance Grants or the Special Circumstance Emergency Assistance Grants were managed on a case-by-case basis by the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce. Assistance for these individuals was provided through St Vincent De Paul. St Vincent De Paul was the official appeal organisation for the Tasmanian Government and raised about $264,000. The Bushfire Recovery Taskforce has worked with St Vincent de Paul to assist with the distribution of these appeal funds.

Means-tested grants for Recovery and Restoration, where a principal residence is uninhabitable or destroyed, were paid to 15 applicants at a total cost of $81,053. Emergency accommodation assistance was paid to the equivalent of 1,854 days at a total cost of $97,513.

Dr Rob Gordon sessions

In collaboration with the Huon Valley and Central Highlands Councils, the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce arranged for Dr Rob Gordon to come to Tasmania to give a series of public presentations to people affected by the 2018-19 bushfires.

Dr Gordon is a clinical psychologist who has spent over 30 years working with people affected by emergencies and natural disasters. The sessions were held at Miena, Bothwell, Geeveston and Huonville. Dr Gordon shared stories, learnings and practical examples to help people understand their reactions to trauma and grief and come to terms with their situation and emotions.

Around 80 people in total attended the sessions.
Community recovery events

The Tasmanian Government, in partnership with affected area councils, hosted four ‘Thank You’ events to acknowledge and thank emergency service staff and community members who contributed during the 2018-19 bushfire campaign. The four events, held at Geeveston, Zeehan, Miena and Westerway, were family-friendly BBQs with entertainment and activities for children.

The ‘Thank You’ events were an opportunity for those who contributed to the bushfire response, those who were affected by the bushfires, and those who simply wanted to say ‘thanks’ to emergency service workers and volunteers, to come together and celebrate their community.

The events were well received by the communities, with about 3,450 people attending the events.
4.1.2. Providing advice and assistance to businesses

**Financial assistance**

A number of business assistance grants were provided by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to support the economic recovery of the affected municipalities. Bushfire Small Business Disruption Grants of up to $2,000, were available to businesses that experienced significant disruption as a result of the bushfires. 345 applicants received this assistance, at a total cost of about $650,000. Also available were Bushfire Business Recovery Grants of up to $25,000 for small to medium sized enterprises to help cover demonstrated irrecoverable losses. A total of 83 applicants were approved for funding, at a total cost of about $1.7 million.

A Concessional Business Recovery Loan Scheme was available so that small businesses and farmers could access up to $100,000 on an unsecured basis for up to five years to help re-establish after the bushfires. Applications for this scheme closed on 30 April 2019.

Freight subsidies to primary producers were activated under the DRFA with the Australian Government. Four applications for assistance have been received and three approved.

The Australian Government made available a Disaster Recovery Allowance to provide short-term income support to assist employees, sole traders and farmers who could demonstrate that the bushfires had affected their income.

**Targeted support for forest industry**

The Department of State Growth has worked with the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce to coordinate support for the forest industry and, in particular, for displaced forestry workers. An information session was provided by the Skills Response Unit to affected workers from Ta Ann at the Huonville Town Hall on 6 March 2019. Employees were advised of the Rapid Response Skills Initiative which allowed up to $3,500 per person for re-training. The event included presentations from Centrelink and a range of employment and training providers. Additional Centrelink support was also provided at the Geeveston Community House on 21 March 2019 to Ta Ann employees who required further assistance.

A Forestry Industry Bushfire Recovery Project has commenced in the Department of State Growth. The project aims to deliver a co-ordinated response to forestry related bushfire recovery incorporating Tasmanian Government, local government and community level issues. The focus of the project is the Huon Valley and the Derwent Valley local government areas, but it will have broader applicability to other municipalities such as the Central Highlands. Particular areas of focus for the project include coordinating communications with the industry and its markets; considering options to maintain the broader forestry supply chain and opportunities to re-establish the affected resources.

**Tourism support**

The tourism industry was particularly impacted by the bushfires through a reduction in business during the peak tourism season. Destination Southern Tasmania, in partnership with Tourism Tasmania, developed a bushfire recovery marketing campaign titled ‘Love Autumn in the South’ which was launched on 1 March 2019 by the Premier. The campaign focused on the Huon and Far South, the Central Highlands and the Derwent Valley, where operators were subject to emergency alerts and road closures restricted access to tourism operators. The key messages of the campaign drew attention to the beauty and appeal of Southern Tasmania during the autumn and the vast array of things to do and see at that time of the year. The campaign focused on events and experiences and encouraged people to get out and embrace Tasmania’s autumn in a spirit of fun, adventure and curiosity.
The Tasmanian and Australian Governments have committed $2 million in funding for the temporary installation of a public art attraction in the Huon Valley municipality to encourage visitation to the area to support local businesses. The Huon Valley Council has also received a $2.14 million grant from the Tasmanian Government to upgrade the Arve Road, which is a major tourist route connecting Geeveston with the Tahune Airwalk site. The upgrade will improve the safety for all road users as well as provide a more enjoyable route for attracting tourists to the region.

### 4.1.3. Restoring essential infrastructure

In January 2019, the Tasmanian Government activated the Australian Government-State DRFA with regard to the bushfires. Since the establishment of the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, a significant amount of work has been dedicated to understanding and quantifying the impacts of the bushfires on important infrastructure assets in the State’s national parks and the TWWHA. This will support applications for financial assistance under the Category C and D measures of the DRFA for restoration and recovery work.

### 4.2. Medium to long-term recovery

The primary focus of this Recovery Plan is medium to long-term recovery activities. The Recovery Plan will set out ongoing and planned activity under five outcome areas. Some actions will be broad and applicable across all affected local government areas, other actions will be region specific based on assessed need.

The actions demonstrate the Tasmanian Government’s commitment to supporting the affected communities throughout the recovery process. The Government has provided additional support, including financial resource, to help the affected communities reach a point where they can continue the recovery process on their own terms. Ongoing community participation in the implementation of this plan will be a priority, as will close collaboration with the affected area councils.

#### 4.2.1. Outcomes

- **Outcome One: Social recovery**
  Aim: individuals, families and communities have rebuilt emotional, social and physical wellbeing through a community-led, coordinated and planned process.

- **Outcome Two: Infrastructure recovery**
  Aim: homes, businesses and local infrastructure have been restored in a timely manner.

- **Outcome Three: Economic recovery**
  Aim: the local economy has been revitalised and visitation levels to the affected areas restored.

- **Outcome Four: Environmental recovery**
  Aim: the adverse impact on natural and cultural assets are minimised.

- **Outcome Five: Identify and share learnings**
  Aim: future recovery processes are enhanced by sharing lessons learnt in a systematic and consistent way.
4.2.2. Community Recovery Fund

Under the DRFA the Tasmanian Government can request additional financial assistance from the Australian Government where a community is severely affected by an eligible disaster and needs assistance to restore community facilities and activities, and increase community resilience.

The Tasmanian Government sought assistance from the Australian Government to establish a Community Recovery Fund in response to the 2018-19 bushfires. On 9 April 2019, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, agreed to co-fund an economic recovery package of up to $9.9 million under Category C of the DRFA. The Tasmanian Government will oversee administration of the Fund.

The Community Recovery Fund will assist the communities affected by the bushfires by providing for projects and initiatives that:

- support long-term economic and community recovery needs, to help the local economies rebound;
- assist with the restoration of business and community infrastructure by providing coordinated services and advice;
- support individuals, families and the community; and
- restore and reinstate PWS assets and access.

The following actions in this Recovery Plan will be funded through the Community Recovery Fund:

1.1 Provide recovery information and support services for individuals and families in need
1.2 Support existing social recovery networks in local businesses and communities
2.1 Assist the Parks and Wildlife Service to restore visitor access and damaged infrastructure
3.2 Promote the fire affected regions to tourists and other visitors
3.3 Deliver the Economic and Community Recovery Grants program
3.4 Provide recovery support, mentoring and business development services to affected businesses
5.3 Evaluate the Community Recovery Fund
### 4.2.3. Medium to long-term actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>DELIVERABLE</th>
<th>EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social Recovery</td>
<td>1.1 Provide personal and social support for individuals and families in need</td>
<td>Engage Community Recovery Officers (for up to 6 months)</td>
<td>30 Sept 2019</td>
<td>Tasmanian Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver personal and social support to affected individuals and families through locally based social work services</td>
<td>29 Feb 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Support existing social recovery networks in local businesses and communities</td>
<td>Deliver clinical psychological support and mentoring sessions</td>
<td>31 Aug 2019</td>
<td>Tasmanian Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver psychological first aid training courses</td>
<td>31 Dec 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE</td>
<td>EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Infrastructure recovery</td>
<td>2.1 Assist the Parks and Wildlife Service to restore visitor access and damaged infrastructure</td>
<td>Community Recovery Fund application submitted, Program of restoration works and resource needs is developed, Assets within parks and reserves are made safe and reopened</td>
<td>31 May 2019, 31 July 2019, 30 June 2021</td>
<td>DPAC (Bushfire Recovery Taskforce), DPIPWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Work with councils and property owners to restore destroyed boundary fences</td>
<td>Boundary fences restored at eligible properties</td>
<td>30 June 2019</td>
<td>DPAC (Bushfire Recovery Taskforce) and Department of Justice (Tasmanian Prison Service)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE</td>
<td>EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Economic recovery</td>
<td>3.1 Co-ordinate and deliver forestry related recovery effort</td>
<td>Implement the Forest Industry Bushfire Recovery Project</td>
<td>31 Dec 2019</td>
<td>Department of State Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Promote the fire affected regions to tourists and other visitors</td>
<td>Deliver autumn tourism promotional campaign “Love Autumn in the South”</td>
<td>31 May 2019</td>
<td>Tourism Tasmania, with Destination Southern Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Deliver the Economic and Community Recovery Grants program</td>
<td>Grant recipients notified</td>
<td>31 July 2019</td>
<td>DPAC (OSEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All approved projects completed</td>
<td>31 Dec 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 Provide recovery support, mentoring and business development services to affected businesses</td>
<td>Engage Economic Recovery Officers (for up to 12 months) to work with all the affected area councils</td>
<td>31 Aug 2019</td>
<td>Department of State Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE</td>
<td>EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Environmental recovery</td>
<td>4.1 Develop and progress action plans arising from the Rapid Impact Assessment (RIA)</td>
<td>Actions as a result of RIA identified and prioritised Consider need for Category D application under the DRFA, where RIA establishes actions that need to be undertaken High priority actions commenced, where funded through Category D DRFA application</td>
<td></td>
<td>DPIPWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 June 2019</td>
<td>DPIPWE with DPAC (OSEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31 July 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Sept 2019</td>
<td>DPIPWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE</td>
<td>EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Identify and share learnings</strong></td>
<td>5.1 Bushfire Recovery Taskforce operational and administrative learnings shared</td>
<td>State Recovery Coordinator to discuss operational learnings with Premier</td>
<td>31 May 2019</td>
<td>DPAC (Bushfire Recovery Taskforce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.2 Update recovery arrangements to capture learnings from the 2018-19 bushfires recovery</td>
<td>Findings from all relevant agency reviews consolidated and recovery arrangements updated</td>
<td>30 Sept 2019</td>
<td>DPAC (OSEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 Evaluate the Community Recovery Fund</td>
<td>Engage a consultant to undertake the evaluation Final evaluation report provided to the State Recovery Committee</td>
<td>30 June 2020 31 May 2021</td>
<td>DPAC (OSEM)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that by 31 May 2019 the affected communities will be ready to manage their ongoing recovery efforts locally and with targeted assistance from Tasmanian Government partner agencies. At this time, the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce will cease to operate and Tasmanian Government agencies will resume the delivery of mainstream services and the specific actions identified in this Recovery Plan. Remaining administrative responsibilities associated with the recovery effort will transfer to DPAC's OSEM, in accordance with the medium to long-term actions outlined in the table in section 4.2.3. Support to communities will continue to be provided by the relevant agencies in line with their portfolio responsibilities.

Ongoing oversight of the implementation of the Recovery Plan will be done by the SRC, reporting to the State Emergency Management Committee. Regular reports on implementation progress will be provided to the Ministerial Committee for Emergency Management.

If the HVAARC continues to meet past 31 May 2019, responsibility for providing executive support to the group will transfer to the AARC.

The Bushfire Recovery Coordinator will work with OSEM to ensure learnings from this Taskforce are recorded for the operation of future recovery taskforces.