

Bruny Island Timber Group Back Working at Traralgon South

Just 51 weeks ago a crew of volunteers from Bruny Island, off the south-east coast of Tasmania, arrived at the fire devastated townships of Traralgon South and Callignee to start what turned out to be an 8-month demonstration of goodwill and aid to the district.

Complete with a tractor and post rammer, rare commodities after the February 7 fires, the volunteers started the huge task of reconstructing boundary fences in the area. The volunteers, all members of Timber Communities Australia's Bruny Island branch, are back for their third working holiday in the community in less than 12 months. Trevor Adams, his brother "Boof" and Ian Kaden are all on their third tour while fellow Bruny Island farmer "Chiller" is making his first visit.

"The bond that has been forged between the Bruny Island and Traralgon South communities has been amazing. Many of the last year's volunteers commented they remembered the assistance Tasmania received from Victorians after similar bushfires hit Tasmania in 1967. They saw the fencing project as a way of paying back communities that helped them out after that disaster" said TCA's coordinator Trevor Brown.

Fencing, however, has not been the main task undertaken on this trip. "We have cut and split a lot of firewood and helped out a few people with finishing off sheds. It is quite amazing how many new homes and sheds have been built since our last visit" Trevor Adams commented.

"We are all farmers but settlement of Bruny Island came about through the timber industry. Timber grows extremely well on Bruny and we all understand the industry's value to our community. There are plenty of people that haven't got a clue where Bruny Island is that would do anything to stop our local timber industry. That is why we are members of Timber Communities Australia" Mr Adams added.

Timber Communities Australia's Tasmanian branches committed to arranging volunteer fencing crews to Victoria less than a week after February 7 fires. "We figured the Traralgon South – Callignee area was the best place to concentrate on. Being a local I could see that the area was barely mentioned in the media following the fires but was as hard hit as towns such as Kinglake" Mr Brown added.

"More than 130 people made the trip across Bass Straight through our program last year and we are very lucky that TT Line has continued its support for the program. That will enable volunteers to keep coming over and back until the project winds up" he said.

La Trobe Council recently took over management of the refencing program within the municipality. Prior to Christmas it was managed by the Victorian Farmers Federation and funded by the Department of Primary Industries.



Caption: (L-R) "Boof" Adams, Trevor Adams, "Chiller" and Ian Kaden await a well earned dinner following a day helping bushfire victims at Traralgon South. The Timber Communities Australia Bruny Island branch members are on their third working visit to the district since last year's Black Saturday bushfires.

For further information contact Trevor Brown 0428 489 362