

**What happens after the
smoke clears?**

**The Victorian Bushfire
Case Management
Service.**

The Benetas Experience.

***Helen Brightman &
Jane Furey***



benetas
THE CARING SPIRIT

Welcome

About Benetas

Dedicated to providing a positive, fulfilling experience of ageing.

- **An integrated range of community home based aged care services.**
- **Specialist residential care and accommodation to more than 2000 older people, their families and carers across Metropolitan Melbourne, the Mornington Peninsula and regional Victoria. Our services include the following:**
 - **Extended Aged Care at Home Packages**
 - **Community Aged Care Packages**
 - **Benetas @ Home- personal and home care assistance**
 - **Day respite services**
 - **Overnight and permanent residential care at 12 facilities**
 - **Palliative care, pastoral care, dementia specific care and culturally inclusive care**
 - **Independent Living Units**

Feb. 8th 2009



In the beginning...

In February 2009 following the devastating bushfires on Black Saturday the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments recognised and chose case management as the program that was essentially required to assist individuals and families to recover from this crisis.



The Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service

- The fires destroyed over 2,029 houses, 3,500+ structures in total and damaged thousands more.
- Many towns north-east of Melbourne were badly damaged or almost completely destroyed, including **Kinglake**, **Marysville**, Narbethong, Strathewen and Flowerdale.
- Many houses in the towns of Steels Creek, St Andrews, Callignee, Taggerty and were also destroyed or severely damaged, with several fatalities recorded at each location.
- The fires affected 78 individual townships in total and displaced an estimated 7,562 people.
- 173 people died as a result of the fires and 414 were injured.

The Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service

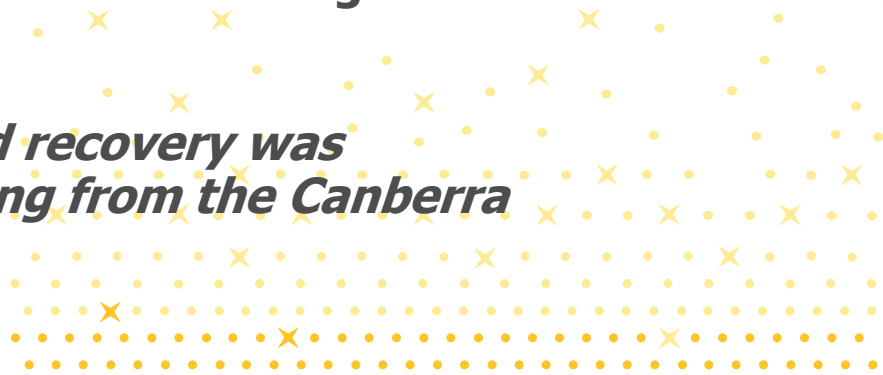
- The Victorian Premier John Brumby and Federal Minister for Community Services Jenny Macklin announced the establishment of the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service (VBCMS) on Feb. 19th 2009
- ***"Each affected family will be given the name and phone number of a person they can call who can give them the help they need to get their lives back on track"***

The Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service

- Case managers were:
 - ✓ To be a primary contact.
 - ✓ To help accommodation, material aid, grants, finances and employment and education.
 - ✓ To provide personal support.
 - ✓ To support individuals and families to develop a recovery plan.
- A new division was created within the Department of Human Services (DHS) across all bushfire affected regions.
- Client database developed.

The Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service.

- **Within one week:**
- **2428 registrations were received.**
- **A recruitment strategy for case managers was put in place and the first 100 case managers commenced.**
- **Case managers were recruited from different states and professional backgrounds.**
- **Across all regions 1207 cases were assigned with 301 waiting for allocation.**
- ***This model for response and recovery was conceived from a key learning from the Canberra bushfires in 2003.***

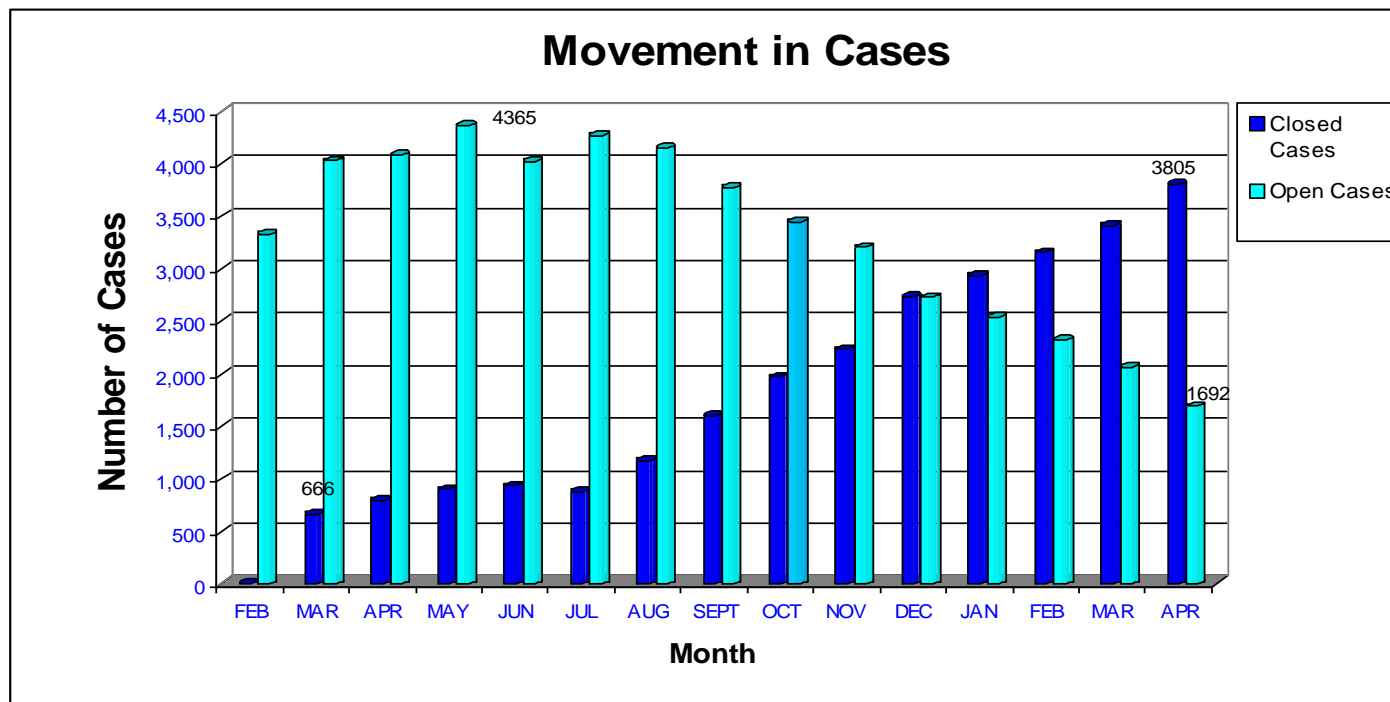


The Benetas Experience.

- Benetas responded to the call from the Department of Human Services and offered its case managers (working in their Community Care division) the opportunity to be seconded to the VBCMS.
- Benetas received an overwhelming response from its case managers and eight were selected to take up the opportunity across the Eastern, Northern and Gippsland DHS regions.



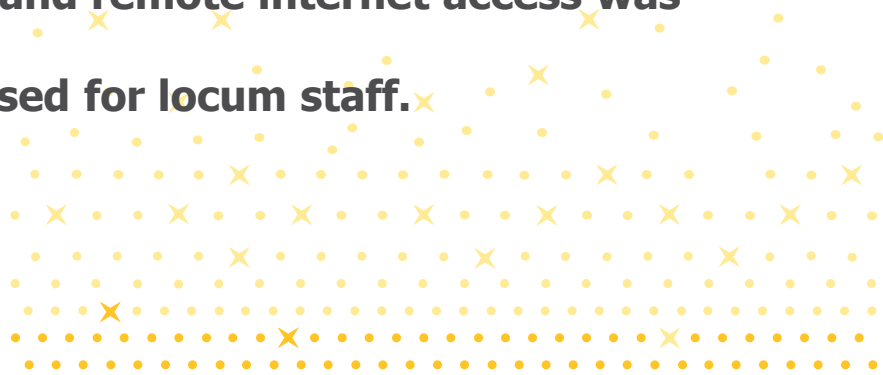
Statewide VBCMS cases over time February 2009 to April 2010



The Benetas Experience.

How did we do it?

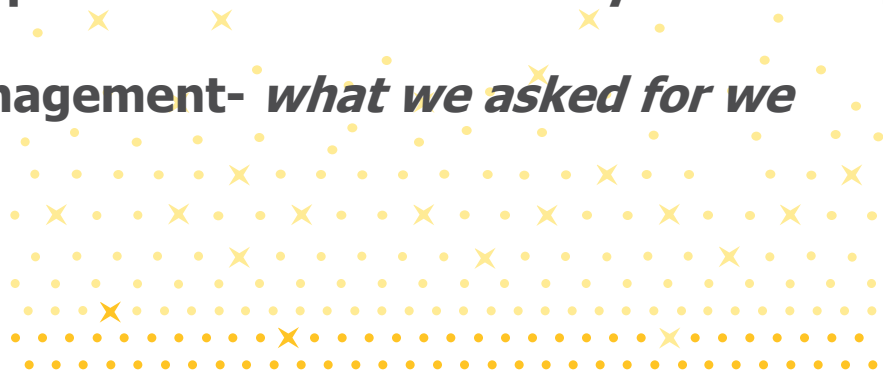
- **Generous funding**
- **Locum case managers were employed.**
- **Partnerships with other like agencies to accommodate and support the 4 Case Managers who worked in the Hume, Northern and Gippsland DHS regions. Outreach Office was set up in the Eastern Region.**
- **Benetas laptops and vehicles were used. (Within 3 months their vehicles had been replaced with 4WD to suit the road conditions they were facing).**
- **New mobile phones were purchased, and remote internet access was organised as required.**
- **Replacement computers were purchased for locum staff.**



The Benetas Experience.

How did we do it?

- Letters were sent to all affected Benetas clients.
- A line manager was appointed for the seconded case managers.
- Case Managers remained linked to Benetas. Case Managers were invited to attend all team meetings as normal and were kept up to date with all internal activities.
- Case managers were invited to present at team meetings so that their teams were aware of the importance of the work they were undertaking.
- No road blocks from Benetas Management- *what we asked for we got.*



The Benetas Experience.

Some of the Challenges by Jane Furey

- Road Conditions – Road works, Dirt roads. Trucks, Weather conditions
- Grants – Keeping up with information, Effect on clients and Communities
- New computer system and terminology
- Media – Friend and Foe.



The Benetas Experience

What makes this model of Case Management Different?

- Never been done before (unique in its scale & operation).
- Outreach Role- case managers travelled to visit their clients either in their home or in a place convenient to them. Long distance travelling
- Emphasis on client
- Dealing with a wide range of ages, households and Issues
- No Budgets
- Working towards discharge/Case Closure



The Benetas Experience

Positives

- Opportunity to do our bit
- Clients
- Travel – Broadened our Horizons
- Support from Benetas.
- Support from DHS Team Quality Manager & Benetas Line Manager.
- Access to Case Manager Helpline.
- Community Hubs



The Benetas Experience

A Highlight

- **Training opportunities.** Training sessions were planned around identified client behaviours and needs.
- **A specialised training service was developed following a survey of training needs of case managers and line managers.**
- **Training sessions were offered in the following:**
 - training sessions with clinical psychologist
 - Resilience
 - Mental Health and Suicide.
 - Drug and Alcohol.
 - Grief & Loss
 - Financial Management.



The Benetas Experience

Other Highlights

- Recognition – Benetas, DHS, Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority
- Resources
- Various forums
- Regular meetings providing opportunities to network with other VBCMS case managers.



The Benetas Experience cont...

What have we learnt?

- Ingenuity & innovative problem skills
- Flexibility with existing procedures
- Managing without a defined budget
- Identifying and using “free” resources in the community
- Wider knowledge of Community Agencies



The Benetas Experience

What have we Learnt?

- Greater understanding of Rural Issues – Fencing, Farming, Access, Isolation, Pasture
- New Computer System
- Greater understanding of other Agencies.
- Better Understanding of working with People in Crisis

The Benetas Experience.

Our Rewards

- Being able to see communities re-building.
- Positive relationships formed with families and children.
- Bringing clients “full-circle” and re-integrating into local communities and society as a whole.
- Being part of History.
- Opportunities to network with so many stakeholders that we would have never interacted with otherwise.
- Skill Development.
- Being involved in “shaping the service and the case management role”



The Benetas Experience

- Our 3 months contract was extended and we continue to be involved today.
- The Federal and State governments are committed to fund the service till February 2011 (a two year commitment).
- Case Management showcased as a profession.
- An evaluation of the service is now underway.



The Benetas Experience.

- Questions.

- Thankyou.