



The Hon Michael Keenan MP
Minister for Justice

The Hon Kim Wells MP
Victorian Minister for Police and Emergency Services
and Bushfire Response

4 March 2014

**ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRIMARY PRODUCERS AND SMALL
BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY FEBRUARY 2014 BUSHFIRES**

The Minister for Justice Michael Keenan and the Victorian Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Bushfire Response Kim Wells today announced that low-interest concessional loans have now been made available to eligible primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations affected by the February 2014 bushfires.

“Disaster assistance for these fires is being provided under the jointly-funded Commonwealth and State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements to primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations,” Mr Keenan said.

Mr Wells said that concessional interest rate loans are being made available to bushfire-affected small businesses and primary producers in the local government areas of Baw Baw, East Gippsland, Greater Shepparton, Hume, Latrobe, Macedon Ranges, Manningham, Mitchell, Moira, Nillumbik, Wellington and Yarra Ranges.

Concessional loans of up to \$200,000 will be administered by the Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria and can be used to restore damaged buildings, replace damaged equipment and stock and for other general requirements to assist businesses.

“I encourage all primary producers and small businesses who have suffered direct physical impact from the February bushfires to contact the Rural Finance Corporation to test their eligibility for the loans,” Mr Wells said.

To apply for a concessional interest rate loan, primary producers and small businesses can contact the Rural Finance Corporation on 1800 260 425 or online at www.ruralfinance.com.au.

The Commonwealth and Victorian governments are committed to ensuring those communities affected by natural disasters have the assistance they need to recover.

For further information on available recovery assistance, visit the Victorian Government’s Emergency Relief and Recovery Victoria website at www.recovery.vic.gov.au or the Australian Government’s Disaster Assist website at www.disasterassist.gov.au.

Media contact:

Emily Broadbent 0400 390 008 (Minister Keenan’s office)

Jessica Jackson 0437 422 048 (Minister Well’s office)