



**State Library
of Victoria**

Disaster Preparedness: Bushfires and Collections

Sarah Slade

21 March 2012

State Library of Victoria: Collection Emergency Preparedness Plan



6 Key Components

- Collection Emergency Teams and Leaders
- Communication System
- Training
- Disaster Store and Bins
- Business Continuity Management
- MoU with Arts Agencies



Collection Emergency Teams and Leaders

Collection Emergency Team Leader: Storage, Preservation & Conservation Manager

Response Team

Leader: Preservation & Processing
Coordinator

Preservation staff

Processing staff

Storage staff

Registrar

Recovery Team

Leader: Conservation Coordinator

Conservation staff

Books

Paper & Photographic

Paintings

Support Team

Collection Access

Collection Managers

Exhibition Managers/Coordinators

CMD/AID Senior Managers

Communication System

Collection Emergency Cards

Senior Management Team
Collection Emergency Team
members
Offsite Store Supervisors

COLLECTION EMERGENCY TEAM 

Security Control Room
8664 7300 (x 7300)

- Central communication point for all emergencies
- Instigate the Collection Emergency Plan

Collection Emergency Team Leaders
Sarah Slade, Collection Emergency Team Leader (m) 0434 076 296 (x 7383)
Kate Holloway, Response Team Leader (m) 0434 076 297 (x 7328)
Shelley Jamieson, Recovery Team Leader (m) 0423 025 457 (x 7357)

- Attend and assess the level of the disaster
- Determine Response and Recovery Team members required
- Contact team members and inform them of their team and duties
- Coordinate all aspects of the Collection Response and Recovery

Manager, Collection Management
Liz Jesty, (m) 0418 340 601
(x 7126) (h) 9803 6410

- Put Emergency Team members on alert
- Contact Collection Managers/Exhibition Manager (on advice of Team Leaders)
- Inform Team Leaders of who is available to attend
- Inform members who are not required

Collection Emergency Response and Recovery Team Members

- Placed on alert by Liz Jesty
- Attend only if contacted by Team Leaders after the situation has been assessed
- Informed if not required

Director, Collections and Access
Shane Carmody (m) 0422 007 374 (x 7509)

- Informed about occurrence
- Informed that Collection Emergency Team is attending

Training

Training Manual

Practical Training

Mock Disasters

Focus on key procedures

45 staff trained



Disaster Stores and Bins



1 onsite and 1 offsite

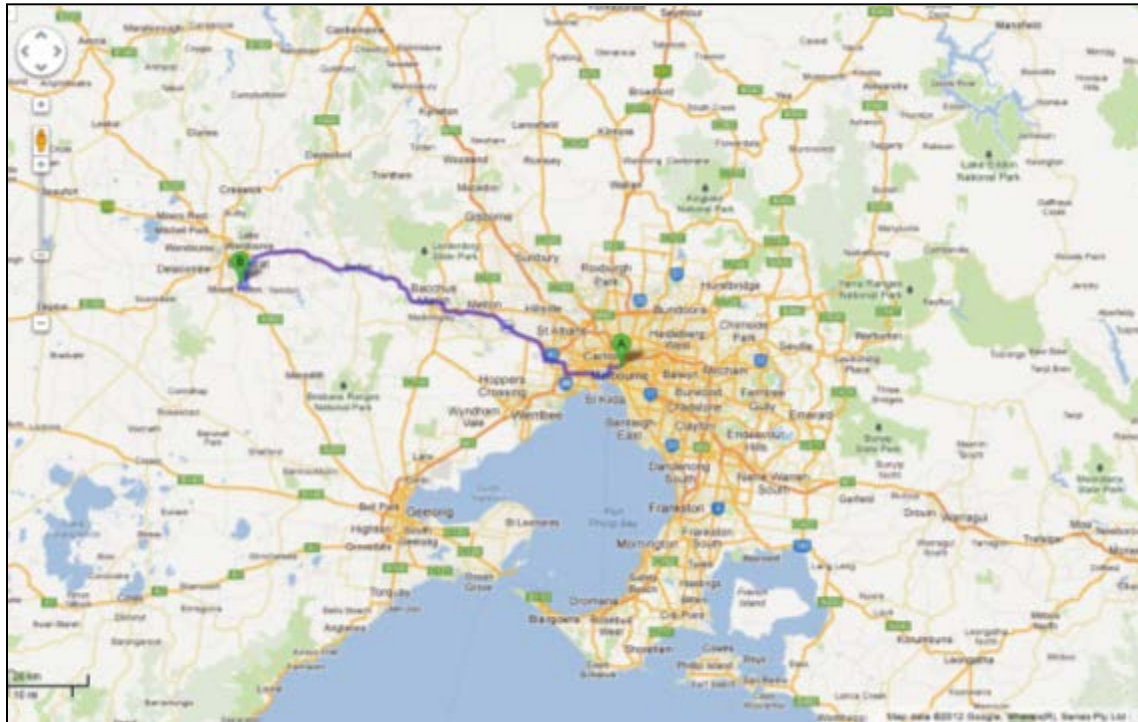


34 onsite and 1 offsite

Collections and Bushfires

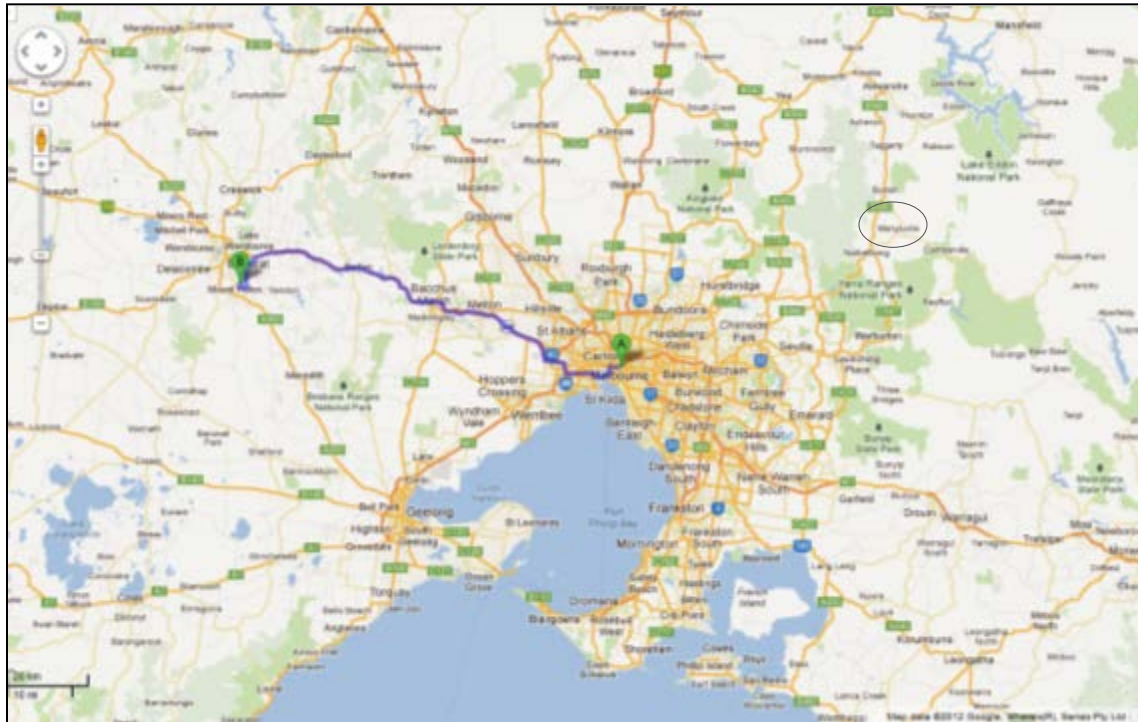


Collections and Bushfires



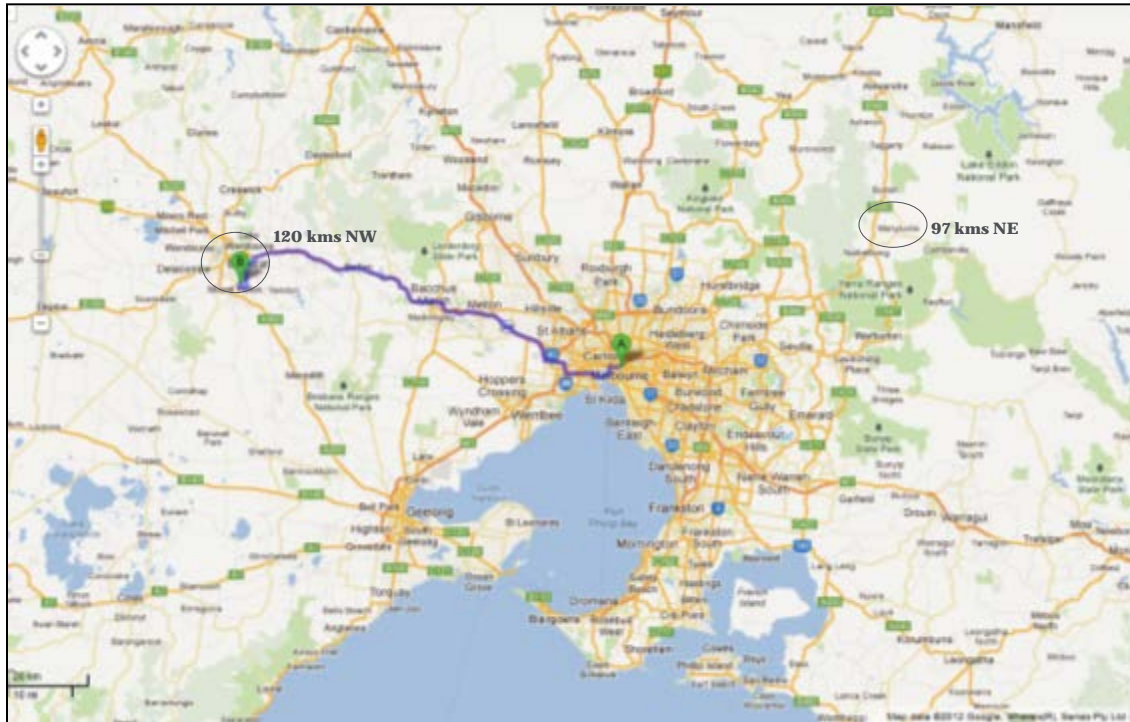
<http://maps.google.com.au/> accessed 20 March 2012

Collections and Bushfires



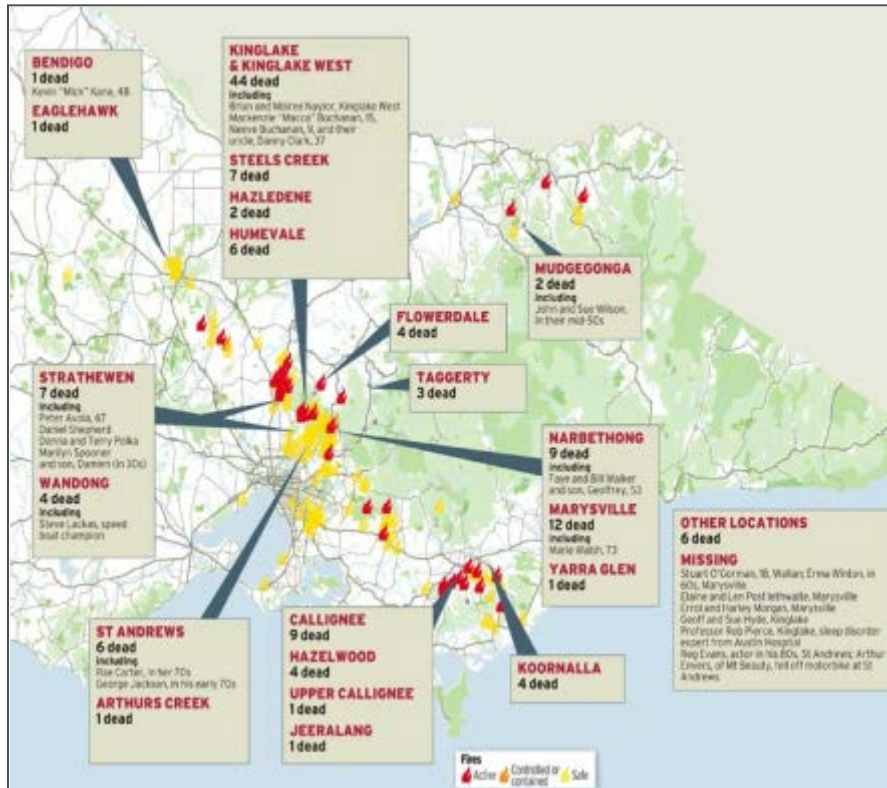
<http://maps.google.com.au/> accessed 20 March 2012

Collections and Bushfires



<http://maps.google.com.au/> accessed 20 March 2012

Victorian Bushfires February 2009



<http://www.smh.com.au/national/victoria-bushfires-2009> accessed 19 March 2012

- 173 lives lost
- Most lives were lost on Black Saturday 7th February
- More than 5,000 injured
- More than 2,000 homes, businesses and community facilities engulfed
- 4,500 square kms destroyed
- 11 library regions affected but none of the public libraries destroyed

Video: [Black Saturday Bushfires, St Andrews, Victoria](#)

Bushfires and Collections



Offsite Store

- Fire break around building
- Fire panel – reports to Country Fire Authority
- Smoke detectors
- Plant shut-down
- Automated sprinkler system
- Fed by mains pressure and boosted by onsite electric sprinkler pumps
- Fire hydrants
- Tilt-up concrete panels

Since Black Saturday

- Staff SMS sent on code red days in Central Weather District
- BAS link between Library and Offsite Store
- Plant shutdown procedure established
- Examining water harvesting and roof sprinklers
- Incorporating actions to take if a catastrophic event occurs into Collection Emergency plan



Assistance provided by the State Library of Victoria

The screenshot displays the State Library of Victoria website. At the top, the logo and navigation menu are visible. The main content area features a 'Welcome' message from the subject librarian, Kate Price, and a 'The Library' section. A central image shows a historical illustration of people fighting a bushfire, with the caption 'Fighting the fire, c.1850-1860'. Below the image, there is a 'Comments' section and a 'Send' button. The footer contains copyright information and logos for the State Library of Victoria and the Victorian Government.

<http://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/bushfires> accessed 20 March 2012

Assistance provided by ALIA and Victorian Public Libraries

Rebuilding with Books

Sue McKerracher, Australian Library and Information Association



In the aftermath of the Victorian bushfires last February, while there were concerns about what heritage items may have been engulfed by the flames, the immediate priority was to provide aid for the survivors. At the time the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) took many calls from library people keen to help. ALIA responded by putting in train its disaster recovery project which takes a practical approach to helping affected communities rebuild with books.

One part of the exercise has been to document the role of libraries in a crisis situation. Although the bushfires swept through eleven library regions and had a devastating impact on six, none of the public libraries was destroyed. As fire-ravaged families sought a safe haven the public libraries provided something the hastily-erected relief centres couldn't, a place to take stock without the chaos and debris. Ann Le Lièvre and her team at Murrumbidgee Library Service, covering Pingajana, Alexandra and Marysville, were at the centre of the worst scenes of devastation. Ann describes "throwing the rule book away" and opening from early morning to late evening, taking after calls while their parents phoned insurance companies and tried to arrange temporary accommodation, handing out magazines and books to victims, making endless cups of tea and coffee, and just sitting and listening to people as they told of their ordeals.



Above top getting back into books below Jeremy Drough, from Lost and Found Books, Hazelton, sorting through the thousands of donated books at the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Author to author photo with permission from Sue McKerracher

At this point, the Murrumbidgee mobile library service was unable to reach the outlying areas. As soon as she could, Kate, the mobile library driver, headed back to Burles, Elders, Flowerdale, Marysville and Strath Creek. Kate says she spent a lot of time those first few weeks sitting on the floor of the mobile library with the children letting them talk about what had happened. It was traumatic for the library staff, many of whom had fought to save their own homes from the flames, to discover the loss of familiar faces in the library. Some twenty-three mobile library users died in Flowerdale alone.

For the first six months books weren't high on the list of priorities for bushfire-affected communities. ALIA's original

disaster recovery project manager Jane Grace from Yarra Plenty Regional Library had put in place a Build Your Book Collection scheme to distribute new and best quality second-hand books from the thousands donated by bookshops, publishers and the public. There were only a handful of requests to begin with but in July and August the number increased dramatically. ALIA has set up local distribution points in libraries and relief centres so people can browse a wide selection of books and take away what they'd like to put on the shelves of their new homes. During September and October ALIA and the Australian Booksellers Association ran a Rebuilding with Books campaign. Booksellers asked their customers to purchase a book voucher for someone who had lost their home and libraries did fundraising for book vouchers.

An important aspect of ALIA's disaster recovery project has been to bring together arts organisations, harnessing goodwill and providing a mechanism for assisting bushfire-affected communities in a way that is greatly valued by the recipients. Named partners are the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, the Australian Booksellers Association, Arts Victoria, the State Library of Victoria, Public Libraries Victoria Network, the School Library Association of Victoria, Friends of Libraries Australia and the Australian Publishers Association. In addition, the project has had assistance from the Municipal Association of Victoria and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It has been a truly collaborative venture.

Sue McKerracher is a freelance library specialist employed by the Australian Library and Information Association to manage its disaster recovery project.

The Rebuilding with Books campaign has ended but you can still make a donation to the book voucher scheme. For details email: sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au

To learn more about the Rebuilding with Books program visit www.alia.org.au/disasterrecovery

WIRE MAGAZINE www.miaa.com.au

<http://www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au/documents/articles/Insite.page9.pdf> accessed 20 March 2012

Assistance provided by Conservation profession: Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials

Alex Ellem

Alex Ellem was presented with the 2009 Conservator of the Year award for her outstanding contribution to the recovery efforts of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires. She initiated and coordinated AICCM's assistance program for the communities affected by the fires. Her tireless work resulted in new relationships between the conservation profession and community groups, government bodies and media representatives. Fiona Tennant recorded this interview with Alex in November 2009.



<http://www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au/documents/articles/AICCM%20Newsletter.pdf> accessed 20 March 2012

Key role of Blue Shield



The screenshot shows the Blue Shield Australia website. At the top, there is a blue header with the Blue Shield Australia logo and name. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home | About Us | News & Events | Resources | Disaster management | Contact Us | Log in. The main content area is titled "Resources" and is divided into several sections:

- Blue Shield Information**
 - [General information about](#)
- Submissions**

Blue Shield Australia Submissions

 - [Submission to the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission](#)
 - [Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation](#)
 - [Senate Select Committee Inquiry into Bushfires 2009](#)
 - [UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage 2008](#)
 - [Defence White Paper 2008](#)
- Articles**
 - [Rebuilding with Books - See McKerracher, Australian Library and Information Association](#)
Reproduced by kind permission InCite magazine
 - [The Victorian Bushfire Collection, history, remembering and reflection - Lisa Dale, Maffett, Museum Victoria](#)
 - [Interview with Alex Elton following 2009 Victorian Bushfires](#)
Reproduced by kind permission ACCM National Newsletter
- Australian Cultural Heritage Networks**
- Blue Shield Links**
- Images**

On the right side of the page, there is a vertical banner for "MayDay SAVING OUR MUSEUMS MAY 1 2010". The banner features a stylized graphic with a flame, a book, and a wave, and includes the text "ARCHIVES • HISTORIC PRESERVATION" at the top and "PREPARING OUR PROTECTORS FOR 2010" at the bottom.

<http://www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au/resources.html> accessed 20 March 2012

ALIA Guide and a way forward



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