



## VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:11): In rising to support the motion, I do not in any way feel qualified to reflect upon the tragedy. All of us here have read the newspapers and seen the television reports and we have tried to understand how it might have impacted on us if we had lived within those circumstances.

The leader, in his contribution, reflected upon the tragedy of the eight adults surrounding a child. I cried when I read that. Emotions build up now when thinking of the instinct of the human species to protect its next generation at any cost. It is truly inspiring and it is something that we should all reflect upon.

Taking up the words of the member for Mount Gambier about the need for South Australia to focus on the future, I was inspired by a letter that I received from a constituent, which I want to put on the record. It is from Joy Woodroffe, and she states:

Recently I emailed [the local newspaper] in Balaklava, my idea of 'Adopting a Town' in Victoria after the devastating and life-crippling bushfires which has ravished their state.

Terry was excited by the concept and gave me front page coverage. I do not presume to have the answers to this horrifying tragedy that has shocked the whole of Australia, and I do not feel in any way capable of tackling this idea on my own.

I understand the concept is huge and will only come together, as we, as community groups, unite as one for the benefit and rebuilding of our fellow Australians who are suffering in a most horrendous way from an unforgiving force of nature.

Their plight at this time is hard for us to comprehend. So many lives lost, so many homeless, so many without businesses, so many in despair, not knowing what lies before them. We have always been removed from this sort of trauma as it normally happens overseas. But this is on our own doorstep. Thankfully, we were spared this time, we may not be so fortunate next time. All of us feel so helpless in knowing how to help—but we all have a need to help.

I have only planted a seed in my suggestion of the Wakefield Regional Council area adopting a town, and in doing so, hope that your group will help me water that seed and watch it grow. As individuals we can do a little—as a community, united by one purpose, we can do so much more.

It is easy for us to donate what we can for the cause, but it is another thing altogether to have an ongoing commitment to love, support, nurture and be there physically to help them rebuild their lives and community. There are many and varied gifts, talents, skills and expertise which you all have to make this happen.

What I am proposing initially is for a representative from all community groups [within the Wakefield Regional Council area, be they] service, church, school, sporting, arts...from each town...to come to an Adopt a T own meeting where we can brainstorm together to come up with a plan of attack.

I realise the crisis has only just finished and the clean up has only just begun. They face a massive task ahead. Before a community like ours can physically be there for them we can do things from a distance. We can start planning, fundraising, pooling our resources, gifts and skills and be ready when they need us.

I know your heart breaks with mine as we try to understand what has happened. As a community who is able to help our fellow Australians, let's unite, put our differences aside, and do what we need to, to get our Victorian neighbours back on their feet and growing as a community again.

There is no doubt that communities all across South Australia have that same emotion and desire to come forward and help our fellow Australians. We must all pray that the tragedy of the Victorian bushfires never befalls our nation again.