



Department of Justice and Community Safety

Emergency Management Victoria

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justice.vic.gov.au

21/01/2020

Our ref: CD/20/45504

Ms Felicia Mariani
Chief Executive, Victoria Tourism Industry Council
Level 3, 150 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Mariani

URGENT MATTERS FOR BUSINESS OPERATORS IN THE ALPINE SHIRE

Thank you for your email of 8 January 2020 about the issues some of your members are experiencing with accessing their business insurance. I hope this letter assists in facilitating timely access to this support. I also extend my thoughts to your members as they continue to work through the impacts of these devastating bushfires.

I can confirm that on 2 January 2020 the Premier declared, under section 23(1) of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, that a state of disaster exists in relation to the following parts of Victoria:

Local Government Areas:

- Alpine Shire
- East Gippsland Shire
- Mansfield Shire
- Towong Shire
- Wangaratta Rural Shire
- Wellington Shire

Alpine Resorts:

- Mount Buller
- Mount Hotham
- Mount Stirling
- Falls Creek

The declaration was originally in force until 11:59pm on 9 January 2020. However, on 9 January 2020 the Premier extended the declaration for another 48 hours until 11:59pm on 11 January 2020, due to the continuing significant and widespread danger to life and property posed by the bushfire crisis and high-risk weather conditions anticipated throughout this period.

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The declaration gives the Victoria Government the powers and resources it needs to keep Victorians safe, including compelling the evacuation of persons from the disaster area or any part of it. This is the first time the Victorian Government has used these powers since they were included in the *Emergency Management Act 1986* following the devastating Victorian Bushfires in 2009.

The impact of the bushfires on townships, communities and properties within this broader area has been immense. As at 13 January 2020 four lives have been lost and 1.4 million hectares have been burnt. There have been more than 3,891 damage assessments completed and 353 residential and 548 non-residential structures have been confirmed as damaged or destroyed by fire. These figures will change as further assessments are undertaken.

Dealing with the immediate aftermath of the fires, while many fires continue to burn across the state, is a significant challenge that involves all levels of government, businesses and communities. On Monday 6 January, the Victorian Government announced the establishment of Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) to work directly with local communities impacted by these devastating bushfires. BRV will progress immediate priorities for recovery as well as longer-term work to help local communities and local economies, like the agriculture and tourism sectors, to recover.

I understand that staff from Emergency Management Victoria have been liaising directly with you. Should you require any further assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Jenni Rigby, Executive Director, Emergency Management Victoria on 0477 309 294 or jenni.rigby@emv.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Minack

Chief Executive Emergency Management Victoria