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Getting tourists back into fire-affected regions

The Morrison Government is backing tourist towns in fire-affected regions through a \$10 million tourism events and visitor attractions initiative to support communities and protect local jobs.

Federal Tourism Minister Simon Birmingham said tourism was the lifeblood of many fire-affected communities and the aim of the Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grants (RTBR) program was to get tourists back into these regions.

“We know tourism businesses in fire-affected communities are currently doing it tough,” Minister Birmingham said.

“This program is about encouraging international and domestic tourists to visit these regions and more importantly put tourism dollars back into these local economies, especially outside of regular peaks visitor periods.

“These grants will help support the development of unique experiences such as events, concerts, permanent visitor attractions such as art installations and tourist walks, as well as local tourism promotions.

“The development of new visitor attractions and experiences will not only give visitors a reason to visit, but will also give these communities a positive focus as recovery efforts continue.”

Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism Jonathon Duniam, said encouraging tourists to visit fire-affected was a key part of the Morrison Government’s \$76 million tourism recovery package.

“This is a major opportunity to create something that will bring tourists back to our regions, and have an immediate positive impact on these fire-affected communities,” Assistant Minister Duniam said.

“Importantly, this is a chance for local communities to come together and focus on something positive, to celebrate what’s unique – whether that’s their local seafood, their history or local artists.

“The more visitors we can get back into these fire-affected areas, the more money that will be going directly into the pockets of local small businesses that are currently doing it tough.”

An expert panel has been appointed to provide advice on the grants program. The members of the panel are:

- Ms Sandra Chipchase – former Chief Executive Officer of Destination NSW
- Mr Michael Luchich – South Australian State Director, Optus and Chairman of Country Arts South Australia
- Sara Quon – Chief Executive Officer of Sovereign Hill Museums Association, Board Member of Visit Victoria and the Committee for Ballarat.

To ensure communities can get access to funds quickly, the first stage of the grants program will focus on grants of up to \$30,000, and events up to April 2020 with a streamlined application and assessment process facilitating decisions.

All applications will open on Monday 17 February 2020.

The Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grants (RTBR) forms part of the Morrison Government's \$76 million tourism recovery package to help get the tourism industry back on its feet.

For further information on the RTBR grants program visit:

<https://www.austrade.gov.au/Australian/Tourism/Tourism-and-business/Grants/regional-tourism-bushfire-recovery-grants>

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