



## Bushfire Psychological Counselling Voucher Program Information for applicants – July 2011

The Bushfire Psychological Counselling Voucher Program has been developed through a \$3.5 million gift from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund. It aims to assist people directly affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires to access psychological counselling support.

### What does the program do?

The program provides six counselling sessions to each individual (including dependant children over five years of age) who has been directly affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires. Individuals can apply for vouchers until 1 June 2012. Vouchers are redeemable until 31 August 2012. Applicants will be sent six vouchers that can be used to see an eligible counsellor of their own choice, and in their own time.

Applicants who have used all six of their vouchers can apply for an additional six vouchers for further counselling support. This includes parents who have used their own vouchers in family counselling to support the care of children under five years of age. A maximum of 12 vouchers will be issued to any individual.

Applicants who require additional counselling support beyond the Bushfire Psychological Counselling Voucher Program or who require specialist treatment should visit their local general medical practitioner for ongoing advice and referral.

There is no cash involved in this process and applicants will not have to pay any co-payment to the counsellor.

The program will run until 31 August 2012. Vouchers can be used anytime during this period. Vouchers cannot be used for counselling sessions that have taken place before 10 August 2009.

### Who is eligible for this program?

People eligible for the program include:

- people who have received grants paid by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund
- people receiving or who have received Victorian Bushfire Case Management
- dependant children (over 5 years of age) of eligible people above
- other people who have been directly affected by the Victorian bushfires, for example, family and close friends of people affected by the bushfires and those people who have lost their livelihood directly through the effects of the bushfires.

### How does the program work?

The program has four steps.

1. Register for the program
2. Receive your vouchers
3. Make an appointment with an eligible counsellor
4. Attend your appointment and give the counsellor your voucher.

\* If you require a second round of vouchers, simply submit an **Application for Additional Bushfire Psychological Counselling Vouchers** form or contact our hotline directly on **1800 180 213**. Please note if you are applying for vouchers for the first time you must complete an initial application form.

### Who are eligible counsellors?

Only counsellors eligible to participate in the program can accept counselling vouchers.

These are:

- psychological counsellors employed in community health services receiving funds from the Department of Health.
- psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists registered as approved Medicare providers under the Commonwealth Government's Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative.
- psychological counsellors working with the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement.

### Contact details for these eligible providers are available at:

- community health services [www.health.vic.gov.au/communityhealth/service\\_provider/community\\_health\\_directory](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/communityhealth/service_provider/community_health_directory)
- Medicare providers under the Commonwealth Government's Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative including:
  - psychologists [www.psychology.org.au/MedicareProvider/SearchByMap.aspx](http://www.psychology.org.au/MedicareProvider/SearchByMap.aspx) or phone **1800 333 497**
  - social workers [www.aasw.asn.au/membersdirectory](http://www.aasw.asn.au/membersdirectory)
  - occupational therapists [www.ausot.com.au/images/File/BAMH%20Practitioner%20Directory%20100608%20Edited%20v2.pdf](http://www.ausot.com.au/images/File/BAMH%20Practitioner%20Directory%20100608%20Edited%20v2.pdf)
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement, Bereavement Information and Referral Service on **1300 664 786 (toll free)**

## How to register for the program

To register for the program complete an application form. Parents/guardians may apply on behalf of children over five years of age. Young people may also apply independently if they wish.

Applicants who have used all six of their vouchers, including parents who have used their own vouchers in family counselling to support the care of children under five years of age, can apply for an additional six vouchers for further counselling support. Simply complete the **Application for Additional Bushfire Psychological Counselling Vouchers** form or contact our hotline directly on **1800 180 213**.

Application forms can be downloaded at **[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal)**

Send completed forms to  
Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund  
GPO BOX 4057  
Melbourne 3001  
Fax (03) 9092 1926

Further information is available online at **[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/bushfireappeal)** or through our hotline on **1800 180 213**.