



PRESS RELEASE

10 March 2022

Scholarships awarded to bushfire impacted students

- Scholarships ranging between \$2,500 and \$7,000 have been awarded to 14 students across East Gippsland.
- Scholarship recipients were able to demonstrate they were heavily impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires.

SCHOLARSHIPS totalling \$77,000 have been awarded to students across East Gippsland who were heavily impacted by the 2019/2020 Black Summer bushfires.

This is the first scholarship grant round of the East Gippsland Community Foundation, formed in 2021 to support the region's long-term recovery from the 2019-2020 Victorian bushfires.

Michelle Dowsett, Executive Officer of East Gippsland Community Foundation, indicated that a large number of applications were received, providing evidence of the need for financial support to students to further their educational aspirations.

"The East Gippsland Community Foundation scholarships were available for students who completed Year 12 from 2019 through to 2021 and have a confirmed enrolment in a post-secondary course in 2022. Successful applicants are enrolled in either a degree or TAFE-type course with a registered training provider. Students have indicated that funds received will be utilised primarily for accommodation, travel and living costs which is understandable due to the relocation of many students from East Gippsland to metropolitan areas to study their chosen course.

"Unfortunately, we weren't able to fund everyone that applied. We have provided information for all applicants about other scholarships we are aware of in the hope that they may have success elsewhere."

Chairperson Barry Henwood stated:

"We awarded scholarships to students who appeared to be the most heavily impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires. In several cases, successful applicants lost family homes in the fires, others suffered damage to farm properties, many students and their families were evacuated (sometimes on multiple occasions), and many were impacted in the aftermath of the fires by not being able to secure paid part time work as a result of business closures and lack of tourism in the area." Mr Henwood said.

The East Gippsland Community Foundation intends to run a scholarship program again in 2023, with further details available in late 2022.

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