

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **News Limited pledges \$1 million to Victorian Bushfire Appeal**

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**February 9, 2009**

News Limited chairman and chief executive John Hartigan announced today that the company had pledged \$1 million to help victims of Victoria's devastating bushfires.

The donation will be made to the special Bushfire Appeal set up by the Red Cross and the Victorian and Federal governments.

The company's donation joins other significant pledges from corporate Australia today that are aimed at funding the immediate need for practical support in fire ravaged areas, as well as help alleviate the longer term financial impact of the devastation.

Mr Hartigan said: "This unprecedented national tragedy warrants an unprecedented response. Our commitment is both financial and, through our thousands of employees and millions of readers around the country, any other kind of support we can harness to assist the victims."

News Limited has set up a special community notice board which links all of its news websites Australia-wide to help victims and their families.

The online notice board is hosted by [www.heraldsun.com.au](http://www.heraldsun.com.au) and is also accessible via each of News Limited's metropolitan, regional and community newspaper websites nationally. The site is believed to have received about 10 million visits since midnight on Saturday.

The company's Victorian network of community and regional titles is providing special local coverage in print and online at [www.leadernews.com.au](http://www.leadernews.com.au) with eight of its titles in fire affected areas.

The national site allows readers anywhere in Australia to donate money to the Red Cross and other appeals and provides a Message Board to allow victims and their families and friends to re-establish contact and arrange assistance.

The *Herald Sun* site also provides direct links to emergency services hotlines, and enables readers to post a permanent tribute to victims of the fires in a special online condolence book set up by Legacy. Tributes and messages of support to fire fighters and emergency service personnel and volunteers, can also be posted on the site.

Readers are also encouraged to contribute disaster relief or make suggestions that will connect the people in dire need of assistance with suppliers of materials and services.

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Additionally, readers are able to post photos and information about their first-hand experiences of the fires as a way of helping others to learn more about what is happening to family and friends in the affected areas.

Mr Hartigan said the company would make further announcements in the coming days about other initiatives to provide support for victims. The first of these is a 12-hour telethon tomorrow being run jointly by News Limited's *Geelong Advertiser* newspaper and the City of Greater Geelong.

Mr Hartigan said: "This is a tragedy that affects every Australian and tragically some of our staff have lost family members, friends and properties. I urge everyone to contribute something, no matter how modest, to help ease the suffering of so many of our fellow Australians."

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Released by News Limited, Corporate Affairs

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