

28th Global Eco Tourism Conference 2020

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1 December 2020

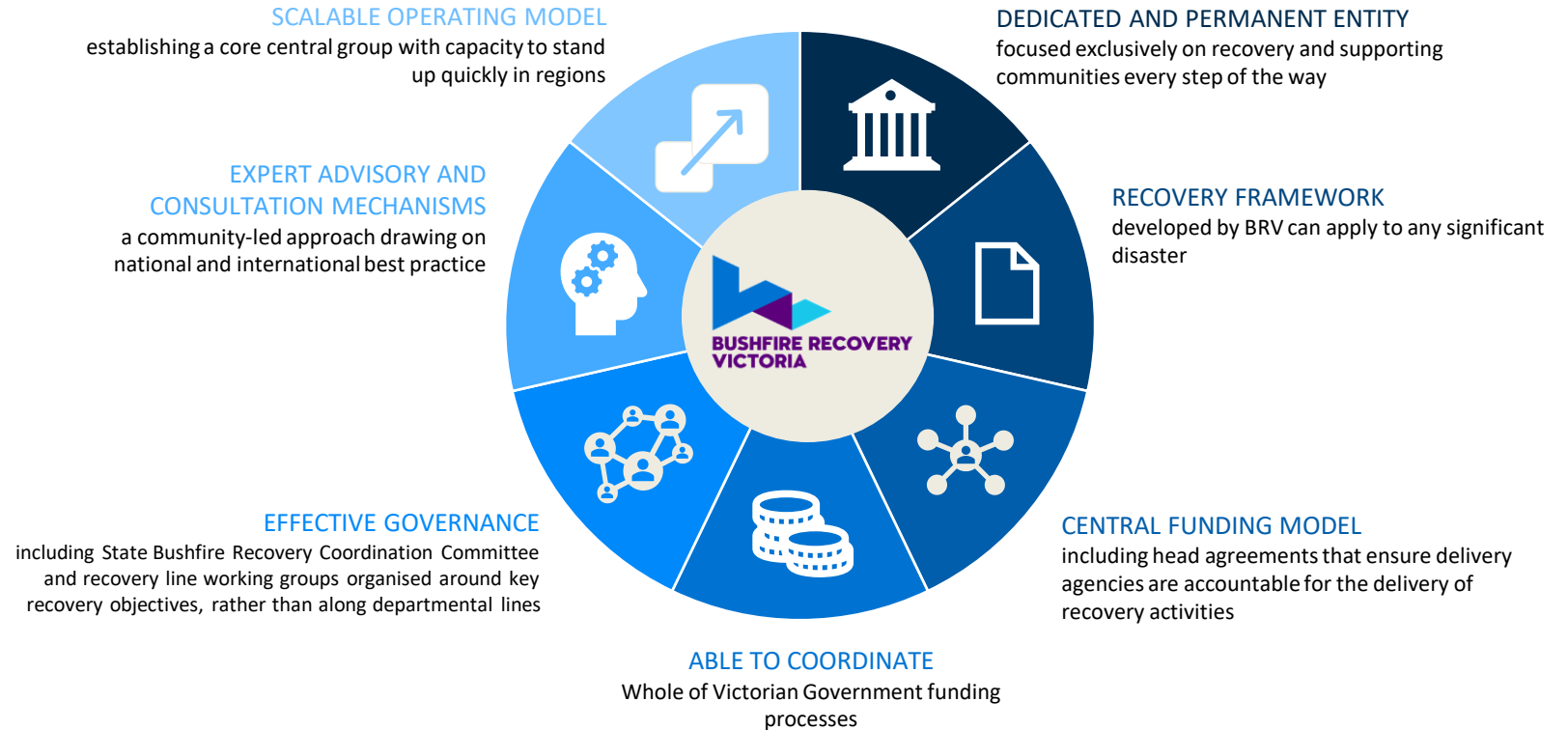


Establishment of Bushfire Recovery Victoria

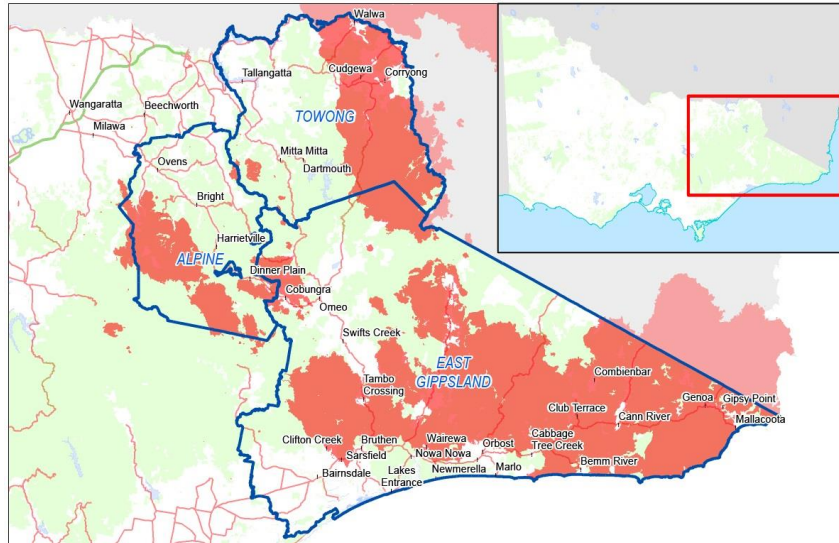
BRV was established as a dedicated and permanent agency in January 2020 to support communities to rebuild and recover from these unprecedented bushfires, and in recognition of the 'new normal' of longer and hotter bushfire seasons and the potential for more frequent events of this scale.

BRV role

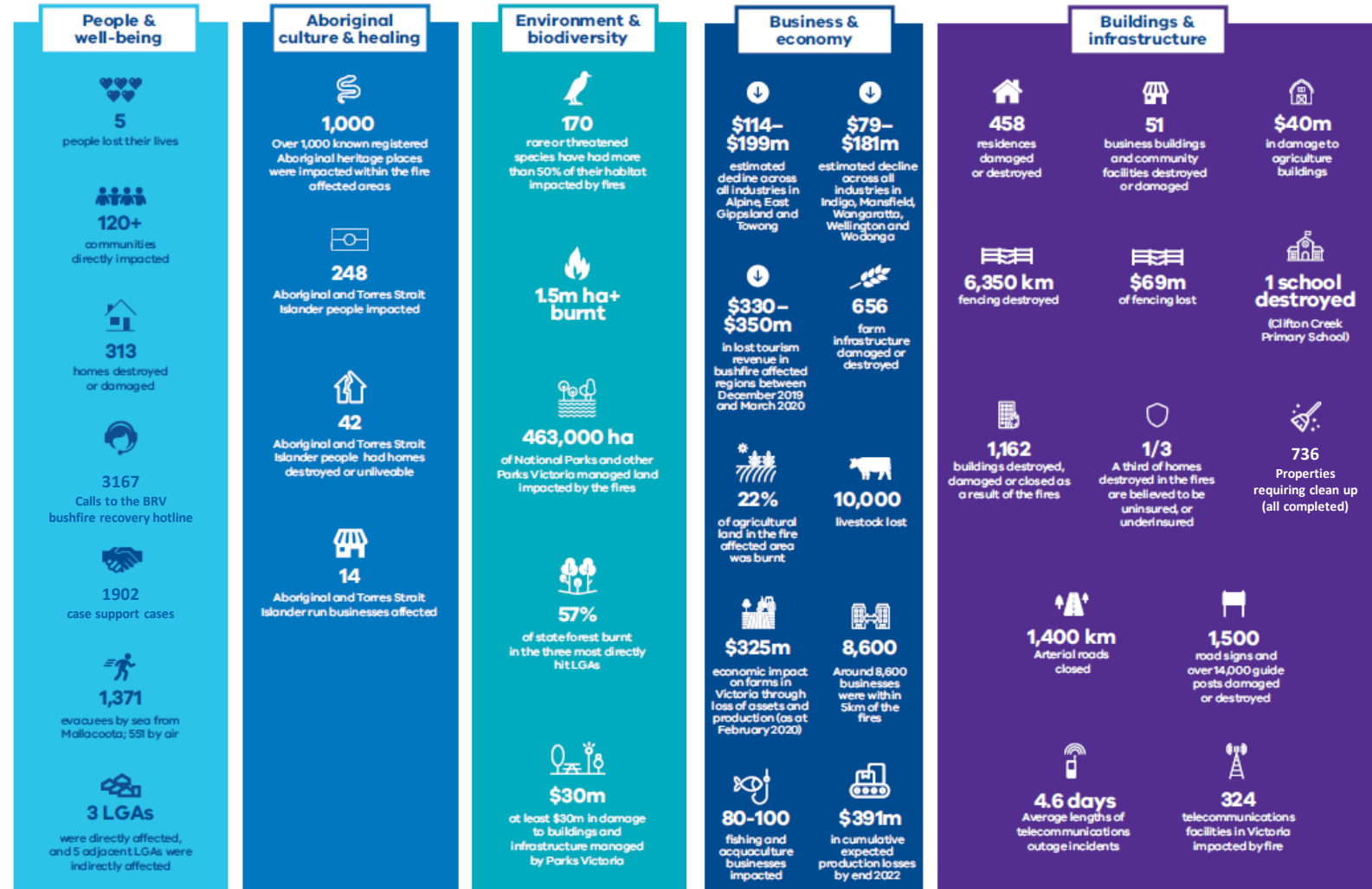
- System-steward
- Commissioning agency
- Delivery where the activity is not core business for departments (e.g. Clean-up)
- Coordination of funding and effort across tiers of government
- Coordination of community solutions
- Architecture for community-led recovery and service delivery



Key impacts of the bushfires



When all significant fires across Victoria had been contained in February 2020,
over 1.5 million hectares had been burnt across the state – more than three times the area of Black Saturday.



BRV's immediate focus has been to....

- Deliver dedicated case support as stressors compound
- support residents to rebuild
- operate Community Recovery Hubs to make it easier for people to access the services they need
- support Community Recovery Committees so communities can plan and lead their own recovery
- facilitate funding pathways for community priorities
- adapt services to ensure we can continue to support communities in the COVID-19 context

Some of our key achievements include



Funding

Over \$387 million invested into support for bushfire-affected communities



Clean-up

All 736 registered sites, incorporating 2,500 structures, cleaned up by end of August 2020



Business

Released \$21.7 million in Small Business Bushfire Support Grants of up to \$10,000 to over 2,800 applicants



Support

Over 1,900 cases recorded through the dedicated Case Support program



Fencing

Over \$4.9 million released to support fencing reconstruction



Bushfire Recovery Grants for Aboriginal communities

Over \$3.5 million made available



Wildlife

Over 2,000 wildlife assessments undertaken

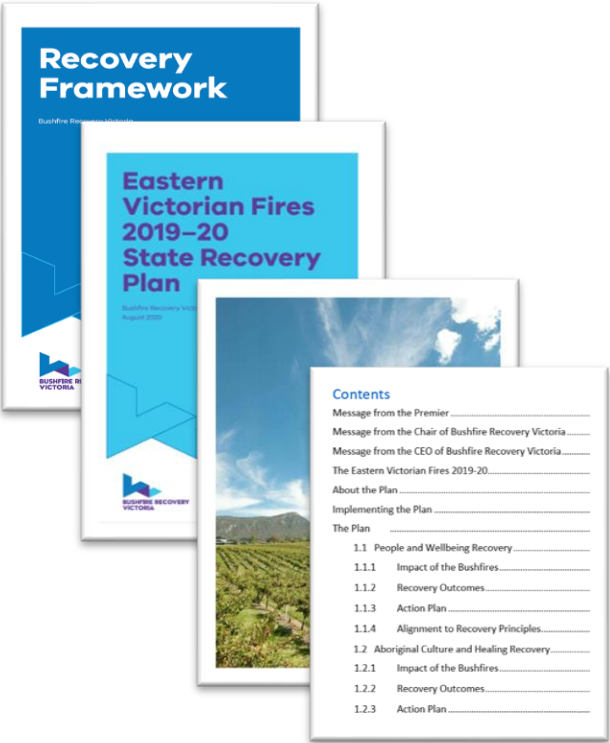


Rebuild support

Completed over 454 bushfire hazard assessments

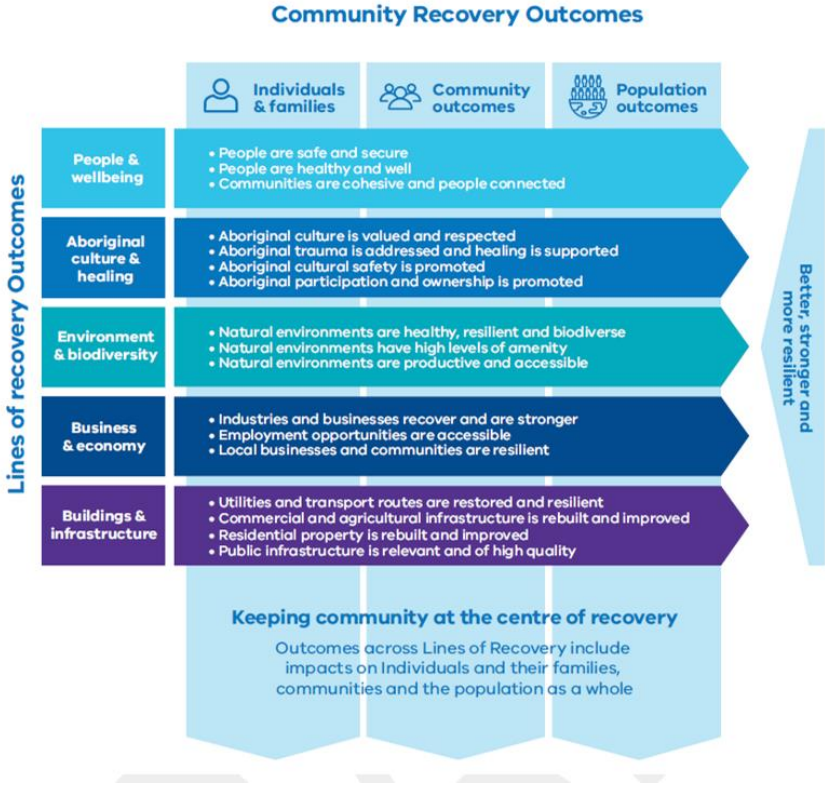
The State Recovery Plan is a Whole of Victorian Government plan, guide by BRV's Recovery Framework and Lines of Recovery

The Plan presents an overview of recovery planning over the next 12-18 months and is public-focused with images and case studies



Indicative table of contents

Each line of recovery chapter has long-term outcomes



Each chapter covers:

- Long-term outcomes
- Recovery priorities to December 2021
- Case Study
- Action Plans

Line of Recovery Chapters were developed through engagement with all relevant departments

First tranche of tourism initiatives

- In February and March 2020, a range of Government initiatives were announced to boost tourism in bushfire impacted communities as part of the immediate response:
 - **Marketing** - Visit Victoria's \$2 million marketing campaign to encourage visits to bushfire impacted areas and the Commonwealth's \$76 million Tourism Recovery Package, including support for events and domestic and international marketing
 - **Events** – Event grants of up to \$20,000 in fire affected areas through a dedicated Regional Events Fund Bushfire Recovery Round (\$300,000)
 - **Business Events** - more than 115 business, sport and government agencies backing the to encourage businesses to hold events in a bushfire-affected region
 - **\$10 million Bushfire Tourism and Business Fund** - \$500,000 for regional industry groups and chambers of commerce, \$350,000 for Tourism North East, and \$500,000 for Destination Gippsland

Environment and Biodiversity

Recovery priorities

- Biodiversity and wildlife
- Natural environment, land and waterways

Key actions

- Reduce immediate threats to biodiversity and wildlife
- Facilitate Traditional Owner Reading and Healing activities
- Deliver the \$900,000 Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery Grants program for individuals and environmental organisations and networks
- Restore affected waterways and catchments
- Monitor natural regeneration and actively regenerate fire-affected roadsides, parks, forests and reserves
- Restore and promote access to nature-based tourism sites
- Make firewood collection sites available to the community



Buildings and Infrastructure

Recovery priorities

- Enabling Planning & Rebuilding
- Restoration and resilience of transport infrastructure
- Drinking water and sewerage
- Restoration and resilience of telecommunications and energy services
- Building and assets
- Fencing

Key programs

- Short Term Modular Housing provides modular homes for a number of families who lost their primary place of residence in the fires for up to three years
- Rebuilding Support Services provides preliminary Bushfire Hazard Assessments and rebuilding information through dedicated rebuilding support officers
- Rainwater and septic tank replacement program provides rebates and funding for lost or damaged rainwater and/or septic tanks
- Better Home Design Guide outlines what to consider when rebuilding after a bushfire, or in building in a bushfire prone area.
- Complex Site Taskforce is an independent advisory body that will assess complex, bushfire-impacted locations and provide advice to BRV and councils about how to support owners of these sites who are looking to rebuild.
- Planning permit exemptions or reduced requirements for people who lost their homes in the fires, depending on their circumstances

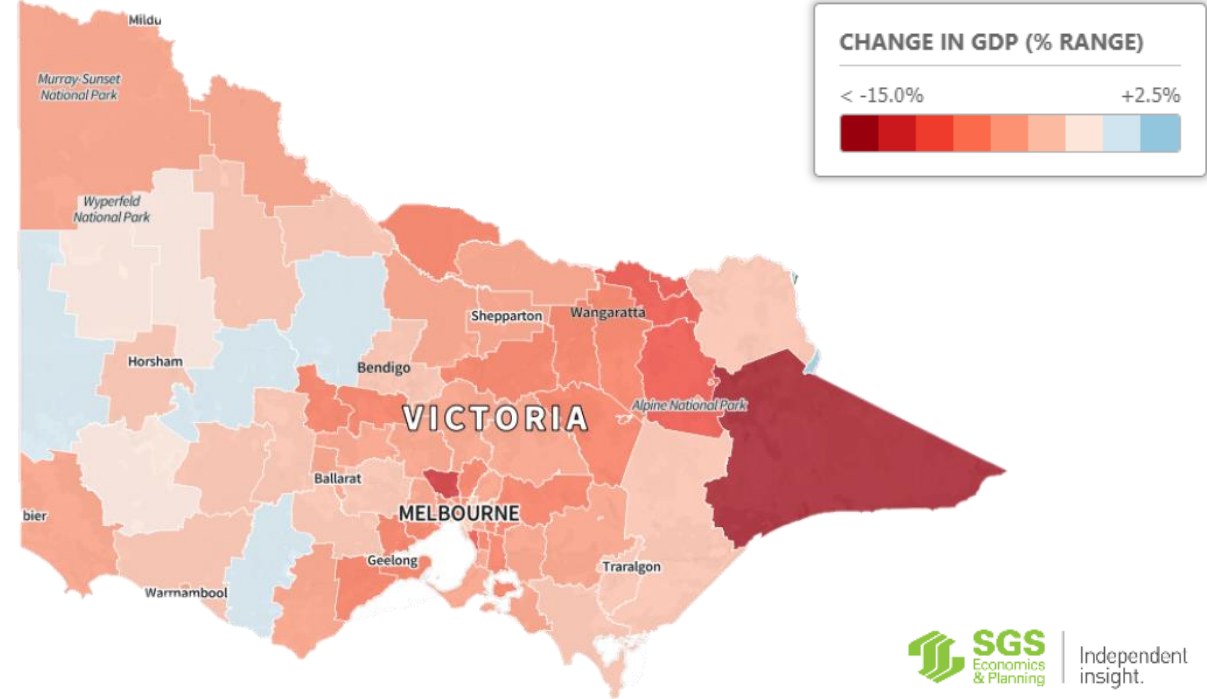


Key priorities for building and infrastructure are to repair and rebuild residential, commercial and agricultural buildings, and to restore essential community infrastructure safely and quickly.

Economic impact of the bushfires and COVID-19

The dual impact of COVID-19 and the summer bushfires means that the Gippsland and Ovens Murray regions will likely face some of the most significant GRP declines in Victoria. East Gippsland is the most significantly impacted LGA, with a decline of more than \$293.2 million in GRP for 2019-20.

Local Government Area	Impact ranges (%)	Impact ranges, in terms of GRP (millions)
East Gippsland	> 20%	> \$293.2
Towong	2.5% - 5%	\$4.9 – \$9.8
Alpine	10% - 12.5%	\$68.5 – 85.6
Wellington	2.5% - 5%	\$74.6 – 149.3
Indigo	10% - 12.5%	\$50.5 – 63.1
Wodonga	10% - 12.5%	\$232.7 – 290.9
Wangaratta	7.5% - 10%	\$101.8 – 135.7
Mansfield	7.5% - 10%	\$39.3 – 52.4



SGS Economics & Planning: COVID-19 and summer bushfires: The economic impact on your suburb and pathways to recovery

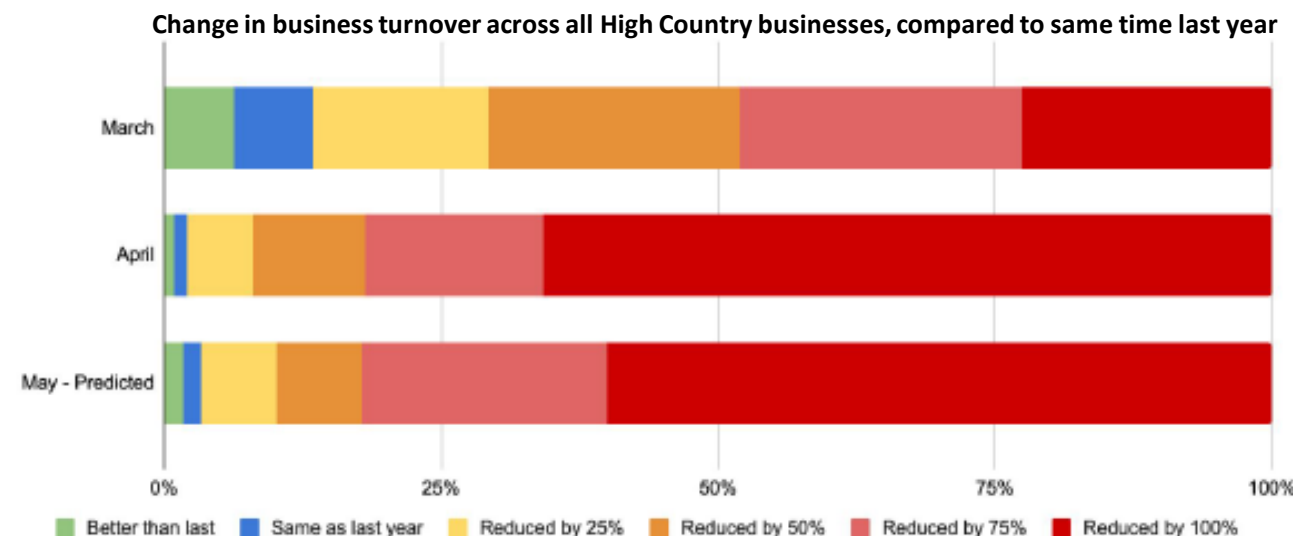
Economic impact of the bushfires and COVID-19

With the exception of the Labour day long weekend, the High Country's visitor economy has undergone 5 months of sustained economic loss, resulting in up to \$639 million in expenditure losses and a loss of up to 6,390 jobs (FTE equivalent).

Many businesses operating across Victoria's High Country have reported a significant reduction in revenue due to the combined impact of bushfires and COVID-19, with income losses ranging between 75% and 100%.

Estimated impacts of bushfires and COVID-19 on the High Country economy, between 1 January and 30 June 2020

Measure	March quarter	June quarter	Total
Visitation Loss (millions)	0.49 – 0.63	0.76 – 0.97	1.25 – 1.60
Expenditure Loss (millions)	\$158 – \$208	\$341 – \$431	\$499 – \$639
Job disruption (FTE equivalent)	1,580 – 2,080	3,410 – 4,310	4,990 – 6,390



¹Victoria's High Country Tourism Sector - Economic Assessment

The Local Economic Recovery Program

The Australian Government’s \$650M bushfire recovery package comprises:

- \$448.5M for Local Economic Recovery (LER) and Complementary Project (CP) funding
- \$15M to assist the forestry industry
- \$149.7M to support native wildlife and habitats
- \$13.5M for community wellbeing
- \$27.1M for telecommunications resilience

LER funding is focused on priority projects in priority regions, identified through established local and regional recovery planning processes and, where applicable. The Commonwealth will provide up to **\$34.3M** for local recovery projects in Victoria, under matched funding arrangements.

LER SCOPE OVERVIEW		
Enabling infrastructure New infrastructure and functionality enhancements or upgrades to existing infrastructure, including betterment, to support longer term economic recovery, specialisation and diversification, and disaster resilience.	Economic recovery support Development or repositioning of regional specialisations and endowments to support longer term economic recovery and diversification – including through workforce participation support and skills development.	Business and industry development Entrepreneurship and innovation, business retention, expansion and attraction, capacity building, small business development, and local and regional industry networks.
Social development Community development and wellbeing or social support initiatives that can also demonstrate a contribution to enduring economic recovery.	Natural environment and resource development Natural resource recovery and improvement initiatives that can also demonstrate a significant contribution to enduring economic recovery.	Built environment future-proofing Built environment adaptation, to respond to future climate and natural hazard conditions.



**BUSHFIRE RECOVERY
VICTORIA**

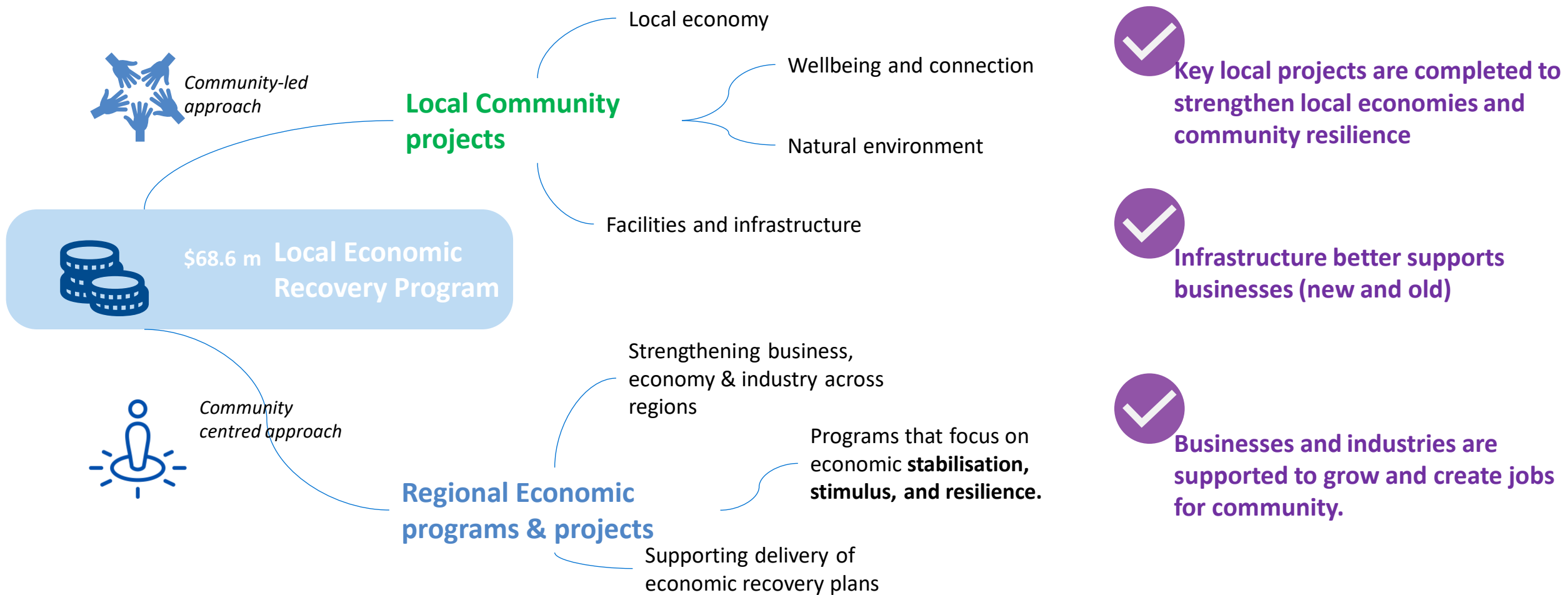
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On 11 May 2020, the Commonwealth Government announced \$448.5 million to support the Local Economic Recovery and Complementary Project Fund (LER Program).

On 14 July 2020, Minister Littleproud confirmed a \$34.4 million contribution to Victorian initiatives as part of the LER Fund. This funding has been matched.



How the Local Economic Recovery Program helps



Cape Conran

The fires caused extensive damage to visitor and tourism facilities - including cabins, canvas 'glamping' tents, essential power and water infrastructure, toilets, barbeques, boardwalks and the steps down to the beach.

- \$7.15 million toward the completion of water and sewage upgrades and construction of a bike path between Orbost, Marlo and Cape Conran.
- Cape Conran campground was partially reopened for the September School Holidays.
- Recovery works made 45 sites available.
- Beach access points to Salmon Rocks, Surfers Beach and Banksia Bluff Campground have been reinstated.
- Toilets at Cape Conran have also been repaired.
- The full campground (all 135 sites) and remaining cabins and lodge will be operational for the Christmas holiday period.
- As part of the Victorian Government 2020/21 Budget announcements, the *Gippsland Tourism Recovery Package* includes \$3.5 million to build 10 eco-pods at Cape Conran Coastal Park.
- The distinctive accommodation will be built from sustainable materials and attract more visitors to the beautiful beach on the Melbourne to Sydney coastal route.



Banksia seed pods have started to open at Cape Conran



Tree ferns at Cape Conran have already started to regrow.

2020-21 Budget Outcomes

Tourism

- Up to 120,000 vouchers each worth \$200 available to attract more people to visit and stay in regional Victoria.
- More than \$149 million to build new visitor accommodation, improve major tourist trails, and drive more people out to taste the world-class produce, food and wine on our doorstep.
- \$150 million Regional Tourism Investment Fund will fund nature-based, First Nations, arts and culture, and food and wine tourism projects – priorities identified in the Regional Tourism Review.
- \$20 million Regional Events Fund.
- \$18.5 million Gippsland Tourism Recovery Package:
 - Upgrade to the East Gippsland Rail Trail
 - \$3.5 million to build 10 eco-pods at Cape Conran Coastal Park.
 - Metung Hot Springs will receive \$1.5 million to support the establishment of a year-round geothermal mineral spring.
 - \$2 million will create more camping spots in East Gippsland.
 - \$1 million will go towards the Nunduk Spa and Eco-Resort proposed for the southern shores of Lake Wellington.
- \$15 million will go towards works on the popular Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing hiking trail
- \$4.3 million will enable the continued growth of the Prosecco Road winery district including helping to establish accommodation at Dal Zotto Wines.
- Extension of the Murray To Mountains Rail Trail and \$3.85 million to provide better access to Point Hicks Lighthouse.
- The extension of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail to deliver 25 kilometres of additional trail linking Beechworth to Yackandandah, and Yackandandah to Osbornes Flat.

Roads

- Princes Highway East Duplication Stage 3 (\$241.1 million).
- Duplication of the Princes Highway East between Traralgon to Sale.

Infrastructure

- \$525.9 million for Victoria's Digital Future Now for the provision of business-grade broadband in suburban and regional areas.



Questions

For further information about BRV and our program of work visit
brv.vic.gov.au