



Media release

6 January 2020

Save the Children sets up Child Friendly Spaces to help bushfire hit communities

Aid agency Save the Children has established Child Friendly Spaces in Wagga Wagga and Bairnsdale to support communities affected by the devastating bushfires ravaging large parts of the country.

The spaces, in southern New South Wales and eastern Victoria respectively, will provide support and relief to children and families in the surrounding areas affected by the bushfires.

“As Australians in New South Wales and Victoria brace for another bout of extreme weather, Save the Children is joining the response by setting up Child Friendly Spaces in evacuation centres,” said Save The Children CEO Paul Ronalds.

“We know that children are most vulnerable during times of disaster and crisis and what we’re dealing with here is a crisis on an unprecedented scale. The traumatic effect of what they’ve seen and lived through cannot be underestimated.”

“These Child Friendly Spaces help children cope by giving them somewhere to be children again. They can draw, play games and socialise with other children in a safe and supportive environment.

“Importantly they can begin to process their experiences, which is critical to helping recovery and building resilience. It also allows parents to do the important things like access support, recover possessions and deal with administrative matters.

“We have an amazing group of dedicated staff who bring a fantastic set of skills at a time like this. We’re proud to be able to support children whose lives have been turned upside down by the bushfires.”

The two Child Friendly Spaces have been established thanks to the generous support of the broader Save The Children movement, notably Save The Children UK, Save The Children Italy and Save The Children Switzerland.

This summer Save the Children has already established Child Friendly Spaces at evacuation centres in New South Wales and the Adelaide Hills in South Australia. In 2019, Child Friendly Spaces were established in the wake of Cyclone Trevor in the Northern Territory, the Townsville floods in Far North Queensland and the bushfires of the Huon Valley in Tasmania.

Note to Editors:

Child Friendly Spaces are located within evacuation and recovery centres for children affected by natural disasters. Trained, qualified early childhood specialists provide opportunities for children (generally aged 0-12 years) to play and socialise in a safe and supported environment. We also support families by linking them to other complimentary services, while giving parents opportunities to recover and the time to begin to address the significant changes in their lives.

ENDS

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