

Financial support after the February 2024 Victorian Storms and Western Victorian Bushfires



Get recovery support

After an emergency it can be difficult to know what to do next.

Depending on what you need, recovery support can help you to:

- find services to support your recovery
- apply for payments
- progress an insurance claim
- get legal support
- get support for your business.

Find out more at vic.gov.au/recovery-support, or call 1800 560 760.

Financial support

Financial counselling

Recovering from a natural disaster will take time. There are a lot of financial decisions to think about straight away, and over the months ahead. Financial counselling is free, independent and confidential. A financial counsellor can help you make a plan to manage your money and prioritise your bills and other payments. A financial counsellor can also talk to creditors on your behalf and negotiate affordable payment plans. If you get help early, you will have many more options.

Call the National Debt Helpline on **1800 007 007** to speak to a financial advisor.

You could also call the:

- Mob Strong Debt Helpline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - **1800 808 488**
- Small Business Debt Helpline - **1800 413 828**
- Rural Financial Counselling Service for primary producers and small, related rural businesses – **1300 771 741**

If you lost power

Prolonged Power Outage Payment

If your household or small business has experienced a power outage for at least 7 days (if you remain off power as at 12.01am Tuesday, 20 February), you may be eligible for a Prolonged Power Outage Payment of \$1,920 per week to eligible households and \$2,927 for eligible small businesses. Eligible customers will be notified by their power distribution business.

Major event day payment

If your power was disrupted for more than 12 hours during the February 2024 storm event, you are entitled to compensation.

Under the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice, a distributor must make a payment to a customer of \$90 if the customer experiences an unplanned sustained interruption of more than 12 hours on a major event day, such as extreme weather or a storm.

This payment will appear as a credit on your power bill from your electricity retailer within two billing cycles of the day your power was out.

If you evacuated or your home was damaged by fire or storms

Emergency Relief Payment

Emergency relief payments are available for eligible community members whose homes have been damaged by the bushfires or storms in Victoria.

An emergency relief payment can help you to pay for things you need most, including:

- food
- clothing
- medication
- accommodation.

Payments are \$640 per adult and \$320 per child, up to a maximum of \$2240 per eligible family.

You are eligible for a relief payment if:

- your principal place of residence is in an evacuation warning area, or the fires or storms have damaged your home, and
- you have unmet immediate relief needs.

If you think you may be eligible for a relief payment, you can find out more by calling the Emergency Recovery Hotline on **1800 560 760**.