



# THE FAWCETT FLYER

JANUARY 2020



2020 began with the continuation of widespread bushfires adding to the pressures of drought on many regional communities. Australia's bushfire recovery will take a concerted, cooperative effort and the Morrison Government is investing significant resources in immediate and longer term support for affected communities (*More on Page 2 and 7*). Being on Kangaroo Island with my family for New Year, I was already aware of the impact that fires were having on the island when the blaze broke containment lines on January 3 prompting calls for an evacuation to Kingscote or Penneshaw. A meeting with Mayor Michael Pengilly, Police and CFS incident controllers in Kingscote on the morning of January 4 was an opportunity to link them directly with HQ 9 Brigade in Adelaide, and it was great to see such a timely and comprehensive response from Defence to ensure the emergency services and community were receiving the assistance they required.

Along with the global community, we are now also dealing with the outbreak of a novel coronavirus. Australian scientists are leading global work to define the virus and develop an effective vaccine - creating the first copy of the virus to allow for testing treatment and vaccine options. CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratory is developing a system for potential vaccines to be tested, in the hope of producing a vaccine at near record pace.

Throughout 2020, our Government's priorities and vision have not and will not change. We continue to strengthen the economy in the face of global uncertainty and natural disasters, create even more jobs, wisely spend close to 2% of GDP on Defence capability, deliver the first budget surplus in twelve years, and once again deliver record funding for schools and hospitals, among many other policy initiatives. We will continue to build global trade networks through Free Trade Agreements negotiated with the UK and EU following Brexit, among others.

Constructive rural health changes begin to become reality in 2020, with long term improvement and sustainment our priority (*Page 4*). We continue to build our network of alliances and partnerships throughout the Pacific region via the Pacific Step-Up, as demonstrated through our relationship with Kiribati (*Page 5*).

For more information about any of these topics or other matters of a federal nature, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

**SENATOR DAVID FAWCETT**



# FINANCIAL SUPPORT FLOWS 2 TO BUSHFIRE VICTIMS

The 2019/20 summer has brought with it a bushfire season the ferocity of which we haven't seen in over a decade. In addition to the support provided to emergency services to combat the fires, the Federal Government is funding initiatives to begin to assist those who have felt the full force of these fires.

The \$2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Fund, administered by the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, forms a significant part of the funding committed by the Federal Government.

With more than \$88 million already delivered as a result of approximately 75,000 claims, the Disaster Recovery Payment is a one-off payment - \$1,000 per adult and \$800 for each child – to help provide immediate assistance. The Disaster Recovery Allowance is a short-term payment, maximum of 13 weeks, for those who have had their income directly affected. The application process has been simplified to speed up access to assistance.

Thanks to the jointly Federal and State funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), re-establishment grants are available

for eligible uninsured South Australians who have had their home damaged by bushfire, with up to \$10,000 for repairs.

Primary producers, such as farmers or winemakers, can apply for recovery grants of \$75,000 to assist with the immediate costs of rebuilding and recovery. Small businesses can also seek up to \$50,000 in recovery grants and loans of up to \$500,000 with deferred repayments and concessional rates.

An initial \$76 million investment in mental health support has been made to fund free counselling sessions, extra Medicare and tele-health consultations, an expansion of headspace services for young Australians, and community recovery initiatives.

This is just a portion of the financial support being provided to bushfire affected communities. For a more complete list, [click here](#) or use the QR Code below.





## MORE JOINT INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Late last year, I represented the Australian Government at the official commencement of construction for the Regency Road to Pym Street (R2P) Project alongside Premier Steven Marshall and SA Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government Stephan Knoll.

The Federal Liberal and State Liberal Governments are each contributing half of the \$354 million R2P Project – \$177 million each – with completion expected in 2022.

This 1.8km six-lane juncture completes 47kms of uninterrupted road between Gawler and River Torrens.

The project will also see improved cycling and pedestrian facilities, an intersection upgrade at Regency Road, the creation of 210 jobs over the life of the project, and two lanes in each direction on the South Road surface road – providing better

access to surrounding community and local businesses.

Upon completion, the North-South Corridor provides a nonstop carriageway between Gawler and Old Noarlunga, facilitating freight movements from Adelaide Airport and Port Adelaide, and reducing congestion for 53,000 motorists daily.

In the 2019/20 Federal Budget, \$2.6 billion was allocated for transport infrastructure in South Australia over the next decade, including the North-South Corridor, Flinders Rail Link and Gawler Rail Electrification.

For more information on the R2P section of the North-South Corridor, [click here](#) or use the QR Code below.



# 2020 VISION FOR RURAL HEALTH

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This year, rural communities will also have new options at their disposal as they attempt to secure the long term services of a doctor. From January, rural doctors are now eligible for top-up payments, from \$4,500 up to \$60,000, under the General Practice Rural Incentives Program.

Several initiatives of the Government's \$550 million Stronger Rural Health Strategy are now in effect, including:

- An up-to-date rural classification system – ensures metro areas will no longer be able to access incentives intended for regional communities
- The Bonded Medical Program – offers medical students a Commonwealth Supported Place in a medical course at an Australian university in return for their commitment to work in certain regions once they have graduated

We're also expanding rural training, with an additional 100 rural generalist training positions in 2021, to ensure there's a pipeline of rural generalists to support a sustainable workforce into the long term.

Elements of the Government's



fast-tracked \$62.2 million National Rural Generalist Pathway are also being rolled out throughout 2020. Government Ministers are also currently considering the benefits and implications of initiatives including rural GPs (as medical specialists) being able to receive increased Medicare rebates, and the single employer model to give rural GPs greater employment security.

Throughout this year, I will continue to meet with Emeritus Professor Paul Worley - re-appointed National Rural Health Commissioner and former rural SA GP (*pictured, middle*) - as well as State and Federal ministerial colleagues to ensure the Pathway is delivered. For more on the Stronger Rural Health Strategy in 2020, [click here](#) or use the QR Code below.



## KIRIBATI CONTRIBUTES TO A PROSPEROUS PACIFIC



Just a five hour flight from Brisbane, the Republic of Kiribati comprises 32 atolls and one raised coral island, and is the only country on earth to stretch across all four hemispheres. Its unique composition and locality means it has the world's farthest forward time zone.

With a permanent population of 115,000, Kiribati gained its independence in 1979 from the UK and maintains close relations with Australia as a Pacific neighbour and Commonwealth member.

Seaweed farming, copra and fish exports are Kiribati's primary exports. Australia is Kiribati's largest bilateral development partner, supporting the growth and resilience of its economy.

\$27.3 million in aid was allocated in the 2019/20 Budget to Kiribati, being delivered through specialised

programs to improve gender equality, disability inclusiveness, education, health, and more.

Like many of its Pacific neighbours, the remoteness of Kiribati means job prospects and tertiary education options are limited. In partnership with Australia since 2011, more than 10,000 i-Kiribati school students are benefiting from curriculum reform, teacher training and improved learning environments through the Kiribati Education Improvement Program. As a result, more children moving through school and on to tertiary education.

Technical and vocational training and scholarships are available through the Australia Awards, supporting between 30-55 students annually from Kiribati to undertake tertiary education. DFAT's partnership with the Kiribati Facility is creating in-country vocational pathways for



young people detached from the education system.

Australia's Pacific Labour Scheme and Seasonal Workers Program have mobilised more than 770 i-Kiribati workers to Australia since 2015. Workers from Kiribati have predominantly contributed to our aged care and hospitality sectors (*pictured*), while gaining income and skills to take home.

Australia is committed to building a healthier population in Kiribati by financially supporting the South Tarawa Sanitation Improvement Sector Program, and incidences of sanitation-related disease are being reduced across the country.

With no military of its own, Kiribati is one of 12 Pacific Islands who have received or will receive a Guardian Class vessel under Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program. Delivery of the patrol boat in 2021, and our ongoing support, increases Kiribati's capability to police their waters, combat illegal fishing, and conduct search and rescue.

For more information on Australia's engagement with our neighbours in Kiribati, [click here](#) or use the QR code below.



## 28th ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

In January, Canberra hosted parliamentary leaders from nations of the Asia-Pacific region. Included were our near neighbours such as Indonesia and New Zealand; nations we don't often think of in the context of being "pacific nations" such as Russia, Canada, Mexico and Chile; as well as our major trading partners South Korea, China and Japan.

The Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) provides a framework to identify and discuss matters of common concern in the region, and to promote cooperation.

I chaired the Security and Political Matters Working Group which has worked through some difficult issues such as denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. While agreement was not reached between key players on all issues, progress was made on some and understanding of other nation's perspectives improved.

For more on APPF, [click here](#) or use the QR Code below.



## ADF STRENGTHENS SA COMMUNITIES



Practical, on-the-ground support during a natural disaster is vital and invaluable to affected communities. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) – including both full-time and reserve personnel – has provided this support alongside emergency service organisations, community groups and local authorities during the recent bushfire season.

Over 6,000 full-time and 3,000 reserve personnel have been providing support across fire affected regions. 90 communities throughout the country have received ADF bushfire relief and recovery support since September 2019.

With all the major bushfires now under control or extinguished, the focus becomes recovery and restoration. ADF personnel continue

to provide significant support to recovery operations on Kangaroo Island and in the Adelaide Hills.

ADF teams have been busy in the Hills working in coordination with the Lobethal Recovery Centre to assist with repairs to farms and infrastructure, roadside maintenance, clear fallen trees and transport up to 20,000 litres of water for local farms and livestock.

On Kangaroo Island, support teams continue to bury and dispose of deceased livestock and wildlife, deliver supplies, as well as assist with road clearance and fence repairs, remove fallen trees and replace roadside markers.

A P-8A Poseidon aircraft from RAAF Base Edinburgh continues to undertake reconnaissance of



fire grounds on the island, among other locations, to provide current information to authorities. Two CH-47 Chinook helicopters have been supporting recovery tasks and distributing hay bales.

ADF caterers were assisting in the provision of meals for SA Country Fire Service personnel, and a Primary Health Team located at the Ferry Terminal was treating evacuees. ADF Pastoral care and mental health support are on the island to help the community through these challenging times.

Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds and I travelled to Kangaroo Island (*pictured*) to meet with local authorities including Mayor Michael Pengilly, ADF personnel and community groups engaging in recovery efforts.

ADF bushfire recovery efforts across Australia have been supported by our global friends and neighbours including Japan, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, the US and Fiji.

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) established a Water Treatment Facility in Vivonne Bay on KI, providing up to 12,000 litres of fresh water in cooperation with SA Water. NZDF engineers also supported repair tasks in the area. As well as the NZDF, the Singapore

Armed Forces are providing support through military assets and personnel. Japan is providing two C-130 Hercules aircraft and associated personnel. Support has also arrived from our pacific neighbours to the north, with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force providing 100 light engineers.

In South Australia, the recently appointed State Lead for Disaster Rebuilding and Resilience, Margot Forster, is coordinating the long-term economic and social recovery for the affected regions. I met with her this month to discuss details of Federal Government assistance.

The Federal Government continues to work with local and state governments, business groups and other community organisations to develop Local Economic Recovery Plans. The plans will assess and prioritise which local assets and infrastructure need to be rebuilt, as well as forecasting potential construction timelines and resources needed.

For a summary of the ADF bushfire recovery across SA, [click here](#) or use the QR Code below.



# 9 OUT AND ABOUT



As part of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, I chaired the Security and Political Matters Working Group (*More on Page 6*).



Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds and I travelled to Kangaroo Island to meet with Mayor Michael Pengilly, ADF personnel and community groups engaging in recovery efforts (*More on Page 7*).





Congratulations to Pathway Community Centre (*pictured, left*) and Michael Grech (*pictured, below*) for being awarded the Tea Tree Gully's Outstanding Community Group of the Year and Outstanding Citizen of the Year respectively.

All of the award nominees demonstrated what is achievable when Australians make an intentional effort to make their community a better place.

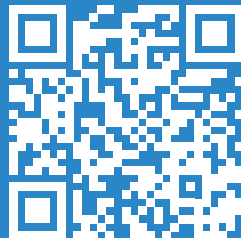


Australia Day is a great opportunity to join new Australians celebrating their first Australia Day as citizens.

I represented the Australian Government at the City of Tea Tree Gully (*below*) and the City of Playford (*above*) citizenship ceremonies.



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