

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Built Environment Bushfire Support Roundtable

On 6 March 2009, some 70 built environment stakeholders continued discussions about a co-ordinated approach to bushfire support at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Built Environment Bushfire Support Roundtable, hosted by the Building Commission.

Organisations active in the affected areas (including DHS, Building Commission and local Government) gave first-hand accounts and spoke of some of the early challenges that have arisen.

Christine Nixon (VBRRA) and Daniel Grollo (Grocon) outlined their organisations' roles in the recovery moving forward.

Deputy Commissioner Sarah McCann-Bartlett, who chaired the roundtable, encouraged the sector to stay focused on working together to provide immediate returns to the affected communities.

"Our focus today is how best to use the resources on our volunteer database in a way that is aligned with the aims of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority and other support agencies," she said.

There was broad support for the six built environment projects proposed by the Building Commission:

1. Resident Advice
2. Design a House
3. Audits and repairs to damaged homes
4. Community-Based Projects
5. Fencing
6. Land Surveying

"By focusing on a limited number of projects we can match skill with need and concentrate on our own patch," Ms McCann-Bartlett said.

"Our projects must be manageable and able to deliver immediate results."

Christine Nixon thanked the sector for their support and while she cautioned that the recovery would not be quick, she was optimistic about the future.

"We are encouraging communities to think about what they could have, not what they have lost. There are real opportunities," Ms Nixon said.

The Minister for Planning, Justin Madden, who arrived direct from the Premier's announcement of the new residential building standard, echoed the support for the sector's efforts.

"The Premier is keen to maintain the momentum within the built environment, in particular, using the skills of the volunteers," he said.

Built environment volunteers are being contacted by the Building Commission to confirm the details held in the volunteer database and to better understand the skills and qualifications each volunteer holds.

As projects start to come on line, volunteers will be contacted again and asked whether they are available for specific tasks.

"It is important to remember that some projects will not commence for a number of months. It will be vital to maintain our volunteer numbers over time," Ms McCann-Bartlett said.

The Building Commission will provide regular updates on the progress of the volunteer program to all built environment volunteers.

A 3<sup>rd</sup> Built Environment Bushfire Support Roundtable will be convened in approximately eight weeks.