

MEDIA RELEASE

ATTENTION CHIEFS OF STAFF, BUSHFIRE EDITORS, LEGAL REPORTERS

Monday, 9 February 2009

LAW INSTITUTE OFFERS FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE AFFECTED BY BUSHFIRES

People affected by the bushfire crisis can receive free legal advice through the Law Institute of Victoria.

LIV President, Danny Barlow, said members would offer half an hour of free initial advice to people with bushfire related legal problems.

Mr Barlow said the scheme began operating in the Gippsland area last week, and would now be extended across the whole state through local country law associations.

People seeking legal assistance can receive referrals according to local area, area of law, preferred language and other specific requirements.

They can access the service via phone or e mail through the LIV:

Telephone: (03) 9607 9550 (9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Online: liv.asn.au/directory

Email: referrals@liv.asn.au

Mr Barlow said the advice could be critical for people who may have lost their homes, their documents and have issues to do with contracts; loans; mortgages; employment or wills.

Normal fees will be charged if people decide to seek additional advice after 30 minutes or engage the lawyer to do additional work.

"Our lawyers are aware that people affected by bushfires will face a myriad of problems and issues. By providing specialist legal advice we are offering a service which experience tells us will be much in demand," Mr Barlow said.

"Our lawyers are part of the local community and want to do all they can to help," Mr Barlow said.

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