



Interim _____

Disaster Appeal Report

Response,
Relief,
Recovery

AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES MARCH 2020 INTERIM REPORT





Australian Bushfires 2019 - 2020

Australia has been ravaged by an unprecedented bushfire crisis this summer, with countless communities left devastated.

As of 15 February 2020, over 46 million acres (72,000 square miles) of land was burnt due to thousands of fires. At least 80 percent of the Blue Mountains World Heritage area in New South Wales and 53 per cent of the Gondwana Rainforests in Queensland were burnt.

Just like the decades past, The Salvation Army has been at the forefront during this disaster – providing emergency and recovery relief. We have stood alongside communities since September 2019, as fires took hold of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, with Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) deployed in response.

We simply could not have predicted the scale of disaster that was to unfold.

As Salvos teams sprung into action to provide immediate relief, we were overwhelmed by the generosity of people around us. Everyday Australians, corporations, Salvation Army partners and donors began donating towards our emergency relief efforts.

\$43m has been pledged to The Salvation Army since our Disaster Appeal was launched on 9 November 2019.

THE SALVATION ARMY'S RESPONSE

The Salvation Army provides disaster assistance in three stages:

- Response - Emergency response during and in the aftermath of the disaster. SAES teams are activated at evacuation centres to respond to the needs of those affected. Meals and refreshments, care packs, bedding, referrals, counselling and financial assistance are just some of the ways we help.
- Relief - Initial assessment and provision of emergency funds.
- Recovery - This is often the longest, where additional financial support is provided to those who have been severely impacted by the disaster.



BUSHFIRE RESPONSE AS OF 5 MARCH 2020



\$6m response and relief



\$15.2m recovery - hardship payments

Our local teams continue to distribute funds as the focus has now shifted towards long-term recovery in affected communities.

As at 5 March 2020:

- \$21.2 million in services and support has been spent since our Salvation Army Emergency Services teams were first activated in September 2019.
- Over 3,000 Salvation Army volunteers worked around the clock, providing more than 250,000 meals and over 240,000 light refreshments and personal packs to first responders and evacuees.
- Over \$15.2 million in hardship payments distributed to 9,430 Australians (through a dedicated phone line and face-to-face conversations on the ground)
- Assistance beyond financial payments, such as gift cards to the value of over half a million dollars, product donations, flights and emergency accommodation, thanks to the contributions of corporate partners.
- A dedicated Bushfire Recovery Team established to help rebuild communities for the next two to three years.

INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES ASSISTED WITH HARSHIP PAYMENTS TO DATE

NSW	6367
VIC	2142
SA	650
QLD	215
WA	56





THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

The Salvation Army's response to this national crisis has now shifted from emergency response and immediate relief to medium-to-long term recovery. Our priority is to provide support to people who have suffered significant losses.

Our experience in dealing with personal hardship resulting from disaster tells us that up to 70 percent of donated funds will need to be spent in the recovery stages – that is anywhere from now to up to three years.

For the people and communities caught up in this crisis, the road to recovery will undoubtedly be a long one. We are working with federal, state and local partners in our disaster response and recovery plans, to determine next steps.

The Salvation Army has established a dedicated Bushfire Recovery Team that is locally embedded and will be coordinated nationally.

The team's services include:

- financial assistance and counselling
- a dedicated phone line to help workers assess requests for and deliver material aid
- outreach workers embedded in local communities across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, and
- caseworkers based in communities to deliver holistic assistance, including financial, emotional and psychological support.

As The Salvation Army moves from our emergency response to long-term recovery phase, thanks to your support, we will be able to stand alongside people and communities for as long as it takes to rebuild and recover.

HOPE IN THE HEART OF A BLAZE

Late last year, Salvo Elaine Middleton, put up her hand to help feed firefighters and other emergency services personnel during the bushfire crisis in northern New South Wales.

"I spent the first week serving in the mess tent. There were often more than 200 emergency workers for each meal and we also made packs for them to take away," Elaine says, adding "it was very intense and extremely tiring".

Despite initially intending to finish volunteering after four days, Elaine stayed on to assist the Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) teams, travelling up and down the east coast of Australia for weeks to come.

Elaine recalls one morning when a group of over 300 firefighters arrived at a Salvation Army evacuation centre, tired, hungry and exhausted. They had been battling blazes all night.

"In our hearts, we weren't just feeding them but hoped we were nurturing them in some way too," she says.

"Working with other Salvos was wonderful – they just rolled up their sleeves and were into it."

"They did whatever they could for anyone, at any time, and I was really proud to wear the Salvos t-shirt."

Elaine adds that her time volunteering with The Salvation Army during a devastating and difficult time for many Australians, "gave me a whole new appreciation of the emergency services and I'm in awe of them all".

"They were risking their lives to save people, to save homes and to save towns. It was beautiful to help serve them and others."