



## MCA Resound Bushfire Appeal Report – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### About

The MCA Resound Bushfire Appeal is a partnership with the Dandenong Ranges Music Council, Upwey, Victoria. Drawing on DRMC's experience with past Victorian bushfires, the appeal aims to match suitable pledged instruments to bushfire survivors who lost instruments in the 2009 Victorian bushfires. The appeal is run by volunteers, thanks to a grant from the VBRF of \$5000. All volunteers have been trained by a counselor from the Mitchell region, experienced in post-bushfire relief and challenges. The appeal was established in March 2009, and recently closed applications for instruments in February 2010.

### Donations

Approximately 300 instruments have been pledged, offering choice for the most suitable instruments. In addition, \$8000 has been made in donations from various music associations, ensembles, and schools. This has allowed for the purchasing of instruments when needed (for example, guitars, where the need has outnumbered the pledges).

### Outcomes

The appeal has delivered over 150 instruments, to the value of \$37000, to survivors in Kinglake, Marysville, Alexandra, Traralgon, Healesville, Flowerdale, Yea, and many other areas inbetween. The appeal has been followed by local media, and ten articles have appeared in various newspapers. Ongoing support has also been provided by Emma Ayres from ABC Classic FM. Deliveries have been made every 2 months.

Many services have been donated including piano removalists (ABC Piano Removals, and Melbourne Piano Movers), and instrument repairs (Upwey Music, Tony Fairbridge). In addition, help has been provided for instrument purchases through CMI and Keyboard Corner.

Bushfire survivors have used instruments donated through Resound for community performances (including brass concert bands), open mic events, concerts (including the bushfire concert 'A Better Day'), live music programs on Kinglake Radio, instrumental teaching (including re-establishment of their own teaching businesses), and in school music programs (for example, 5 keyboards and a digital piano went to Middle Kinglake Primary School).

### Individual Stories

The appeal has had a lasting impact on all those involved. Each volunteer delivery driver has heard about the challenges individuals have faced over the last year. Most are not yet in permanent housing, and many have relocated out of the areas they were previously living in. Resound recipients have all expressed gratitude towards the appeal – music has provided a much-needed relief for many, and some of their stories are listed below.

“Thankyou so much for organising to replace some of the instruments that were destroyed with our home in Kinglake on Feb 7. We lived at the top of the mountain in Grandview Crescent & were away from home the day of the fires. Music is such an elixer, a comfort, a release & one of our favourite things. I also use music as a multisensory modality in my work as a paediatric occupational therapist. I'd like to also thank Tony from Emerald [Resound volunteer courier] ...I'm very grateful for the work that you do & for the instruments we've received...”

Another partner of a recipient mentioned that receiving their guitar was the “icing on the cake” for them. She said they thought after losing everything, it didn't seem important to ask for a replacement instrument,

but seeing her partner's reaction and her daughter dancing when he played, made her realise it was very important for them all to heal.

One 12 year old pianist lost her entire family, had 50% burns, and was living in Melbourne Royal Childrens Hospital. She needed a digital piano, which Resound fundraised for, purchased through Keyboard Corner and delivered by Keyboard Corner on the girl's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday to her in her ward at the hospital. Of the experience, her carer said: "She was surprised more than we could ever have hoped & it arrived in perfect timing & Craig & Syd put it together. Craig christened it by playing " Happy Birthday" to her on the spot..... wonderful. This gift will be a big part of her healing in the future."

Three tertiary piano students, both who teach piano also, had pianos delivered to them by ABC Piano Removals and Piano Removalists Melbourne, and are now able to practice for their degree, and teach (earn income). One of these students is also a local choir accompanist for the Phoenix Fire Choir.

Kinglake Arts Alliance, whose members received guitars and other instruments through Resound, have been playing regularly at open mics, and at their live music radio program. They now have just begun their own radio station, and the live music program will continue to be part of this.

A Eltham city concert band member who received an instrument from Resound is now back playing with the band, and was able to participate in the bands recent concert and recording to celebrate the band's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They recorded an album for their celebrations at ABC Southbank.

One musician who received an accordion through Resound is involved with the cleanup of the fire-affected areas. He showed a Resound volunteer around some of the fire-affected areas and they discussed how important it is to get the community up and running – morale is still running high, but the process to rebuild is very slow. He passed on his profound thanks for the instrument.

A Kinglake resident who received handmade bagpipes was so thankful for the instrument, that he contacted the donor, who lives in Canberra. Of the experience, the donor said: " I wanted to say thanks to you and the MCA for the work you've done which has allowed people like me to help in this very small way."

### **Future**

The applications for instrument replacements have closed, and now the appeal is focusing on filling these replacements. There are thirty applications to fill, each of various types and quantities of instruments.

### **On behalf of the MCA Resound Bushfire Appeal, consisting of:**

Dr Rachel Hocking (co-ordinator, MCA)

Madeleine Schwer (volunteer assistant, MCA)

Bev McAlister (DRMC)

Tracy Hayllar (DRMC)

Lisa Schwer (counselor – Mitchell Shire)

Volunteer drivers:

Deirdre Murdoch

Tony Fairbridge

Fiona Smith

Noel Pricor

Conny Ellison

Heather Maxwell

Ivan Santurini

Michael Mietzcke

Julie Dunlop

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