

BUSHFIRE RELIEF UPDATE (KINGLAKE)

While the mammoth task of distributing relief to bushfire affected areas continues, there is a plan to continue this relief work for many months.

DOGS Victoria and Nestle Purina Petcare have teamed up and have a long term strategy to ensure that relief supplies are distributed to those in need. One such case is the Kinglake Animal Relief Centre which was at the heart of some of the worst affected areas.

The Kinglake Veterinary Clinic was one of the many buildings not to escape the devastation and thanks to locals, an Animal Relief Centre was established in an empty Takeaway food shop. The Relief Centre is manned by volunteers including vets and is operating as a triage centre for all domestic animals and wildlife.

While on my first visit to the Kinglake Relief Centre, a CFA crew delivered a Leonberger that they found in the bush. Barely alive the volunteers worked to stabilise his condition and then transferred him to a Vet Clinic for urgent treatment. It was later reported that he has survived due to the efforts of those volunteers.

To enable the Relief Centre to continue, DOGS Victoria has purchased a 20ft shipping container which has allowed for supplies to be stored and clear much needed space in the Relief Centre. Further this has enabled the Relief Centre to secure their supplies from looters, an unfortunate side of Australians. Nestle Purina Petcare will continue to ensure that supplies of food, bowls, leads etc are available for distribution via the secure container storage.

Through other donations such as the Adelaide Districts Working Dog Club and many thanks to Nestle Purina, a new stainless steel operating table was purchased. Further direct donations can be used to purchase much needed vet supplies allowing the continued treatment of burned and exhausted animals.

Locals and volunteers at Kinglake are overwhelmed by the generosity of strangers and their work will continue for many months in the treatment of animals. Local vets with no income continue to volunteer their services in the treatment of animals.

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DOGS VICTORIA RESPONSE TO THE BUSHFIRES

When the news of the fires reached the staff of DOGS Victoria early this month, we knew that many of our members would be affected. On the Monday morning the focus was entirely on keeping the website updated with the status of members around the state, setting up a bushfire appeal fund and generally providing as much information as possible to members.

Calls and emails came through with bad news of members who had been affected by the fires. Staff shed many tears as they listened to story after story of loss. Some lost their homes, some their dogs and a few even lost family members. Our hearts go out to all of those who have suffered losses in the fires at any level.

We put out a call for donations of goods and funds and were overwhelmed by the generosity not only of our own members, but of people from interstate and even overseas. Purina and Advance both donated many pallets of dog food, treats, leads, collars, bowls and other much-needed items.

Although things have settled down now and staff members have resumed their processing and other day-to-day work, the response to the bushfire continues. We invite all DOGS Victoria members affected by the fires to contact the office as they begin to rebuild their lives and let us know what they need to help get their family, dogs included, settled into their new situation.

Goods received have now been dispersed, thanks to our many volunteers. And now we have begun the process of dispersing the funds that have been raised through the DOGS Victoria bushfire appeal, including entries to the International Virtual Dog Show. Funds in this dedicated account are nearing \$200,000 and we expect this to continue to grow through the IVDS entries, which do not close until 6 March.

Management Committee has set up a small sub-committee to develop funding guidelines for dispersal of these funds. The bushfire appeal funds have been put into a dedicated account, which will be audited separately to the general fund.

The focus, of course, is support for the welfare of the dogs belonging to those affected by the fires. There is great need. Management Committee has determined that money should be allocated to any urgent purpose for animal welfare.

Emergency grants have already been made to several members who lost their homes in the fire to provide temporary accommodation for their dogs. More will follow in the coming weeks as we are made aware of members' needs. Some assistance will also be offered to the marvellous veterinary professionals operating in the bushfire areas to continue their amazing work helping all animals affected by the fires.

Funding guidelines will also provide for the longer-term needs of people as they settle back into new homes, possibly in new locations, and require kennels, exercise areas, etc for their dogs. We recognise that this will be a long-term process and we want to ensure that our financial and practical support will be there for all affected members.

Additionally, in response to an initiative of Shane Addison of the Golden Retriever Club of Victoria, DOGS Victoria has purchased a shipping container to be taken up to the King Lake area to allow the storage of pet food for ongoing distribution. Purina have agreed to donate a large amount of food for this project.

DOGS Victoria would like to thank everyone who donated goods to those in need and the volunteers who helped sort and deliver these goods. Huge thanks go out as well to the thousands of Australians and people overseas who have entered the International Virtual Dog Show.

Please visit www.dogsvictoria.org.au for links to member updates, those needing assistance and those offering assistance as well as more information on the DOGS Victoria bushfire appeal and its main fundraiser: the International Virtual Dog Show.

THE KENNEL CLUB CHARITABLE TRUST SUPPORTS DOGS VICTORIA AFTER TRAGIC BUSHFIRES

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust is supporting the relief efforts in Australia, following the recent tragic bushfires which claimed the lives of many people and dogs, and left countless others homeless.

The Trust has made an emergency donation of £5,000 to the DOGS Victoria Bushfire Appeal, the arm of the Australian National Kennel Council covering the areas worst hit by this tragedy. The money will be used to help DOGS Victoria members who have lost their homes and/or pets in the fires to rebuild their lives.

Mike Townsend, Chairman of the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, said, "As an animal lover, I have been truly shocked by the reports of the number of animals killed by these terrible fires. At times like this, the international dog community must stand together to support its friends around the world. "The Kennel Club Charitable Trust is pleased to be able to make this donation to the emergency appeal, and hopes that it can be used as quickly as possible to help those most in need."

Dog lovers around the world are encouraged to support the Bushfire Appeal, DOGS Victoria is holding an International Virtual Dog Show to raise funds to help dogs and families affected by the fires.

Black is all I see



Where green and gold once cloaked the land
Where eucalypt and pine did stand
Where man did live and lay his hand
Now black is all I see



Where horses grazed and cattle drank
Where grasses lined the river bank
Where stood a house and water tank
Now black is all I see



There was a town with store and hall
Which proudly stood 'neath ridges tall
Now nothing moves or lives at all
And black is all I see



There stood a home and there another
Where lived a daughter, father, mother
A sister, cousin, niece or brother
Now black is all I see



Our nation grieves and holds them tight
Throughout the darkness of the night
Till daybreak brings an ashy light
And black is all I see

'POOR FELLA - MY COUNTRY'

N.D. 11 FEB 2009

The poem at left was sent to us at the height of the fire, and we apologise sincerely to the sender for losing their name in the pressure of filing all the fire material. Writer Xavier Herbert was an often-offensive yet heroic figure in Australian literary history. His epic, *Poor Fellow My Country*, is the longest novel ever published in any European language. Its theme is the one that preoccupied Herbert throughout his life - the impact of the white man and development on the indigenous population.