

Tasmanian State report – South

With the devastating aftermath of Victoria's worst possible fire storms still very much with us, it is very hard to focus on any thing else other what accrued and what can be done to help the healing process. When one witnesses first hand the devastation created during those terrible days and nights of early February it is very hard to find the right words to express one's feelings. Sadness and sorrow are possible words, but there is a much deeper feeling that tends to bring silence. This is followed by mixed emotions, It was like Mother Nature happily rolling the dice of death during those terrible few days which then raises the question of "why", followed by the desire to then do some thing to help.

Yes Mother Nature had done her worst but from these darkest of clouds has come the best of humanity along with good old Aussie spirit shinny through those dark clouds.

The unrelenting outpouring of compassion expressed by Tassie TCA members in wanting to help Victorian families makes one extremely proud to be a TCA member.

Within a few days of viewing the news reports of the devastation Tassie members where coming forward with offers to help, and with equally quick follow up by our new Victorian Coordinator Trevor Brown it become clear that replacing rural fencing was a area where our members could provide direct support. Arrangements where quickly put in place to transport and accommodate Tassie TCA volunteer fencing teams. At the same time the list of members willing to help was growing to be over 60.

The amount of generosity being offered in the way of practical support by businesses that had never had any involvement with TCA was over whelming to say the least.

Our Tassie branches were also busy arranging fund raising events, Just one being a combined Forestry Tasmania, Tourism Council of Tasmania, New Forest Industry and TCA family day at the Tahune Airwalk, David Foster and family travelled over night so they could be part of the day. This event alone raised \$16,000 for the Red Cross appeal.

But the clouds of sadness was never far away with terribly sad news being received by the Tasmanian Forest Festival committee that Errol and Harley Morgan lives have been lost to the fires, Errol and Harley regularly travelled over from Victoria to support the Festival's chain saw carving events. The Festival committee quickly rallied to provide support to the remaining members of Errol and Harley's family. The committee's commitment was supported by a wonderful outpouring of support that extended way beyond what was expected.

This outpouring was also happening within TCA with our North East branch devoting proceeds from its World Forestry Day Timber Ball to help effected families, Our Meander branch used all the proceeds raised from its last years footy tipping competition to purchase a fully kitted fencing tool box for use by our volunteer fencing crews. At the same time our Derwent Valley and Bruny Island branches had indicated their willingness to provide financial support. Our Bruny branch had also enlisted financial from their local Bruny Island Cork Club and the Bruny Island Community Association. Our West Coast branch members also made a donation to the Rotary appeal.

Then Trevor Brown advised us that he had received clearance for relief work to commence in the Traralgon South district. Within a few days of Trevor's advice our first volunteer team (from our Bruny Island branch) was travelling over to Traralgon South with a loaned tractor and post driver to start their weeks work helping to replace a estimated 4,000k of rural fencing lost to the regions Churchill fire.

Our Bruny team has been followed by teams from our branch's including Meander (two teams), Hellyer, Huon (two teams), and North East Tas. The effort is also being supported by Rotary Tasmania with several Rotary members joining our teams. By the time you read this our Bruny branch will completed their second weeks work. Along with the fencing task there is now a growing need for community support work to which several teams of Tassie ladies have taken on with the same commitment as that of our fencing volunteers.

The task is enormous and not easy, but the friendship and thanks being offered to our volunteers by the Traralgon South community is reward enough for our returning teams to express their readiness to remain on the roster to once again spend a week helping their new friends over in the Traralgon South, Callignee district. Our TCA Tassie branches will endeavor to maintain their commitment for as long as the need remains.

Barry Chipman
Tasmanian State Manager

TCA thanks the following list of supporters for their support to our Tassie TCA Volunteers to Victoria.

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